

TOWARDS A DECOLONIAL CARIBBEAN REPARATIONS MOVEMENT

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Abstract

This dissertation seeks to establish a decolonial framework for Caribbean reparations that is located in the Black radical tradition. It critically examines the Caribbean Community's (CARICOM) reparations campaign and proposes an alternative approach that embodies, explores, and revolves around everyday people—not the ruling elites—as the nucleus of decolonization processes that engage critically with a global and capitalist economic system. I argue that reparatory justice must take place on different levels—that is, internally (the liberation of the formerly enslaved and colonized body) and externally (society's socioeconomic and political elements). To support this argument, I put Frantz Fanon's (concept of a "new humanity" and Sylvia Wynter's notion of "genres of man" in conversation with Robin Kelley's nine theses of decolonization and Walter Rodney's decolonial praxis of "groundings." I propose the theory of Rastafari livity as a cartography to articulate the possibilities of internal and external liberation, which can inform the reparations campaign. Moreover, to illustrate the significance of arts and culture in creating transformative praxes, I explore how Rastafari as a social movement impacted Jamaican society from the 1960s to the 1970s; the project underlines the centrality of reggae in that process by examining the music of Bob Marley. I further extend my argument by addressing the legal framing of the reparations campaign through my application of Third World approaches to international law as a decolonial method. To engage civil society in the discourse of reparations, I argue for the movement to have a robust youth-led component since young people make up more than 50% of the Caribbean population and are the primary producers of contemporary culture in the region.

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Introduction: “Rasta Man Chant”

*Hear the words of the Rastaman say:
“Babylon, your throne gone down, gone down;
Babylon, your throne gone down.”*

Bob Marley (1973b), “Rastaman Chant”

Daring to Dream

My early experiences with conversations on reparations for transatlantic slavery came from the frequent dialogues I had with elder Rastafari adherents in Balata, Saint Lucia, in the late 1990s to early 2000s. Growing up in a country where the majority of the population is of African descent and where Rastafari practitioners have historically been ostracized from society and harassed by the police, I saw how the legacy of slavery and colonialism manifests in Caribbean life. During my initial engagements with Rastafari, I was a practising Christian who belonged to the Pentecostal denomination; however, my heart always gravitated towards the “reasoning” sessions on Rastafari principles that I had with the Rastafari elders Istan and Itrut, who were respected in my rural community (even by the “badjohns,” as those who engage in violence are called) because of their consciousness. I learned about the Rastafari principles for reparations (in particular, repatriation, or a “return” to Africa), the centrality of the legacy of Marcus Garvey and his Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), and the significance of prophetic voices such as Bob Marley and Tupac Shakur, among other things. Through these “groundings” sessions, I also came to appreciate and value my African heritage and transformed (or started to unlearn) the colonial ideas I had about the African continent. Lastly, in these sessions, I was able to appreciate how Rastafari mobilized Black men and boys who were prone towards illegal and violent activities due to the community’s social and economic conditions. Rastafari produced a type of masculinity for Black male youth where they gain power (consciously) by accepting the

principle of livity— “a natural way of living, in nature and one’s Irator (*God*)” (Hill, 2001, introduction by Tafari, p. 3). Through the philosophy of this subaltern group, my anticolonial lens was harnessed in imagining new worlds, which informs this current research project.

My engagement with Rastafari ideologies also informs the work I undertake as a pan-Africanist. I am the global youth ambassador for the pan-African organization Global Afrikan Congress, and I was a vital member of the planning committee for the International Conference on Reparations that took place in Barbados in August 2022. I draw from the Rastafari notion of reasoning to engage (in-person or virtually) youth of African descent across the Caribbean region, Latin America, and the African continent in dialogues on how they conceptualize reparations. My research pays homage to Rastafari—particularly the brothers Istan and Itrut—by applying some of its principles in constructing my arguments concerning liberating thought in articulating decolonial Caribbean futures, different perspectives of the future that decentralize the role of the state in creating a just society that recognizes the humanity of all peoples of the world, but more specifically Caribbean people.

In this introductory chapter, I establish the foundation on which a Caribbean regional undertaking of reparations for conquest, enslavement, colonialism, and neocolonialism can unleash the imagining of Caribbean liberated futures. However, before introducing my central arguments, I underline the context my work is writing against to envision new worlds.

The period following emancipation did not lead to the liberation of the descendants of the formerly enslaved as expected; instead, capitalism, with its racialized characteristics, continued to generate wealth for Western societies. As capitalist societies developed and organized, racialism became ingrained in the social structures that emerged from capitalism. This connection is particularly evident in Caribbean societies (Robinson, 1983). In this context,

capitalism, which was harmful to the colonized person, cannot be separated from colonial racism and all its negative impacts. The new world that was produced via “Caribbean extractivist capitalism” (Brissot & Jules, 2023, p. 4) embraced and celebrated violent practices that became interwoven with multiple forms of racial oppression: genocide, slavery, and imperialism (Robinson, 1983).

One of the key components of these glorified acts of violence was the dehumanization of people of African descent. Blackness became interchangeable with property, such as animals, machines, tools, and so on, that could be recognized as having financial significance (Brissot & Jules, 2023). Cedric Robinson (1983) referred to this interconnection and complex process as racial capitalism. Essentially, racial capitalism is the process of deriving social and economic value from the racial identity of another person. It is a longstanding, common, and deeply problematic practice. Furthermore, racial capitalism exposes and politicizes the fact that the capitalist economy is constituted by a racial logic (Robinson, 2000, foreword by Kelley). The enslaved Africans were commodities, invested in by “property-maximizing capitalists” whose strong return on investment was ensured by the state, which promoted the enslavement and trading of Africans (Brissot & Jules, 2023).

From primitive accumulation to transatlantic slavery, to colonialism and now through the “free market” economic principles of neoliberalism (enshrined in the principles of the Caribbean Community, or CARICOM), economic constructs have violently disrupted and transformed societies. The postmodern reconfiguration of capitalism continues to plunder independent states, such as Haiti and Jamaica, and Black second-class citizens in the West, exemplified in the Black American experience. Before contact with Europeans, Africa’s wealth of resources benefited its people; since transatlantic slavery, structures set up by the West unceasingly drained the

resources of the continent and perpetuated mass poverty (Wittmann, 2013). In some instances, Western nations have continually manufactured wars to guarantee the flow of resources from African countries into European banks, as in the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.¹

Transatlantic slavery left more than economic consequences. The descendants of enslaved people continue to endure damaging psychological, physical, and social conditions (Beckles, 2013). In speaking to the African-American context, Joy DeGruy (2009) coined the term “post-traumatic slave syndrome” (PTSS) to think through the effects of intergenerational and intracultural “transmitted behaviours and beliefs, combined with differential treatment and differential access to the benefits offered to others in society” (p. 30). The PTSS concept can be extended to the African and African diasporic experiences since the descendants of enslaved Blacks are living through the traumatic conditions that DeGruy articulated. To address PTSS and the economic conditions that Africa and its diasporas are shackled to, the global reparations discourse suggests progressive praxis in efforts to restore balance to the world. Reparations theorists have argued that one of the initial steps in tackling dire inequalities in the world is the liberation of Africa from Western neocolonial structures (Wittmann, 2013).

In my research, “reparations” refers to the challenge of repairing past wrongs that have determined the present global political order. It does not focus primarily on redistribution of wealth but, more importantly, on sovereignty and a shift of global power dynamics (Wittmann, 2013). My work uses the following words interchangeably: “restitution,” “atonement,” “repayment,” “redress,” and “compensation.” However, I nuance their meaning as I delve further in my analysis of restitution. The debate on reparations is not new, but one of the main catalysts propelling the discourse in the 21st century came from the United Nations World Conference

¹ King Leopold II of Belgium encouraged years of war and genocide in the Congo. Today, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is living through the legacy of this exploitation (Bates, 1999).

Against Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, which was held in Durban, South Africa, in 2001 (Strecker, 2017). This nine-day conference addressed several “controversial” subjects, including reparations for transatlantic slavery. A declaration from the conference recognized that slavery was a crime against humanity (Office of the High Commissioner [OHCHR], n.d.b). Unfortunately, upon the completion of the conference, 9/11 occurred, which stunted the implementation part of the declaration. Not until the conference’s 20th anniversary was there a resurgence of interest in undertaking the mandate of the declaration.

The overall goal of my research is to intellectualize how human freedom can be articulated through the Caribbean reparations project. I do not profess to possess the definitive solution for a radical Caribbean reparations movement. Nevertheless, I am endeavouring to offer an alternative perspective on the potential of a reparations movement that can continue a genuine independence movement in the English-speaking Caribbean. My interventions are a small part of a larger ongoing decolonial project that requires comprehensive approaches for the Caribbean to achieve genuine political sovereignty. I focus on the English-speaking Caribbean due to the level of development of the reparations movement in that part of the region as well as Britain’s predominant role in transatlantic slavery and chattel slavery. The wealth obtained via transatlantic slavery was central to Britain’s transition to modernity and the global dominance of the British Empire (E. Williams, 1994). I argue in this dissertation that the capitalist system that encourages exploitation, oppression, dispossession, displacement, disenfranchisement, and terror will not acknowledge reparations that can be transformative and offer the Caribbean true political and economic sovereignty. As a Caribbeanist, my interest in the reparations discourse stems from my belief that a genuine reparations movement has the potential to integrate the region socially, politically, and economically. Further, I believe the movement can achieve that

goal through a decolonial approach, which can position the region to work towards liberated Caribbean futures. My research's entry point to the global reparations discourse is through an interrogation of the CARICOM reparations campaign. In defining the regional restitution movement from a general perspective, Hilary Beckles (2013) described it as “a moral, legal and political response to the crime against humanity committed during the European imperial project—specifically the genocide committed against the native population and the trading and enslavement of enchained African bodies” (p. 211). It is about more than historical physical or psychological damages; it is about the immiserating poverty and economic impotence in the contemporary Caribbean that can be traced to the history of transatlantic slavery in the region (Clegg, 2014). This moral and just movement does not seek to compensate only Africans on the continent and in the diaspora; it also takes into consideration the genocidal acts that were committed against Indigenous Peoples who encountered Europeans, for example, the Kalinagos, Lokonos, and Tainos of the Americas.

In the following pages, I argue that advocacy for Caribbean reparations, in collaboration with civil society, can be foundational for opening space to radical thought and action to continue the processes of independence and decolonization, which have been stifled in the region through the agents of neocolonialism and neoliberalism. Social movements with decolonial and pan-Caribbean philosophies can help bridge civil society and governmental bodies—such initiatives can be the middle ground where exchanges of ideas and practices can take place. However, in order to execute such ideas, it is imperative that the CARICOM reparations campaign go through a decolonization process since, as it stands, the very foundation of the movement is built on neoliberal tenets. Audre Lorde (1984) and Frantz Fanon (1961/2004) postulated that the mechanisms and political thought produced for the benefit of colonial powers

in the former colonial state cannot be used to dismantle imperialist structures for the cultural and economic liberation of an oppressed people. This work firmly puts forth an approach that places everyday people at the core of decolonization processes. It challenges the dominance of ruling elites and critically engages with the global capitalist economic system. It works within a framework that is grounded in the Black radical tradition. This tradition, in turn, is rooted in the livelihoods of poor Black people, including the colonized, the marginalized, the subaltern, and the working class, which reflects the socio-politico-economic realities of the Caribbean.

The interventions I provide grapple with the intricate relationship between social movements and the cultures they engender to effect change and societal transformation. I work with the concept of culture to explore how cultural works can drive a decolonial Caribbean reparations movement through an examination of a selected number of resistance movements' texts, ideas, identities, and values. Cultural theorists and practitioners widely acknowledge that defining culture is a complex task. I have endeavoured to navigate this task by drawing from Stuart Hall's (1997) conceptualization of culture and cultural production, reflecting the social movements my research underscores. Hall (1997) states that "culture is concerned with the production and the exchange of meaning—between the members of society" (p. 2). He continues, "Culture depends on its participants interpreting meaningfully what is happening around them, and 'making sense' of the world, in broadly similar ways" (p. 2). Moreover, he argues that culture is about "feelings, attachments and emotions as well as concepts and ideas" (p. 2). Essentially, culture provides participants with the required "language" to give meaning to "people, objects, and events" (Hall, 1997, p. 3).

I engage with anticolonial and decolonial social movements because the culture they produce has the potential to create the most positive changes in society. My case studies on

Rastafari and the Caribbean feminist youth movement *Life in Leggings* show that the ideologies and praxes produced by these cultural movements ignited changes across the Caribbean region. I draw from these indigenized Caribbean movements to build a type of reparative justice that interrogates the neoliberal construct of the CARICOM reparations campaign but also provides reparations scholars the tools to construct what decolonial reparations can be in working towards a liberated Caribbean space. The role of movement cultures is significant in my work as they have the capability to shape specific ideas and ideologies. Additionally, they can deeply influence a person's entire body, moulding them on conscious and subconscious levels based on their embodied experience (Reed, 2019). This effect is particularly evident for movements that aim to create new practices in their cultural interactions (Reed, 2019); hence, my engagement with Rastafari and its artistic expressions. The movement has brought about significant changes, not only in Jamaica but throughout the Caribbean and beyond. In my work, I do not emphasize the cultures that have emerged from these social movements as inherently significant but rather focus on their impact on the political, social, and economic dynamics within the Caribbean region.

My research adds to the Caribbean reparations discourse to confront the historical and contemporary wrongs rooted in conquest, enslavement, and colonialism. At the same time, the world is witnessing an awakening of consciousness that has been instigated by young people of different races, classes, genders, religions, geographies, and so forth.² This study is informed by the current political environment: the intersection of the worldwide protests against the public lynching of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, at the hands of the Minneapolis police in the United

² The global protests from 2020 onwards highlighting and contesting anti-Black systemic racism had, in some cases, more non-Black people than Black people marching the streets in support of justice—for example, the 2020 summer protest organized by Not Another Life in Toronto, Canada.

States; the tearing down of the statue of 17th-century slave trader Edward Colston in Bristol, England; the toppling of the statue of Egerton Ryerson, the key architect of Canada's residential schools, in Toronto, Canada; and the removal of the colonial conquistador Lord Horatio Nelson's statue in Bridgetown, Barbados. This work stems from that particular intersection in conversation with the transnational drive for reparatory justice for the crimes committed against Caribbean Indigenous populations and people of African descent in building Britain's empire. In reflecting on how an alternative reparations movement could trigger new possibilities in the Caribbean space and reignite the fire that galvanized the region during the independence movement, I established three main questions for my research:

1. How is the case for Caribbean reparations being made?
2. How does introducing a decolonial lens of reparations help us critique and better understand CARICOM's reparations campaign?
3. What role do the arts and social movements play in politicizing and mobilizing young people on the issue of Caribbean reparations?

I focus on young people in my research because they are the largest age group in the Anglophone Caribbean (CARICOM Commission on Youth Development, 2010) and they tend to be marginalized in decision-making spaces when it comes to matters of Caribbean futures (Eugene, 2019). In accordance with CARICOM's definition, I define young people or youth as 15 to 35 years old (CARICOM Commission on Youth Development, 2010). I recognize that young people are not a homogenous group; their political identities, such as class, race, religion, and gender, play a crucial role in their everyday lived experiences. My intention is not to negate these realities; however, for this project, I treat young people or youth as one group, with the hope that in the future I can explore the heterogeneity of the group in greater detail.

In my analysis, youth participation refers to young people contributing to the decision-making processes that affect their lives, thereby influencing governance and development. It is intrinsically political, as it involves a negotiation of power. Moreover, as a sociopolitical notion, youth participation promotes equity and allows young people to exercise their political rights and occupy political space (Gilbert-Roberts, 2022). Therefore, one can see how youth participation and transformative approaches complement each other in the same way as reparations and decolonization.

In many cases, Caribbean youth have been at the forefront of movements in their respective countries or have been part of transnational entities that work towards the betterment of everyone in the region or in the Caribbean diaspora. For instance, young people played an essential part in Trinidad and Tobago's 1970s revolutionary struggle, which was partly a response to the 1969 student uprising at Sir George Williams University (now Concordia University) in Montreal, Canada. The uprising was triggered by Black Caribbean students who believed that their biology professor was grading them unfairly due to their racial background. After several complaints to the biology department without any positive outcomes and the promotion of the accused professor, the students decided to occupy the ninth floor of the computer room with support from other racialized and white students. The protest ended with police intervention, which resulted in some students and their supporters being arrested, deported, or expelled from the university (Cummings & Mohabir, 2021; Greenidge & Gahman, 2019). However, students did receive support from communities across the Caribbean. In Trinidad and Tobago, the Sir George Williams University affair inspired the Black Power Revolution on February 26, 1970. The leader of the revolutionary movement, Geddes Granger (now known as Makandal Daaga), supported the Caribbean students who were part of that

uprising by protesting against the Trinidad and Tobago and Canadian governments (Greenidge & Gahman, 2019). I highlight the Sir George Williams University affair to show how Caribbean youth played an integral role in movements informed by Black radical thought in the region. Moreover, the students involved in the affair were in the diaspora, but their political intervention was felt in the Caribbean region (Cummings & Mohabir, 2021).

Furthermore, young people in the Caribbean create and maintain the cultural vibrancy of CARICOM member states. Another important social initiative that witnessed a shift in cultural practices in the region was the Life in Leggings movement.³ Moreover, the recent global resurgence of Black Lives Matter (BLM) in 2020 forced people in the region to publicly speak on how anti-Black racism is experienced in societies populated predominantly by people of African descent. Caribbean youth were a central part of these conversations and essential in encouraging such sensitive topics in public discourse as witnessed on social media, and can be involved in an effective strategy for a reparations campaign through the use of social media platforms and networks to speak on the importance of Caribbean reparations. Young people can also be engaged through music, film, theatre, and other artistic expressions used by cultural movements in the region.

For this current project, gender and sexuality are not integral to my analysis of an alternative reparative justice approach, as this goes beyond the scope of my dissertation.

However, I acknowledge that gender and sexuality analyses are critical for a more

³ The Life in Leggings movement, developed by a Caribbean youth, Ronelle King, was an important social initiative that witnessed a shift in cultural practices in the Caribbean region. King began this movement as a response to gender violence. She took to the internet to share her experience of being forced into a man's vehicle after she refused his offer of a ride. The police did not take her story seriously, so King brought her narrative to social media and ended it with the hashtag #lifeinleggings. Women from across the Caribbean, such as Jamaica, Bahamas, and Trinidad and Tobago, then shared their experiences with domestic violence, harassment, and sexual assault, using the same hashtag (Telesurtv.net, 2017). The Life in Leggings movement led to dialogues on gender-based violence in conferences, media interviews, and public discussions in the Caribbean.

comprehensive and inclusive program of repair for the region and to move towards liberated Caribbean futures. It is hoped that this dissertation provides a foundation for thinking critically about Caribbean reparations that can continue to be elaborated and deepened, and that gender, sexualities, young women and LGBTQ+ people will be central in further conversations, and analyses.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

My interdisciplinary scholarship, activism, and community-engaged research draw on an assemblage of theories as I analyze the discourse and perceptions about the CARICOM reparations campaign. Thinking closely with Black decolonial intellectuals as well as scholars of the Caribbean radical tradition, I examine the ways that ideas about reparatory justice are constructed by the region's marginalized populations (such as the Indigenous and indigenized⁴ populations), taken up by the Caribbean state, and understood by civil society. My theoretical framework works across disciplines to create a conversational outline informed by critical work within an anticolonial discourse. This work includes Frantz Fanon's (1959/1965, 1964/1967, 1961/2004, 1952/2008) concept of "new humanity" or "new humanism," Sylvia Wynter's (2006; Wynter & McKittrick, 2015) notion of the genres of man, Robin Kelley's (2021) nine theses of decolonization, Walter Rodney's (1969/2001) decolonial praxis of groundings, and the anticolonial legal framework of Third World approaches to international law (TWAIL). This theoretical framework offers a starting point for interrogating the current mainstream undertaking of Caribbean reparations and then differently constructing decolonial futures for the region that do not negate the general populace and instead centre them in knowledge production

⁴ My usage of "indigenized" aligns with Stuart Hall's (2012) application of the term to describe the process of becoming "native" or "localized."

processes. Furthermore, it establishes the groundwork for recognizing that the reparations process is multidimensional and not linear; therefore, the decolonial transformation must occur on various fronts. The theories that inform my framework provide me with the creative space to articulate the broad questions I utilize as points of departure.

I use a multidisciplinary methodology that gleans from intertextual analysis, the arts, ethnography, and historical archives. Through the gathering of archival documents on enslavement, slavery in the Caribbean, Caribbean political economy, Rastafari, social movements, and the creative arts, this textual analysis aims to capture the necessary themes that address my main research questions. In this dissertation I seek to develop a creative model grounded in Caribbean thought and approaches for deconstructing, reimagining, and rebuilding new possibilities for Caribbean reparations by advocating for regionalism through youth participation and the creative arts. This model is rooted in the radical imagination of the Caribbean, informed by the cultural, political, and economic realities of the region, which are captured through the social commentary of reggae vibrations. Rastafari, through the creative platform of reggae, is one of the few movements that has carried on the conversations about reparations for colonialism in the Caribbean, including Indigenous genocide, transatlantic slavery, and indentureship (Beckles, 2013). Therefore, it is essential to recognize and trace the dialogues on reparations that have come out of the movement and to highlight some of the achievements that have manifested due to Rastafari's cultural expression through reggae music.

As part of this application of a textual analytic method, I trace the subject of reparations in the lyrics of reggae icon Bob Marley from the 1970s to 1983. I focus on Marley's music because of its impact on cultural, political, and social movements in Jamaica, the Caribbean, and globally. Marley became one of the key figures pushing the tenets of reparations, such as

repatriation, into the mainstream media in the second half of the 20th century. Furthermore, through my analysis of Marley's music, I illustrate that the very existence of Rastafari livity is a call for reparatory justice, as it advocates not only for an external upheaval but also for an internal revolutionary consciousness shift. The Marley albums I explore are *Burnin'* (1973a), *Natty Dread* (1974a), *Rastaman Vibration* (1976), *Exodus* (1977a), *Kaya* (1978), *Survival* (1979b), *Uprising* (1980b), and *Confrontation* (1983). I identified these albums as ones that connected with how I am thinking about reparative justice.

My reference to Marley's liberation songs does not follow a linear timeline but goes across time and space. In her analysis of Marley's music, Carolyn Cooper (1995) asserted that the lyrics are a mixture of "scribal and oral literary influences" (p. 117). The scribal influences mainly come from the Bible (according to Rastafari's interpretation) and are traditionally transmitted orally. The oral literary influences originate in Jamaican philosophy, a collection of cultures and traditions across generations (Cooper, 1995)—the everyday lexicon of a nation's people. In my analysis of the lyrics, I do not claim authority over the artwork's meanings but work with Marley's openness to various interpretations of his music. In an interview, when questioned about the meanings of his album *Kaya*, he responded, "You have to play it and get your own inspiration. For every song have a different meaning to a man. Sometimes I sing a song and when people explain it to me I am astonished by their interpretation" (Wilson & Hall 1981, as cited in Cooper, 1995, p. 118). My interpretation of Marley's music through my intertextual analysis of his lyrics is informed by how I am articulating reparations as a decolonial praxis. In my theorizing of Marley's creative work, I find the themes of emancipation, chant down Babylon, repatriation, and promised land.

Chapter Breakdown

Chapter 1: “Concrete Jungle”—The Necessity of Reparations

In the opening chapter of my project, I set the stage for the current state of affairs in the Caribbean and lay the groundwork for a case seeking reparations from Britain on behalf of the Anglophone Caribbean. To achieve this goal, I lead the chapter with a quotation from David Cameron, the former prime minister of Britain, whose actions symbolize the United Kingdom’s longstanding disregard for Black lives. Specifically, I highlight Cameron’s proposal to construct a prison in Jamaica for British Jamaicans while rejecting the Jamaican government’s reparations claim. Additionally, I delve into the history of several institutions that flourished in England due to profits derived from transatlantic slavery—such as banks, the monarchy, the church, and insurance companies—as well as the compensation paid to slave owners and their families after emancipation. By tracing these histories, I demonstrate how they persist in the contemporary-modern Caribbean and make a strong case for reparations to address the injustices of conquest, enslavement, colonialism, and neocolonialism.

Chapter 2: “Get Up, Stand Up”—The Multiplicity of Reparations

There are various constructs of and approaches to reparatory justice; therefore, in the second chapter, I explore the plurality of reparations. In the first section, I provide a breakdown of three restitution approaches: *harm repair*, *relationship repair*, and Olúfẹ́mi Táíwò’s (2022) *constructive view*. The first two views are typically applied within a neoliberal framework, and the third perspective opens up space to imagine multiple decolonial approaches. In the second section, I build on the constructive view to address the significance of the Caribbean radical imagination in conceptualizing a decolonial reparations approach. To support my position, I draw mainly from Fanon’s (concept of a new humanity or new humanism,

Wynter's genres of man, and Kelley's nine theses of decolonization. Overall, in this chapter, I explore the significance of decolonization of the mind and the superstructures that maintain coloniality in the Caribbean. Moreover, I add to the reparations discourse by arguing for a methodological component of a decolonial perspective of reparative justice, which can lead to epistemologies and ontologies that are delinked from Eurocentric knowledge productions.

Chapter 3: "Revolution"—A Case for Caribbean Reparations

In the third chapter, I explore one of the main questions of my project: "How is the case for Caribbean reparations being made?" As CARICOM's reparations campaign has taken centre stage internationally, a neoliberal articulation of reparations has pushed aside earlier forms of redress from the Americas. Therefore, as part of my intervention, I underscore the plurality of the reparations movements in the Americas as transformative praxes. To ground my arguments, the chapter is broken down into two parts. The first provides a short history of how Jamaican Maroon communities, the quilombos throughout Brazil, the Garifuna rebellion in Saint Vincent, the Haitian Revolution, and Marcus Garvey's UNIA took up liberation struggles. Part of the connecting themes in these case studies is the role that land plays in redress. Moreover, I examine these examples to illustrate how reparations in the Black radical framing proffer opportunities for a different type of humanity for the formerly enslaved. I close the section by underlining how restitutions have been approached in the United States, where the focus has been mainly on financial recompense rather than the creation of new worlds. The second part of the chapter investigates the construction of the state-led CARICOM reparations movement and the initiative's successes. There, I underscore the evolution of CARICOM's campaign and how the state-led movement has become the forefront of the contemporary-modern restitution undertaking in the Caribbean.

Chapter 4: “Natty Dread”—Rastafari Livivity as Praxis Towards a New Humanity

In the fourth chapter, my research adds to the Caribbean intellectual tradition by exploring the Caribbean’s indigenized, Afrocentric, radical, and cultural movement of Rastafari as a case study and a decolonial reparatory justice undertaking. I explore Rastafari livivity as an example of a Caribbean radical praxis that recognizes the significance of decolonization of the mind and infrastructure but, at the same time, provides a method of groundings to politicize and mobilize the marginalized and subaltern on issues of reparations. The chapter identifies the Rastafari dialectic as a cartography for constructing a liberated being that is constantly recreating “self” independent of Eurocentric epistemologies. The chapter is unpacked in two main sections. The first part underscores the background of Rastafari livivity, which, read through Wynter (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015), consists of “Rasta’s psychology” (the *mythoi* or origins) and Rastafari’s “dread history.” It then underlines how Rastafari livivity, from its origin, can be seen to express Wynter’s articulation of the *homo narrans* (“a hybridly auto-instituting, languaging cum storytelling species”; Wynter & McKittrick, 2015, p. 31). The second part of the chapter highlights some of the limitations of my primary argument. Chapter 4 proclaims that Rastafari livivity is a possible example of a Caribbean radical epistemology that can support the human liberation project through a decolonial reparations approach.

Chapter 5: “Small Axe”—Decolonizing the Legal Framework of the Caribbean Reparations Campaign

In the fifth chapter, I make a legal contribution to a decolonial Caribbean reparations movement. In my scrutiny of the neoliberal articulation of the reparations discourse in international law, I propose TWAIL as a decolonial intervention to deconstruct and reimagine legal arguments for Caribbean reparations. TWAIL is a movement and network that produces

scholarship interrogating legal structures and practices that maintain mechanisms that are byproducts of the legacies of colonialism and slavery. TWAIL exposes how international law is framed in colonial and neocolonial principles. Furthermore, as an anticolonial movement, it fits within my proposed alternative approach to reparatory justice, the *decolonial view*. Moreover, TWAIL argues that social (and cultural) movements can be vanguards in dismantling and reconstructing international law; the work of the social movement Working Women's Forum is presented as an example of this. In addition, the chapter argues that a decolonial Caribbean reparations movement can work with social justice initiatives in a form of collective struggle to inform or revolutionize international law.

Conclusion: "Roots"—A Decolonial Intervention in Articulating Caribbean Futures

In my dissertation conclusion, I present the decolonial view, a different reparations perspective inspired by the praxis of Rastafari livity. It recognizes in its framing the importance of decolonization of the mind (self) and the infrastructures that maintain coloniality, and it offers a method that is inspired by Rodney's (1969/2001) decolonial groundings praxis. Furthermore, in the appendix, I provide an example of a template for a regional reparations project that can engage the marginalized and subaltern.

The chapters come together to address the main questions of my research on thinking of different ways to imagine liberated Caribbean futures. I invite you to sit with me to reason through my five intellectual groundings sessions, which each chapter represents. This project is one that is driven by love for a people and a region that have gone through centuries of turmoil since 1492 yet always found creative ways not only to survive but to thrive in a global system that functions on racial capitalism. As reggae icon Marley (1980a) laments:

Won't you help to sing
These songs of freedom?

Cause all I ever have
Redemption songs.

Chapter 1:

“Concrete Jungle”—The Necessity of Reparations

*No chains around my feet
But I'm not free
I know I am bounded in captivity
Never known what happiness is
I've never known what sweet caress is
Still, I'll be always laughing like a clown
Oh someone help me 'cause I
I've got to pick myself from off the ground
In this ya concrete jungle*

– Bob Marley (1973b), “Concrete Jungle”

A Just Cause?: The Devaluing of Black Life

I acknowledge that these wounds run very deep, indeed, but I do hope that, as friends who have gone through so much together since those darkest of times, we can move on from this painful legacy and continue to build for the future.

– David Cameron (2015)

In a speech to a joint sitting of the House of Assembly in Jamaica in September 2015, British prime minister David Cameron attempted to address the call for reparations made by the Jamaican government.⁵ Headed by the Honourable Portia Simpson Miller, the Jamaican government highlighted the crucial role of the British in the inhumane practice of transatlantic slavery and chattel slavery in the Anglophone Caribbean. Cameron urged the leaders to move on from the past, saying “we” should think about ways to work together. He announced his government would give £25 million to build a prison in Jamaica that would house Jamaican citizens currently jailed in the United Kingdom. This response to the call for reparations, to

⁵ This move by the Jamaican government was influenced by the advocacy work of Rastafari communities and nongovernmental organizations such as the Global Afrikan Congress.

expand the prison industrial complex⁶ into the Caribbean, indicates that the same bodies that have historically exploited Black and Indigenous people will not support the idea of reparations for transatlantic and African chattel slavery.⁷ Additionally, it underlines British investment in a new place to contain the colonized. Such proposals are how Cameron and his administration envisioned a working future with Caribbean nations—a reimagined cycle of exploitation intertwined with the tenets of racial capitalism.

Since the independence movement, the Anglophone Caribbean has remained Britain’s abandoned territory. As such, the region remains cognizant of the disposal of “failed civilized test subjects” (unwanted “nonhumans”; Wynter & McKittrick, 2015) back into the Caribbean basin as part of the British colonial legacy. Interestingly enough, less than a year preceding Cameron’s trip to Jamaica, he visited Auschwitz, Poland’s Nazi death camp, lit a candle at the memorial, and wrote in the book of remembrance that the world should “never forget” (BBC News, 2014). This different response to another atrocity illustrates the process of continuous dehumanizing of people of African descent since emancipation from slavery in 1834 (Kamugisha, 2019; Wynter & McKittrick, 2015). Evidently, the colonizer does not value the

⁶ The prison industrial complex is a sophisticated system that encourages and depends on the growth of the prison population (particularly in the United States) and is generated by investments from the private and public sectors. Companies that, for instance, provide phone services to prisons charge outrageous prices to inmates and their families to generate large profits. Another crucial factor that maintains the running of the system is prison labour. Inmates are paid extremely low wages to manufacture everyday products, such as computers, t-shirts, and so on. This, in turn, takes away unionized jobs from local labourers and creates nonunionized jobs where workers can be exploited, for example, seasonal farm workers. One key factor that strengthens the prison industrial complex is the targeting of Black people and other racialized bodies to expand the number of prison inmates (cheap labour). This is done through acts carried out by the racist and sexist juridical system, such as the three-strikes law and other racist legal practices that have been established to perpetuate the growth of white wealth through the exploitation of racialized persons (Davis, 2000).

⁷ My research uses the term “transatlantic slavery” (transatlantic enslavement) rather than the more popular “transatlantic slave trade and slavery” because the second term implies that Africans who were the victims of enslavement were on the African continent waiting to be sold, which contradicts historical facts. Most of the people stolen and shipped away from the continent were free people. It is important to note that the kidnapping of people involved no transaction, and most of the affected African communities did not partake in related business deals (Diouf, as cited in Wittmann, 2013, p. 6).

Caribbean or see it as worthy of social transformation or human development; the main objective of the colonial zone is the extraction of goods (Beckford, 1972; Joseph, 2023; Lloyd & Levitt, 1969), which is exemplified in the Cameron administration's response to Jamaica's reparations claim. The colonizer continues to envision the modern Caribbean as a hub from which to extract wealth to fuel European economies. It is crucial, then, to recognize that the end of transatlantic and chattel slavery did not result in true freedom for the formerly enslaved. Rather, it opened the door to fresh types of exploitation within the global capitalist system, necessitating a reevaluation (Manjapra, 2023). This is where the notion of new emancipation comes into play. It demands a genuine liberation process that eradicates the devaluing of Blackness and ensures the real emancipation of Black lives.

The devaluing of Black life is the foundation of the contemporary-modern Caribbean. The instruments of capitalism continue to inform the sociopolitical economic functioning of the region, as neoliberal epistemologies and ontologies dictate the Caribbean's every day. In this dissertation, I wrestle with what it might mean to actualize an alternative vision of reparations as a kind of liberation that is not determined by the former colonial powers and their neoliberal colonial bodies and agents—the United Nations, Global Fund, International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and so on—but that provides independent states with genuine sovereignty,⁸ without the continued legacy of human exploitation. Moreover, this alternative vision recognizes Black, Indigenous, and racialized people's lives outside of commodification.

I undertake this reparative justice project using the framework of the “guerilla intellectual” as articulated by Rodney (1980). The guerilla intellectual praxis is a decolonial

⁸ My usage of “genuine sovereignty” is informed by Norman Girvan's (2000) articulation of sovereignty in a time of global community, where sovereignty is “less a matter of formal state authority and more a matter of developing the capacity for autonomous and proactive strategies at all levels, from the community upwards” (p. 31).

undertaking fusing scholarship with activism, which was evident in his transnational and revolutionary work. Rodney was not just an academic but also a committed political activist who believed in the power of intellectual work to bring about social change (R. C. Lewis, 1998). As such, he engendered a tradition that bridged academia with the revolutionary struggle, which he called the guerrilla intellectual. For Rodney (1980), the guerrilla intellectual contests established narratives, critiques the structures of imperialism and colonialism, and advocates for the rights and self-determination of oppressed peoples, particularly in Africa and the Caribbean (R. C. Lewis, 1998). He states:

I use the term “guerrilla intellectual” to come to grips with the initial imbalance of power in the context of academic learning.... The guerrilla starts out by saying, the enemy has all and we have nothing in terms of weapons, but we have a lot of other things. We start to make and invent what we actually have, and we use that strength to transform the actual logistical position over a period of time into one where we call the tune and ultimately carry the battle to the enemy. This is the symbolism, if you like, behind the use of the term “guerrilla intellectual.” (Rodney, 1980 pp. 111–112)

In the above quotation, Rodney describes how he conceptualizes the term to capture the intellectual struggles the academic must undertake to dismantle the unequal relationships between intelligentsia institutions and the activist. Moreover, he argues that in battles in the intellectual terrain, the guerilla engages with academic structures not to be co-opted into these symbols of power or to gain legitimization by obtaining academic credentials (Rodney, 1980, p. 112). Fundamentally, the goal is total upheaval; the decolonization process does not exclude academic structures, as these institutions produce and reproduce knowledge, perpetuating the global capitalist system.

Rodney’s argument is that the intellectual terrain is a point of struggle that impacts the life of the everyday person. The guerilla intellectual must draw from the “points of struggle”—the challenges of the oppressed group of people—in the process of social transformation. To

support his argument on the significance of struggle in the intellectual terrain, Rodney states that there is no distinction “between the mental and manual labour” (p. 113) and that the intellectual labour must be transcended by “the so-called progressive intellectual” (p. 113) when they leave academia to do manual labour. Essentially, the vigorous intellectual work that is done in academia must disrupt the reproduction of coloniality between the walls of these institutions. As I argue in this chapter, reparations for conquest, enslavement, and colonialism are just initiatives; however, the framing and overall goals of the dominant voices of reparations discourse in the Caribbean must be scrutinized to ensure the same cycle of exploitation is not maintained in the region.

In his tracing of the failure of emancipation, Kris Manjapra (2023) argues that one of the most pressing issues of our time is the existence of the “ghost line.” He asserts that the “line” divides humanity’s history into two distinct categories: “the seen and remembered from the realm of the systematically erased and disavowed” (p. 4)—“Man” (the human) and the racialized Other (nonhuman). Manjapra further argues that “the ghost line creates existential divides between being and nothingness; between those said to be present and those designated as society’s present-absences” (p. 4). Therefore, in my thinking through the notion of a new emancipation delinked from Eurocentric thought, I employ the guerrilla intellectual praxis as knowledge produced in the realm of “nothingness” to examine how reparations can be articulated in new worldmaking. One of my primary objectives is to articulate a world that is free from various forms of exploitation and delinked from Western epistemologies that continue to “ghost line” the racialized person, but more specifically, Black life.

In the tradition of the guerilla intellectual, this chapter contextualizes the historical material realities that produced the modern Caribbean and serves as a foundation for

comprehending the significance of reparatory justice in addressing the ongoing repercussions of conquest, enslavement, and colonization in the region. The chapter is divided into two parts to bolster my assertions. The first part sheds light on the genocide and enslavement of Caribbean Indigenous Peoples and Africans by European conquistadors during the primitive accumulation process and Britain's empire-building.⁹ Although my focus in this project is primarily on people of African descent, to fully grapple with reparatory justice in the Caribbean, it is critical to briefly highlight the crimes against humanity experienced by the Indigenous population in the region. I also provide evidence of the significance of enslaved Africans in building modern British society by examining their intricate relationship with trade, the British monarchy, the church, bankers, and insurance companies. In the second part, I offer a context for the evolution of the modern Caribbean and illustrate how colonialism persisted after emancipation, perpetuating the cycle of exploitation. Furthermore, I present a snapshot of the contemporary-modern Caribbean to demonstrate that independence did not result in political sovereignty for Caribbean nationals. Instead, neoliberalism, masked as a rebranded form of colonialism—neocolonialism—continues to dominate the region. To conclude the chapter, I bring together my arguments to emphasize the necessity of reparations in the case of the Anglophone Caribbean.

Part 1: Historical Injustices

Genocide and Enslavement of Indigenous Caribbean People and Africans

The conversation on reparations for the Caribbean does not begin with African enslavement but with the region's Indigenous populations. The initial groups of people the

⁹ Primitive accumulation refers to the historical processes that led to the emergence of capital. It is centred on establishing a particular type of social labour independent of the soil, its means of subsistence, products, and existence. This type of labour is disconnected from its object, outcomes, and social conditions (Bonefeld, 2011).

Europeans encountered in the Caribbean were the Tainos, Kalinagos, and Ciboney (Beckles, 2000). Upon his arrival in the Caribbean in 1492 by mistake, Christopher Columbus was welcomed by the Taino people in Hispaniola (Rouse, 1992; Wilson, 1993). The Tainos inhabited the Greater Antilles,¹⁰ except for western Cuba (Rouse, 1992). In his journal Columbus noted that the Taino people could be “good servants” and did “not belong to any religion” (Augier et al., 1960, p. 3). Essentially, his point was that the Taino people were not “warlike” and that taking economic, social, and political control of their societies would be easy. In the four voyages Columbus made to the Americas, two themes were constant in his notes on the Taino populations he encountered: one, they were “docile,” and two, they were “savage.” However, some Indigenous societies were complex politically organized systems (Rouse, 1992; Wilson, 1993). For example, the Taino villages in Hispaniola typically consisted of five political entities, which comprised 20 to 70 communities. Additionally, each community consisted of a chief or *cacique* who held the most power over the polity; as the intermediary between deities and humans, the *cacique* was the central figure in political and religious undertakings (Rouse, 1992; Wilson, 1993). Another essential element of their political and social hierarchy was their ball game. Interactions outside the games were critical as they created the space for the Taino chiefdoms to deal with exchange, arrangements of marriage for elite community members, and disputes. Social stratification was also part of the functioning of Taino societies, which had at least two or three tiers in social status (Wilson, 1993). By providing this example of Taino societies in the Greater Antilles, my intention is to show the complexity of Indigenous Caribbean society. New research consistently indicates that the Taino people and their societies were more complex than initially articulated by scholars.

¹⁰ The Greater Antilles is in the northern part of the Caribbean and is made up of Puerto Rico, Cuba, Hispaniola (Dominican Republic and Haiti), and Jamaica (Hillman, 2009).

The first set of Indigenous people who encountered Columbus met him and his crew with open arms; however, the early conquistadors did not reciprocate. Although the Tainos resisted, they could not withstand Spain's military might and were forced to pay tribute. These forced acts were the initial stages of colonial violence, which paved the way for wealth extraction from the region for the next 400 years (Beckles, 2021). The sophisticated agricultural systems practised by the Tainos could not support the Spanish and thus eventually collapsed. The Spanish practice of exhausting the agricultural lands of Indigenous people continued across each island they took; consequently, by 1590, famine consumed the islands of Cuba and Hispaniola. Spain had instituted an economic regime in the Caribbean whose most prominent aspect was a culture of crimes against humanity (Beckles, 2021; Haring, 1947). In their attempt to build wealth and utilize the labour of the Taino people, the Spanish drew from the Portuguese model of selling enslaved Africans in Europe (Beckles, 2021). On February 24, 1545, the Spanish loaded 600 enslaved Tainos onto a ship to be transported to Spain; half passed away during the journey, and as a result, the practice was not repeated (Beckles, 2021).

The Tainos put up a spirited but ineffective resistance. For example, in the 16th century, they engaged in resistance in Puerto Rico and were supported by neighbouring Kalinagos from Saint Croix. The Spanish, through their military prowess, eventually subdued them (Beckles, 2000). Scholars have argued that the Taino population of the Greater Antilles was reduced from over 1 million to a few thousand by the end of the 16th century (Beckles, 2013, 2021; Wilson, 1993). Furthermore, due to the genocide committed against the Taino people, there is limited data on the livelihood of the land's original people in the northern part of the Caribbean.

Spain was the first European country to extract resources from the Americas, leaving a trail of death. When the British arrived to the "New World" in the early 17th century, they

enhanced their predecessor's violent policies to capture land and dispossess the Indigenous populations, particularly in the Lesser Antilles.¹¹ In contrast to the descriptions of the Tainos as “docile” and “childlike,” records illustrate the Kalinagos, the Indigenous population that occupied the southern part of the region, as “fierce” and “cannibals” (Beckles, 2013; Newton, 2014). These descriptors were used to justify the genocide and enslavement of the Kalinago people. Arguably, the Kalinago resistance to the British was a response to the genocide and enslavement of the Taino people by the Europeans. The English state and private sector financed operations, and state policy encouraged military power to decimate the Kalinago population in the hope of receiving massive material profits (Beckles, 2013, 2021; Newton, 2014; Wilson, 1993). Merchants and landholders desired the land inhabited by the Kalinagos for large-scale production of commodities; therefore, genocide and enslavement of Indigenous populations became part of the British economic ideology of capitalism (Beckles, 2013; Wilson, 1993).

The Kalinagos' 200-year resistance against Europe's military force contributed immensely to the Caribbean's anticolonial and antislavery tradition. This can be illustrated in the solidarity between freedom-seeking Africans (since their introduction to the Americas as enslaved people in the 16th century) and the Kalinagos in the Lesser Antilles, who collaborated to attack and breach treaties signed with the British. The Spanish conquest of the Tainos in the Greater Antilles encouraged the Kalinagos to organize, mobilize, and defend their territory in the Windward and Leeward Islands against the Europeans. The “hands off” policy that Spain had adopted in the Lesser Antilles as a result of Kalinago resistance “opened the southern part of the region to the English, and as such, the British were at the frontal attacks of the Kalinagos” (Beckles, 2000, p. 119). For example, English agricultural settlements, established in 1624 in St.

¹¹ The Lesser Antilles are in the southern part of the Caribbean and consist of the Leeward and Windward islands (Hillman, 2009).

Kitts, Antigua, Barbados, Montserrat, and Nevis, were frequently attacked by Kalinago soldiers (Beckles, 2000).

One major incident that encouraged the British to execute a full assault on the Kalinagos and the freedom-seeking Africans was the collapse of the Willoughby treaty in 1667. The initiative was created to foster diplomatic relations between the British and the Kalinagos in Saint Vincent, as the island was crucial to European desires to expand African enslavement and sugar production (Beckles, 2000). Upon the arrival of 54 British colonists from Barbados to Saint Vincent, the Kalinagos, Africans, and Garifuna (mixed African and Indigenous Caribbean persons) forced the British representatives off the island and broke the treaty (Beckles, 2000). In an attempt to regain their pride, the British dispatched 500 soldiers to Saint Vincent, but they returned to Barbados after suffering a significant loss. Eventually, the British military would subdue Kalinago, African, and Garifuna military resistance across the Lesser Antilles (Newton, 2014). From 1492 to 1700, the Kalinago population decreased by 90% (Beckles, 2000).

The introduction of enslaved Africans to the Caribbean was encouraged by the Spanish priest Bartolomé de las Casas. In his advocacy to end the genocide and enslavement of Caribbean Indigenous people at the hands of the Europeans, he pleaded that Africans should be used for labour instead of the Indigenous populations due to the belief that Black people were “hardier” (Anthony, 2015). The church’s validation of exploiting and dehumanizing Africans created the foundation of modern Britain.

African Enslavement and the Making of Modern Britain

Transatlantic slavery and African enslavement in the British colonies made the slave economy the most lucrative for Britain, surpassing England’s tin and coal industries (E. Williams, 1994). The wealth generated from the trade encouraged the development of

numerous industries, such as shipping and shipbuilding, sugar, and rum; these industries facilitated the conversion of Britain into a superpower, and investments were made into warfare and other areas. Transatlantic slavery was so entrenched in British society that in 1776, 40 members of parliament were receiving returns from investments in slavery in the Caribbean. The legacy of slavery has left a profound imprint on the socioeconomic and political landscape of the region. As recently as 2007 in the British House of Commons, 100 members of parliament had a direct link to transatlantic slavery (Draper, 2010).

In addition to the British private and public sectors, the Crown was a major player in financing transatlantic slavery and African enslavement, which aided the British royal family in maintaining intergenerational wealth. They invested in and governed the Royal African Company, which monopolized the trafficking of thousands of enslaved Africans between 1672 and 1692, the years that the British were most active in slavery. The shipping company provided enslaved Africans to the colonies of Jamaica, Barbados, and the Leeward Islands (Davies, 1957; Eltis, 2009; Pettigrew, 2013; E. Williams, 1994). Its monopoly of African enslavement and transatlantic slavery was so immensely profitable that it gave rise to tensions with the private sector, and investors rallied to have full access to the “black gold” (Beckles, 2013; E. Williams, 1994). If transatlantic slavery and African enslavement fuelled the British empire, then the Royal African Company was the engine that propelled Britain into global dominance. The resurgence of BLM in 2020 and the political consciousness that has grown from the global movement since the public lynching of George Floyd at the hands of the Minneapolis police has encouraged people to explore the history of the contemporary world and its relationship with capitalism. This has placed the British royal family under severe scrutiny due to their colonial ties to the global community, specifically the Caribbean, Africa, and Ireland.

Another entity that had its “spiritual hands” in the functioning and investment of transatlantic slavery was the Church of England. After emancipation, the largest application for compensation for the loss of property (enslaved Africans) was made in 1834 by Reverend Henry Phillpotts, one of the most notorious slaveowners (Beckles, 2013, 2019). The Church of England received £8,823 in compensation, which is equivalent to £500,000 today, for the enslaved Africans it owned together with sugar estates in Antigua, Barbados, and Barbuda (University College of London, 2020). Interestingly, on January 9, 2023, the Church of England’s Church Commissioners—the body that oversees the enormous assets of Britain’s established church—addressed a commissioned report that underlined the church’s investment in transatlantic slavery across the Americas. The report focused on the financial assets of a fund that the British government granted to the Anglican Church in 1704, fondly called “Queen Anne’s Bounty.” This fund remained in existence until 1948, at which time it was worth £10 billion. As part of an attempt at atonement, the church declared it would disperse £100 million over 9 years starting in 2023 to a program of investment in pertinent African and African diaspora communities (Sherwood, 2023).

A significant player in the private sector that benefited from transatlantic slavery and helped establish the foundation of British wealth was the banking industry. International banks with home bases in London’s financial district, such as Barclays, Midland, and NatWest, were actively involved in transatlantic slavery and were compensated for their loss after emancipation (Beckles, 2019). In the 18th century, a tradesman would typically transition into a merchant and from there into a banker (E. Williams, 1994). Most of the bankers from the prominent banks, such as the Bank of Liverpool, eventually became eminent members of the Chamber of Commerce and made decisions that benefited their interest in transatlantic slavery. One way that

bank founders and key partners maintained and built their intergenerational wealth was through marriage between their children (E. Williams, 1994), which also helped preserve their political and economic power. In the late 18th century, most of the key British bankers opposed the abolition of African enslavement due to the profits it generated and the trickling of these funds into other critical industries (E. Williams, 1994), such as insurance.

At the height of transatlantic slavery in the 18th century, the insurance industry boomed. As conquest, enslavement, and colonialism powered the functioning of British society, particular regulations were put in place to ensure that the most important “products”—the enslaved and slave ships—were protected (E. Williams, 1994). The *Zong* case is one major insurance incident that underlines the significance of African enslaved life and its association with Britain’s imperialist functioning. *Zong* was the name of a slave ship owned by the Liverpool entity James Gregson and Associates. The ship had a history of transporting captured Africans from the African continent to the Caribbean. In 1781 the vessel got international recognition due to the acts carried out by its captain, Luke Collingwood, and his crew of 17 sailors (Beckles, 2013). Twelve weeks after leaving the coast of West Africa with 470 enslaved Africans to travel to Saint Elizabeth, Jamaica, a trip that typically takes 8 weeks, the destination was not in sight. The extended time on the ocean resulted in seven sailors’ deaths and 60 Africans thrown overboard. The enslaved were insured as property, but a legal clause stipulated that the shipping company would suffer the loss if the enslaved died of a natural cause; therefore, Collingwood had the Africans thrown overboard to save money (Philip, 2008). The ship entered Jamaica with 131 fewer Africans and 420 extra gallons of drinking water. Back in England, a jury found the insurers liable and ordered them to pay the shipping company. The insurers appealed the verdict

to the Court of the King's Bench, where a new trial was scheduled to be held but never occurred (Philip, 2008).

The *Zong* massacre speaks to the larger issue of the devaluing of Black life and raises two critical factors. First, Black enslaved life was not seen as human but rather as property like horses or cattle; therefore, the guiding principles of capitalism were used to justify Collingwood's actions. The argument that the enslaved were property was applied to challenge the abolitionist Olaudah Equiano¹² and his team's attempt to hold Collingwood and his crew accountable for murder (Beckles, 2013). Second, the case underlines the legal system's significant role in siding with the shipping company and thereby protecting the British national interest.¹³ If the *Zong* case had favoured the abolitionists, it would have created an entry point to challenge the notion of the enslaved African as "nonhuman." Therefore, to protect and sustain the functioning of Britain's empire, it was important that the shipping company was successful in the courts. Britain's international politics were contradicted in their local governance. During the legal practice of chattel slavery, the African body was "free" when it touched the shores of England (Beckles, 2013, p. 19), though the entire machinery of modern England was fuelled by the blood and labour of the enslaved across the Atlantic.

The abolition of transatlantic slavery and African chattel slavery did not come with atonement for crimes committed against humanity; instead, the slave-owning class was called the "real victim" (Hall et al., 2014, p. 2) and compensated by the British government for its loss of "property"—the newly emancipated African body. In the case of the Anglophone Caribbean, that remuneration took the form of £47 million, where £20 million was given to the slave-owning

¹² Equiano was a formerly enslaved African who became a leading voice in the antislavery movement.

¹³ In Chapter 5, I explore the role of international law in continuing the legacy of devaluing Black life.

class and £27 million of free labour was provided by newly emancipated Black persons to their former masters during an “apprenticeship” period of 6 years (Comissiong, 2019). The 1834 payment of the £47 million is equivalent to £178.60 billion today. The formerly enslaved Africans received no financial or other form of recompense. One of the many factors that must be considered is that the sum awarded to the former slaveowners represented enslaved Africans who were alive in 1834. It did not recognize the millions of enslaved Africans who died in the British Caribbean before 1834. Additionally, it did not acknowledge the violent disruptions that occurred on the African continent when Africans were stolen from their communities (Comissiong, 2019). It did not address the horrors and traumas of the middle passage, the mutilations (e.g., branding with hot irons), rapes, beatings, burnings, beheadings, starvation, and other inhumane acts of violence the African body succumbed to during enslavement (Comissiong, 2019). The fact that the slave-owning class was given all compensation and the working people given nothing meant that the development of Caribbean economies and the well-being of the region’s people were irreparably harmed or set back.

One can rightly ask: Why did the slaveowner class receive compensation and not the formerly enslaved? In applying a critical lens to articulate the injustices that were carried out postemancipation, it is safe to argue that Black life was viewed as property or as “thingified” (Césaire, 2002, as cited in Bogue, 2012); hence, in the Eurocentric gaze, the slave-owning class justifiably received financial recompense and arrangements to access free Black labour. Contemporary calls to abolish the global capitalist system (or demands for reparations) are grounded in the memory of slavery and Black people’s relationship to property (Walcott, 2021). In the upcoming section, I address how the legacies of enslavement and colonialism manifest in the growth of the modern Caribbean.

Part 2: Evolution of the Modern Caribbean

The Legacies of Slavery and Colonialism After Emancipation

The postemancipation struggle for autonomy in the Caribbean underlines how the legacies of slavery and colonialism exhibited in the plantation system dictate the sociopolitical and economic realities of the region. In general, a plantation is a component of agricultural production with particular kinds of economic organization that tends to have a large unskilled labour force supervised by a small group (Beckford, 2013). Plantations have the following standard features:

They cover relatively large areas; numerous unskilled workers are involved; decision-making is highly centralized; the pattern of management is authoritarian; and the workers are separated from the decision-makers by social and cultural differences.... [T]here exists a rigid pattern of social stratification based on a caste system that separates owners and managers (normally white people of European extract) from workers (normally Africans or East Indians). (Beckford, 2013, p. 109)

The traditional plantation is an economic institution that pulls everyone into its embrace to execute the orders of its owner. Due to its omnipotent and omnipresent functioning in the lives of the people within its confinement, it is articulated as a social institution (Beckford, 2013). During slavery in the Caribbean, the social structure of the plantation system was three-layered: the whites, though they were small in number, were at the apex of the hierarchal configuration;¹⁴ the “coloured” (typically, biracial people with African and European ancestry) were in the middle stratum; and Black people were at the bottom (Brereton, 2002). In the mid-19th century, after slavery was abolished, a fourth tier was added in some colonies as indentured workers arrived from Asia (Brereton, 2002). They were small in numbers in countries such as Saint

¹⁴ Although poor whites existed in colonies such as Barbados and the Bahamas, they were despised by all groups, including Black people, and rarely intermarried (Brereton, 2002).

Lucia, Saint Vincent, Grenada, and Jamaica, but they emerged as a distinct group, especially in Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana (Brereton, 2002).

Essentially, in the postemancipation period, no systemic transformation occurred within Caribbean societies because the fundamental intricacies of race relations, how power was accessed and practised, and the prestige placed on specific values and attitudes were maintained (Kamugisha 2019). The race and class stratification of the plantation system still informed the everyday livelihood of the Caribbean person (Beckford, 1972; Brereton, 2002). The social structure of the plantation lasted until the 1930s to 1940s, when the cataclysmic events of the labour riots in the colonies and World War II brought it to an end (Brereton, 2002; G. Lewis, 2004). The riots involved a series of social and political movements and protests that occurred across various Caribbean colonies during the first few decades of the 1900s (Beckles, 2021) as Caribbean people worked towards attaining their social, political, and economic freedom.

The labour disputes were sparked by the colonial legacy of enslavement. The abolition of chattel slavery in the Caribbean brought with it a property revolution that did not benefit the formerly enslaved and their descendants; instead, the master-slave dialectic was replaced with the employer-tenant relationship (G. Lewis, 2004). In addition, the apprenticeship program established as a form of restitution to the former enslavers enhanced the general resentment that newly emancipated Black people had against the partnership established between the colonial politicians and the planter class to maintain politics of enslavement under the concept of “freedom” (G. Lewis, 2004). During slavery, slave revolts occurred as acts of resistance, whereas in this “new order,” rebellion took the form of refusal to work or marronage into the mountains, which was typical in colonies such as Jamaica (Brereton, 2002; G. Lewis, 2004). These social conditions engendered the first successful workers’ revolution in the British territories in the

1930s, which was the driving force behind ideations of nationhood and political democracy (G. Lewis, 2004).

The labour riots were a significant part of the social unrest that laid the foundation for the independence movement. As part of the continuing socioeconomic and political chains of enslavement, labourers on the plantations faced long working hours, low wages, poor living conditions, and minimal job security. For example, in 1918, labour riots erupted in Trinidad and Tobago due to the high cost of living, which resulted in significant property damage and several deaths (Horne, 2007; G. Lewis, 2004; E. Williams, 1964). Overall, the riots were driven by the harsh conditions faced by the unskilled labour force on sugar and banana plantations, who were predominantly Black and Indo-Caribbean people (Beckles, 2021; Horne, 2007; G. Lewis, 2004). Furthermore, many workers were paid meagre wages that were insufficient to support themselves and their families. Class stratification was rampant and illustrated by the stark economic and social divide across the colonies, with a small elite class of European planters and business owners controlling much of the wealth and political power maintaining the plantation system in the region (Brereton, 2002; G. Lewis, 2004). Discrimination based on race and social status was evident since most labourers were descendants of enslaved Africans and had limited opportunities for advancement (Brereton, 2002; G. Lewis, 2004). Socialist and communist ideologies played a role in the labour riots as well. Drawing attention to the plight of workers in the Caribbean, labour riots and protests contributed to the eventual improvement of labour conditions, including higher wages and the formation of labour unions (G. Lewis, 2004). For instance, a series of strikes and protests in Jamaica in 1938 ultimately led to the establishment of labour unions and better working conditions (G. Lewis, 2004). Labour riots and protests also

played a central part in the broader struggle for independence and self-determination in many Caribbean colonies in the mid-20th century (G. Lewis, 2004).

When the colonial Anglophone Caribbean became seen as a burden to the functioning of modern Britain and was granted independence, the people in the region were left to fend for themselves and deal with the complex world that had emerged due to conquest, slavery, and colonialism. Various economic models were tried in the region to support the transition from a colonial state to an independent nation. For example, Arthur Lewis's (1950, 1954, 1955) economic model provided one of the first nationalist perspectives in addressing anticolonialism using the modernization paradigm during the independence movement. The economic model he developed for British Caribbean development—"industrialization by invitation"—was informed by his neoclassical economic training in the West (Bernal et al., 1984). Although his intention was anticolonial in supporting the labour and independence movements of the Caribbean, his model did not solve unemployment issues and brought in more import than export industries (Lloyd & Levitt, 1969). A second approach, radical Caribbean nationalist economic thought, was birthed in the 1960s in response to Lewis's neoclassical theories. It was associated with the New World Group, comprising political economists who believed that "the most important characteristic of the regional economies is that they are dominated by a series of international corporations" (Girvan & Jefferson, 1968, p. 2). Therefore, new tools and approaches were required that recognized the environment and gleaned from history, sociology, and political science to understand the Caribbean condition (Girvan & Jefferson, 1968). A couple of essential criticisms of the Caribbean radical economists are, first, that they underestimated the issues they would encounter in the transformation process and the extent to which the imperialist countries would respond to their attempts (Bernal et al., 1984), and, second, that in their political economy

analyses, they neglected the third sector and informal sectors (Green, 2001). That meant the exclusion of industries and service areas dominated by the working class and the subaltern, and more specifically by Black and other racialized women, in fundamental areas such as household domestic, small-scale food production, and marketing (Green, 2001).

I highlight the above economic models to illustrate the multiple ways that Caribbean people in the postemancipation period have strived for political autonomy but faced limitations due to the systemic violence of capitalism. Rather than offer liberation to the descendants of the formerly enslaved and colonized people, capitalism continues to refine its methods to generate wealth for Western societies. In the upcoming section, I highlight how the legacies of the plantation system inform the contemporary-modern Caribbean.

Problematizing the Contemporary Caribbean

As emphasized in the previous section, the Anglophone Caribbean, though small geographically, has witnessed monumental events, particularly in its drive towards sovereignty and “development.” The late 1950s to the early 1980s were about nation-building; Caribbean people were hopeful about taking control of their destinies, which manifested in sociopolitical integration initiatives such as the West Indies Federation¹⁵ and social and political movements such as the drive towards independence. In the 1960s, a new Caribbean intellectualism thrived (Meeks, 2001, p. xiv). During that period, countries such as Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, and Guyana received their independence, which ushered in possibilities of true sovereignty and

¹⁵ The West Indies Federation, which lasted from January 3, 1958, to May 31, 1962, was established to bring together the Anglophone Caribbean territories in an effort to create a collective national movement in the region and encourage interregional trade and investment. The hope was that an integrated Caribbean could result in a politically independent region with a single government, thus intensifying the region’s bargaining power on the global economic market (G. Lewis, 2004).

reclaiming the humanity of the colonized. However, in the English-speaking Caribbean, the colonies arguably received constitutional independence rather than political independence, continuing their dependency on “developed” countries (Beckford, 1972).¹⁶ Politicians attempted to put new ideas into practice in the 1970s, which resulted in bitter ends (Meeks, 2001), such as the collapse of Jamaican prime minister Michael Manley’s democratic socialism project. The 1980s saw the retreat of the intellectual class from politics and projects of critical investigations (Meeks, 2001, pp. xiv–xv) as Guyana’s intellectual revolutionary Walter Rodney and the charismatic leader of Grenada’s promising socialist New Jewel Movement, Maurice Bishop, were assassinated. The downfall of the Grenadian Revolution, in particular, left the Caribbean in a state of shock. The 1990s brought in a new period of neoliberalism (Meeks, 2001, p. xv), an international consequence of Thatcherism and Reaganomics’ notion of development, which entailed open markets, tax breaks for the wealthy, and the cannibalization of countries in the Global South that had recently acquired their independence by the IMF and the World Bank.

Analyzing the Anglophone Caribbean from a Black radical framework makes clear that the region was in a state of crisis at the end of the 20th century. Paget Henry (2000) described the region as one of “high legitimacy deficits” (p. 219). Moreover, Brian Meeks (1993) termed this crisis as one of “hegemonic dissolution;” Holgner Henke (2004) concluded that the Caribbean was in “a severe moral and ethical crisis” (p. 33); Anthony Bogue (2002) simply described the region’s position as one of a “postcolony” (p. 1); Obekay Gray (2003) captured the moment as “predation politics” (p. 72); and Selwyn Ryan (2001) questioned the durability of democratic governance in the region given its economic instability and interdependence. These key

¹⁶ Beckford (1972) asserted that the constitutional independence that Caribbean countries celebrate is symbolic. He argued that this type of independence comes with flags and a seat at the United Nations, but it is not political independence. Political independence entails the ability to have power to manipulate the environment for a country to support its people.

Caribbean political and social theorists postulated that the region was in a precarious position and radical transformations were necessary. Meanwhile, there had been a collapse of the paradigm that strongly asserted it was feasible for “small states with radical, egalitarian policies to survive and flourish” (Meeks, 2001, p. x). Since the collapse of the Grenadian Revolution, the global neoliberal agenda appears to have subdued the type of political and economic praxes needed to radically transform Caribbean societies at the end of the 20th century. Meeks (2023) has even articulated that the region has shown less overt resistance to the global neoliberal agenda since the Grenadian Revolution.

The same framing can be applied in locating the key sociopolitical and economic moments at the beginning of the 21st century of the Anglophone Caribbean. In contextualizing the contemporary Caribbean, Aaron Kamugisha (2019) states that “the term neoliberalism flattens the complexity of the Caribbean” (p. 1). He continues, “In the Caribbean, we see an amalgam of neocolonialism, postcolonial elite domination, and neoliberalism” (Kamugisha, 2019, p. 1). The independence project promised new possibilities for Caribbean people. However, capitalist structures were still in place, which maintained the Caribbean as a colonial space dependent on support from the West; it simply transitioned from a colonial to a neocolonial state. Independence in the region resulted in the British practically offering the Creole elites the Caribbean as a gift, which led to the ascent of the middle class (Kamugisha, 2019). This middle class maintained the agenda of the former colonial bodies (although countries such as Jamaica, Guyana, and Grenada briefly attempted to implement localized democratic socialist projects). The aggressive nature of neoliberalism can be observed in how the IMF and World Bank’s structural adjustment policies crippled domestic economies across the Caribbean, eventually turning most of the eastern Caribbean states into a “brothel of Europe” (Fanon,

1961/2004). In fact, sex tourism has become part of the region's tapestry. Kamala Kempadoo (1999) explains that "across the region, sex tourism or tourism-oriented prostitution has become an increasingly important topic of research and discussion due to the growing reliance of national governments on income generated by tourism and tourism-related activities" (p. 13). The Caribbean, through strategic neoliberal policies, was carved out to be part of the service area for the Global North. The postcolonial elites took up the role of the "managerial class" (Rodney, 1969/2001)—as the buffer between the West and the everyday Caribbean person, they oversee and ensure most of the tourism industry's profits leave the region and go to the former colonial class as the locals are continually exploited in various capacities.

Despite grassroots movements that are keeping the vibrancy of the Caribbean spirit alive, the region is at a critical juncture.¹⁷ Barbados is the country leading the Caribbean reparations claim from a governmental level. Under Prime Minister Mia Mottley, it has become a republic, and its globally recognized pop star Rihanna has become a national hero. Thus, Barbados presents as a woman-led nation that confronts the neoliberal global order while celebrating women on the red carpet. Symbolically, Mottley has positioned Barbados as a small-state society leading in global political thought by relinquishing the British monarchy. In her 2021 Barbados Independence Day speech addressing the significance of Caribbean governments and people working together, she stated:

Our people, in this turbulent time, must always remember that we don't walk this earth alone, and we have committed, whether it was in the failed attempt of the West Indies Federation or whether it is in the current incarnation of CARICOM, that we are committed, that we will always treat each other better than we treat anyone else because we are one family with one destiny. (Mottley, 2021, 3:40)

¹⁷ In my project, when I use the term "grassroots movement," it does not mean cultural movement unless specified. For example, Rastafari is a grassroots and cultural movement, as I underline in Chapter 4. In contrast, the Global Afrikan Congress is a grassroots movement but not a cultural movement since it lacks the cultural vibrancy that is required to qualify as one (as noted in the introduction of my project).

Mottley is recognized regionally and internationally for speaking on Caribbean unity, reparations, and climate justice. At the same time, however, Barbados, which has had the most stable economy in the Anglophone Caribbean since 1966 and high investment in human development, is encountering grave economic turmoil (Meeks, 2023). Mottley's administration was thus forced to implement IMF's structural adjustment policies (Meeks, 2023). The country's economic troubles are partly due to the housing crisis, where the average Barbadian cannot purchase a home due to the short-term policy of selling land to rich expatriates. In addition, the impact of the global recession is affecting the country's tourism industry, upon which other industries rely (Meeks, 2023). This trend can be observed across the Anglophone Caribbean in countries dependent on the tourism sector, such as Saint Lucia, Antigua, Grenada, and more. Trinidad and Tobago, which has been a pillar of neoliberal ventures in the region and has produced wealthy public and private sectors through the nationalization of its petroleum industry, is eating up its foreign exchange reserves at an unprecedented rate due to the decrease in oil and gas prices (Meeks, 2023, p. 134). I highlight these two cases because, historically and on the global stage, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago have managed to maintain some form of economic stability and invested highly in human development.

Moving Forward: The Necessity of Reparations in the Anglophone Caribbean

The examination provided in this chapter emphasizes the significance and validity of reparations for conquest, enslavement, and colonialism in the Caribbean, which is critical for the region's development since these various manifestations of capitalism still play essential roles in the region's sociopolitical and economic realities. The arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1492 changed the region's trajectory forever. A consequence of conquest was the genocide of Indigenous Caribbean people. The sugar revolution led to an unprecedented number of African

people stolen from their homelands, forced to do manual labour under brutal conditions, and dehumanized to build Europe's global empire. The abolition of transatlantic slavery and chattel slavery resulted in the indentureship of South and East Asians, who were also dehumanized and subjected to harsh working conditions. Although some countries in the Caribbean received their independence, the political and economic capitalist system still informs people's daily lives (Alexander, 2005). Furthermore, the legacies of conquest, genocide, enslavement, indentureship, and colonialism impact not only the political functioning of the region but also the social relationships. For instance, in addition to the dominance of class stratification in Caribbean societies, the practice of colourism, which originates in the plantation system, still dictates one's livelihood and opportunities. This sometimes leads people to bleach their skin to better fit the colonial aesthetic hierarchies (Brown-Glaude, 2007; Tate, 2019), signalling a deep-rooted aspiration for whiteness that continues to define a colonized sense of legitimacy (Edmonson, 2003, 2009). Moreover, those colonial aesthetics are not limited to shadism and also extend, for example, into the politics of Black women's hair (Brown, 2018).

Outside of the political, economic, and social aspects of Caribbean life, the legacies of conquest, colonialism, enslavement, and indentureship appear in various ways. For example, in the last few years, the Caribbean has experienced more than the average number of natural disasters, which has been triggered by capitalism (Mottley, 2021). An increase in the number of hurricanes and storms ravaging the Caribbean archipelago partly results from Western countries' overwhelming modes of production, within their borders or through their multinational corporations operating in "developing" countries. The accelerated levels of carbon dioxide and other pollutants stemming from those production processes have culminated in a rise in the earth's temperature (Mackay & Spencer, 2017). In thinking about redress and decolonial futures,

climate change is an issue that must be faced head-on since the Caribbean region, particularly the islands, is in a vulnerable position (Mottley, 2021). Therefore, reparatory justice is necessary not only to address historical wrongs committed by Europeans against African people but also to disrupt and transform how the legacies of colonialism and enslavement continue to impact Caribbean Indigenous Peoples, people of African descent, the descendants of indentured Asians, and the region directly. This dissertation therefore argues for a redress perspective that interrogates the colonial legacies that inform Caribbean people’s social, political, and economic realities.

Calls for redress are not new—they began during the practice of African chattel slavery (Kelley, 2021)¹⁸—but the two main catalysts have strengthened the modern-contemporary reparations discourse in the Caribbean: the Rastafari movement from the early 20th century (Brown, 2018) and the government-led Caribbean reparations initiative that was sparked at the 2001 United Nations World Conference Against Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (Beckles, 2013; Strecker, 2017). However, the government-led reparations campaign has become the leading perspective in mainstream media and the primary voice speaking on behalf of Caribbean people. In the next chapter, I explore the theories that inform my theoretical framework for reparations and present my methodology.

¹⁸ The early calls for reparations are explored in more detail in Chapter 3.

Chapter 2:

“Get Up, Stand Up”—The Multiplicity of Reparations

*Most people think
Great God will come from the skies
Take away everything
And make everybody feel high
But if you know what life is worth
You will look for yours on earth:
And now you see the light,
You stand up for your rights
Get up, stand up!
Stand up for your rights!
Get up, stand up!
Don't give up the fight!*

– Bob Marley (1973c), “Get Up, Stand Up”

Mainstream reparations discourse typically conceptualizes restitution as a form of financial recompense that must be paid to a victim by the offender; however, there are multiple approaches to reparations. In this chapter, I explore three approaches to reparatory justice to establish the groundwork for an alternative reparations movement. The chapter is unpacked into two parts. In the first, I summarize the restitution approaches: *harm repair*, *relationship repair*, and *constructive view*. The first two approaches are typically applied within a neoliberal framework, and the third opens up space to imagine multiple decolonial approaches. In the second section, I build on the constructive view within the framework of the Black radical tradition and the Caribbean radical imagination in conceptualizing the grounds for an alternative reparations perspective. To accomplish that objective, I glean primarily from the work of Fanon and Wynter. Finally, I end the chapter by grounding the discussion on new worldmaking in Kelley’s nine theses of decolonization to offer a launching pad to think critically about the practicality of decoloniality and restorative justice.

Part 1: Reparations Approaches

The public dialogue on reparations for transatlantic slavery in the Caribbean is generally placed under one umbrella, but multiple approaches to reparatory justice exist. Here, I examine three prominent reparations perspectives. Harm repair and relationship repair are conventional legal approaches used in cases of restorative justice. In contrast, the constructive view, as conceptualized by Táíwò (2022), is presented as a disruptive praxis in new worldmaking that is not limited to neoliberal frameworks. I focus on the noted three views because of their relationship to reparations for enslavement and colonialism in the Caribbean. My scrutiny of the three approaches is not intended to take away from their credibility and importance but to encourage thinking through reparations more critically in imagining a new emancipation.

Harm Repair

According to Táíwò, a harm repair approach aims to address present harm that is connected to a historical wrong, and pushes for material outcomes. The argument is that harm was committed against the victim, placing them in a position that lowered their welfare from a specific baseline they would have been at otherwise. Repairing the harm may involve various measures, including financial compensation, policy changes, and community development initiatives. In the context of transatlantic slavery, the harm repair view emphasizes that slavery was brutal and inhumane, a system that caused immense suffering to millions of forcibly enslaved Africans as well as their descendants. Furthermore, the legacies of these crimes against humanity extend to economic exploitation, cultural erasure, and generations of racial discrimination. In relation to the United States, the harm repair approach emphasizes that the historical wrong can be addressed by placing the descendants of the enslaved in a “more

equitable position commensurate with the status they would have attained in the absence of the injustice” (Darity & Mullen, 2020, p. 3).

The harm repair perspective leverages law as a guide to determine compensation for harm and injury.¹⁹ It draws from the legal mechanism of tort law—personal injury litigation—where the accused must make recompense to the victim in order to make the offended party “whole again” (Táíwò, 2022, p. 125). Widely embraced due to the “rhetorical appeal and strategic utility of a ready-made legal framework” (Táíwò, 2022, p. 125), the harm repair perspective has gained traction beyond organizational politics. For example, the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N’COBRA) has adopted this approach to seek justice for Black Americans who are descendants of enslaved individuals in the United States (Táíwò, 2022). N’COBRA is a grassroots movement that has advocated for slavery redress in the United States for just under 40 years; in comparison to other restitution movements, it has the most chapters across the country (Araujo, 2017). Another prominent movement that utilizes the harm repair approach is the CARICOM reparations campaign, which I highlight in Chapter 3 through the work of reparations scholars Hilary Beckles (2013, 2019) and Verene Shepherd (2018). The harm repair view is effective because it acknowledges the victim’s present circumstances, which have been influenced by past injustices (Táíwò, 2022).

However, there are limitations to the harm repair view. One significant setback is conceptualizing what it means for victims, such as the descendants of enslaved Africans, to become “whole again” (Táíwò, 2022, p. 126). An articulation of the descendants of the enslaved becoming “whole again” could be connected to land and community in Africa before chattel slavery because the Caribbean space is not the indigenous lands of the enslaved Africans (though

¹⁹ In Chapter 5, I explore the limitations of using international law to seek reparations for enslavement and colonialism.

Afro Caribbean people have arguably become indigenized to the Caribbean space). Therefore, in relation to the issue of Caribbean reparations, this would mean asking certain questions. How does one return to “before” enslavement and colonialism given the contemporary-modern world has been created via racial capitalism and the destruction of traditional African and Caribbean indigenous societies? Is it possible to recreate societies that were destroyed? If so, then how can one conceptualize what the livelihood of Africans would be if they had never been violently ushered into enslavement? There needs to be a rethinking of what “whole again” means in terms of the descendants of the enslaved in the Americas.

Second, a fundamental weakness of the harm repair view is its integrationist praxis in acquiring justice.²⁰ It articulates a process of acquiring justice through policy recommendations and changes and therefore ignores that the global system engine is fuelled by racial capitalism. In other words, it does not deal with systemic transformation, just access to resources to place the victim in an equitable position. Furthermore, the harm repair view suggests that if the victims are provided with a specific set of resources, they should be able to engage within society in a “meaningful” manner (Táiwò, 2022). One can then ask: What if the victims end up falling short of society’s expectations after receiving recompense, due to systemic inequalities? In the case of the descendants of enslaved African people, would that mean that Black people are inherently inferior to white people? Lastly, what societal standards would be used to measure Black people’s “progress”? I raise these questions to illustrate that this approach does not consider the

²⁰ Black integrationist philosophy “was anchored in a firm belief in American democracy, and in the struggle to outlaw all legal barriers which restricted equal access and opportunities to minorities. It was linked to the politics of building coalitions with sympathetic white constituencies, aimed at achieving reforms within the context of the system.... [I]t sought the deracialization of the hierarchies of power within society and the economic system” (Marable, 1995, p. 187).

violence that racialized people have to face, such as systemic racism, which permeates the current global system (Táíwò, 2022).

Relationship Repair

The second approach, relationship repair, undertakes reparations to restore a damaged relationship, according to Táíwò. He argues that this process of fixing is not limited to one generation, as the hurting party includes people who have inherited the same identity as the original offenders, and the aggrieved party includes descendants with the same identity as the original victims. Conquest, enslavement, indentureship, and colonialism engendered numerous catastrophes in the Caribbean; they embody essential moral wrongdoings, violating individuals' humanity (later in the chapter, I discuss the notion of humanism in more detail). Unlike the harm repair view, which analyzes the victim's welfare in light of a historical wrongdoing, the relationship repair view focuses primarily on the moral principle (Táíwò, 2022). For example, the genocide committed against the Indigenous Peoples of the Caribbean by Europeans violently disrupted an initially more mutual relationship. To restore that social, political, and moral relationship between the Caribbean Indigenous Peoples and Europeans, reparations are the way to move forward. This approach can also be applied in thinking about the relationship between continental Africans and African Caribbean peoples, which was violently disrupted by transatlantic slavery.

In the relationship repair approach, Táíwò argues, atonement can take place in two ways: debt repayment and communicative repair. Debt repayment focuses on restoring the moral relationship. The goal is not necessarily the transaction but the outcome of the act of repayment—that is, to fix the relationship that was hampered by the moral wrongdoing (Táíwò, 2022). For example, several English-speaking Caribbean countries are indebted to the IMF

because of the imposed economic system. As a result, they are compelled to obtain financial loans that are accompanied by stringent conditions in the form of structural adjustment policies (Meeks, 2023), which restrict the political and economic autonomy of these nations. Waiving the debts of these countries would allow them some relief and enable their governments to make choices that are advantageous for their citizens. This leads to the second part of the relationship repair—the communicative repair. Debt repayment for a moral wrongdoing goes beyond just fulfilling a financial obligation. It is about creating a path for effective communication and restoring damaged relationships (Táíwò, 2022). According to Táíwò, if the offending party fails to take responsibility for their actions, it implies that the injured party deserved to be hurt and may not be seen as an equal. Expressing genuine regret for any harm caused is crucial in the process of repairing the relationship.

Similar to the harm repair view, the relationship repair approach has pros and cons. On the one hand, it recognizes that a vicious act was committed against a group, and there is a moral obligation to tend to that matter. The nonpayment of owed reparations is an ongoing injustice (Táíwò, 2022) and moral responsibility to rectify it falls on the accused (or their descendants). An example of this model is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, which addressed the country's residential school system and included financial compensation to Indigenous people, and was also seen as the moral duty of the Canadian government (Government of Canada, 2022).

On the other hand, there are essential setbacks to the relationship repair approach. The material outcome of atonement can become disconnected from the overall purpose of justice and slightly change the intent (Táíwò, 2022). Case in point, a government might give a statement of regret to underline a hurtful act that was committed without offering any material compensation

yet still fulfill its moral obligation to restore a healthy relationship. (A statement of regret differs from an apology since the latter admits that an injustice was done, and therefore some form of compensation must be given.) There, no action to restore the damaged relationship has been taken beyond offering lip service, which, in most cases, does not better the welfare of the offended party (Táíwò, 2022). Like the harm repair approach, the relationship repair view is constrained by the tools of racial capitalism. As Táíwò argues, it neglects the fact that reparations should concentrate on enhancing the current living conditions of those who receive them. This means that the same system that caused the damage may persist, potentially perpetuating the exploitation of the victim.

Constructive View

The constructive view, proposed by Táíwò, believes in new worldmaking for the undertaking of reparations. This approach seeks to transform social structures and arrangements that perpetuate systems of oppression and exploitation, rather than only address individual instances of harm or wrongdoing. The constructive view acknowledges the limitations of the harm repair and relationship repair approaches, which only compensate individuals or restore personal relationships without addressing the systemic injustices underlying them. Instead, it advocates for a more holistic approach that considers the broader social, political, and economic context in which harms occur. At the core of the constructive view is the recognition that the state apparatus plays a critical role in perpetuating racial capitalism and exploitation. Consequently, genuine reparations require a fundamental transformation of the state and its institutional structures. This shift necessitates moving away from the current neoliberal paradigm, which prioritizes individualism and market-based solutions, and towards a more collective and community-oriented approach that prioritizes the common good and resource

redistribution. Ultimately, the constructive view provides a compelling vision for achieving reparative justice that surpasses mere compensation or reconciliation. By addressing underlying causes of social and economic inequality, it strives towards creating a more just and equitable world. Moreover, it is not stagnant and does not adhere to one specific framework. Its notion of justice always evolves due to its fluid approach to new worldmaking.

Táíwò's constructive view of new worldmaking can be located within the framework of the Black radical tradition. According to Robinson (2000), the Black radical tradition is "an accretion, over generations, of collective intelligence gathering from struggle" (p. xxx). In other words, it involves a long history of political and social thought, activism, and resistance by Black individuals and communities in Africa and its diasporas. It encompasses diverse ideas and actions to challenge systemic racism, white supremacy, and various forms of oppression. From the first orchestrated slave rebellions in the slave dungeons on the African continent and on the slave ships, the enslaved were mobilized in relation to traditional African kingships (Robinson, 2000). The goal of these rebellions was to return to the African continent to continue a way of life that was disrupted by transatlantic slavery (Robinson, 2000). In the "New World," these forms of resistance took place in plantations across the Americas into the postemancipation period (Elnaiem, 2021), as exemplified by the Grenadian Revolution, and into the contemporary-modern world with social movements such as BLM. In each historical moment that displayed tenets of the Black radical tradition, race was the "epistemology, ordering principle, organizing structure, moral authority, economy of justice, commerce and power" (Robinson, 2000, p. xxxi). Therefore, the "purpose of the struggles informed by the tradition became the overthrow of the whole race-based structure" (Robinson, 2000, p. xxx). Robinson's articulation of the Black radical tradition was constructed in a search for grace, to affirm Blackness against its continuous

dehumanization (Robinson, 2019, introduction by Quan). Táíwò's constructive view takes on the tenets of grace in seeking to dismantle the global capitalist system and acquire justice for the dehumanized in the process of new worldmaking.

The constructive view is a step forward in advancing the reparations conversation from a transformative perspective, but it has its challenges. One of the primary issues is that it strays away from the main idea, which is redress (Táíwò, 2022). It approaches reparations from a global perspective, which appears to neglect how movements contextualize their realities in their advocacy for redress; for example, CARICOM and N'COBRA's demands for redress are articulated differently, although they both work from a harm repair perspective. Typically, when reparations are sought, they focus on the victim's welfare,²¹ but the constructive view articulates reparations as a global movement. Due to racial capitalism, liberation movements across the globe are connected, and, therefore, there need to be collaborations across borders in the new worldmaking project. It is safe to argue that Táíwò is proposing some form of new emancipation to reimagine society's structures. The limitation is that the local issues get lost in the larger ideas of new worldmaking.

Second, although the constructive view is one of the most progressive perspectives in conceptualizing reparations, it does not centre the victims in its analyses. Táíwò's argument for new worldmaking is geared towards transforming the instruments of the "global system of racial empire" to produce a just society submerged in decoloniality, but one crucial aspect missing is the conversion of the people's consciousness—the decolonization of the mind. People are not coming into the reparations discourse as blank slates; they have been informed by neoliberal structures, which articulate a notion of development in particular ways, and, as argued by

²¹ The CARICOM Reparations Commission's 10-point plan is an example of this approach. I explore the plan fully in Chapter 3.

DeGruy (2005), intergenerational trauma due to enslavement. Hence, the process of new worldmaking cannot be limited to the instruments of society. How can people create new systems if the colonial mindset is still present? A consciousness shift must also occur. Gordon Lewis (2010), in his analysis of the Grenadian Revolution, notes that one factor people did not consider is the colonial mindset (Western education) of the movement's leaders, which contributed to its downfall. Therefore, I propose in this dissertation a reparations discourse that extends Táíwò's constructive view and necessarily acknowledges the decolonization of the global system and the consciousness of the people (both the enslaved/colonized and enslaver/colonizer).

Part 2: An Alternative Reparations Perspective

The Caribbean Radical Imagination

In thinking of decolonial and creative ways to extend Táíwò's constructive view of reparations, my analysis gleans from the possibilities of the imagination. The concept of the imagination and its capabilities are fundamental to knowledge production in the Caribbean human liberation project. In speaking of the human liberation project, I reference Anthony Bogues' (2012) "freedom and human emancipation project" (p. 43), where he argues that freedom and emancipation are related but different. Emancipation, he states, is a single action that establishes a ground, whereas freedom is an act of creation that demands the capacity "to create and the repeatable enactment of such creation" (Bogues, 2012, p. 43). I analyze these ideas of freedom using Bogues' articulation of a "common association," setting a template of what a liberated Caribbean can work towards. Bogues provides possibilities for the Caribbean imagination to construct what liberation means after emancipation. He states that the imagination is a faculty that reproduces one's own "thrownness" and people's "everydayness," in a manner

that continues to reinforce the multiple “modes of our existence” and eventually serves to strengthen power in our everyday life (Bogues, 2012, p. 44). Theorist Donald Pease (2009, as cited in Bogues, 2012), in *The New American Exceptionalism*, makes the case that the imagination works with fantasy to fortify hegemony. The hegemonic ideas that are created can act as a prison for an oppressed group, particularly if that identified collective believes in a certain inferior/superior dialectic—for example, the slave/enslaver dialectic. The imagination can also take an alternative trajectory, where it is used to counter dominant narrative or hegemonic systems. The imagination can be a space to facilitate critical thought to challenge the everyday status quo (Bogues, 2012). For example, before Haiti became the first Black republic to achieve independence, there were several cases of covert and overt forms of resistance, which were crucial to the Haitian Revolution and the eventual liberation of the people (C. L. R. James, 1989). In order for the enslaved and free Blacks to participate in revolts, ideas about liberation had to be sparked in the imagination.

The radical imagination challenges the ideology and fantasy of Western hegemonic discourse to produce new thought and to be the catalyst for aspirations. Fanon’s (1952/2008) closing remarks in *Black Skin, White Masks* highlight the intervention of the radical imagination: “I must consistently remind myself that the real leap consists in introducing invention into life” (p. 204). As Bogues (2012) reminds us, Fanon encourages people to engage in the labour of the radical imagination—to imagine what a new human life can be like (p. 45). My argument is that Fanon’s intervention creates space to rethink the world and sets a precedent for liberation praxes that are delinked from Western ideologies, setting the groundwork for a decolonial undertaking of reparatory justice. It provides the entry point for scholarship and practices that have been negated by European epistemologies in the construction of “the human.” In other words, part of

the analysis of a reparations view in the new worldmaking trajectory is to rethink the notion of “the human.” Fanon (1952/2008) continues: “In the world I am heading for, I am endlessly creating myself” (p. 204).

With freedom, as explained by Bogue (2012), the invention of that new being is not limited to the act of self-creation but transcends the vision into practice that is repeatable. Additionally, these practices recognize the “full human experiences” (Bogue, 2012, p. 45) that take place across various terrains, such as politics, religion, music, and more. In conceptualizing the radical imagination, the new ideologies that are created to challenge the status quo must not only acknowledge imagery and theories but also embrace the action component: thought and practice, as in the Haitian Revolution. The “full human experiences” can be extended across disciplines in the conceptualization of the new human. One can rethink the political, economic, and legal (to name a few) systems of governance in the Caribbean space. However, these acts of radical imagining are not limited to Caribbean experiences in the deconstruction and reconstruction of the human, which has historically been established in the European/Other dialectic.²²

Decolonization of the “Self”: Frantz Fanon’s New Humanity/New Humanism

To further develop the constructive view in conceptualizing Caribbean reparations as a liberating praxis, Fanon’s notion of a new humanity serves as a cartography for grappling with ideas on decoloniality, which can then lead to human liberation. The argument is not that decolonization must occur from within first but that the internal and external aspects are intrinsically linked and work in a cycle. Working with the Caribbean radical imagination, Fanon

²² Historically, not all Europeans were considered white; take, for example, the Irish (Robinson, 2000). However, as the lines of whiteness became more inclusive to include all Europeans and their descendants, only racialized/colonized bodies were assigned the category of nonhuman.

diagnoses the colonized/colonizer dialectic and provides the necessary prescriptions (the decolonial and intellectual tools) to uproot the European model of the “human,” which maintains an imperial subjugation of racialized and disenfranchised bodies, but more specifically of Black life via racial capitalism. His critical work—*Black Skin, White Masks*), *A Dying Colonialism*, *Toward the African Revolution*, and *The Wretched of the Earth*—addresses themes such as race and class, violence, capitalism, and colonialism, socialism, and the revolutionary party; however, the idea that I am engaging with in his material is the new humanity/new humanism discourse.

Black Skin, White Masks speaks to the personal transformation that the colonized body²³ must go through to achieve liberation. The text is a foundational tool in understanding and unpacking the colonized (Black) experience in Western society and the native homeland using a psychoanalytical methodological approach. Here, Fanon (1952/2008) explores the psychoexistential emancipation of the colonized subject from what he called the “epidermalization of inferiority” (p. 92), where race is the determining factor of one’s humanity. In highlighting the colonial experience of the Black body, he asserts that once the colonial dialectic (the white/Black binary) is naturalized and ossified within a given society through dismantling the representation of the Other, it is then replaced with a racial schema. Fanon’s encounter on the train with a young white boy and his mother is a prime example of how Blackness (the Other) is imagined, constructed, and represented in the “developed” world. The child fails to perceive Fanon as a regular passenger, as a human, and thus becomes frightened by the racist associations with Black life, but more specifically the Black man:

“Look! A Negro!” It was a passing sting. I attempted a smile.

“Look! A Negro!” Absolutely. I was beginning to enjoy myself.

“Look! A Negro! The circle was gradually getting smaller. I was really enjoying myself.

²³ In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon (1952/2008) speaks to the Antillean experience; however, the same psychoanalytical framing can be used to understand the colonized/colonizer dialectic across the English-speaking Caribbean.

“Maman, Look, a Negro; I’m scared! Scared! Scared!”
...I wanted to kill myself laughing, but laughing had become out of the question. (Fanon, 1952/2008, p. 91)

The child’s act of seeing, of direct observation, is impacted by the assumptions of the colonial gaze. Colonial indoctrination limits his ability to see beyond the instrumentality of the dialectic, and inserts an inherently violent, uncivilized, and terrifying abstraction onto the body of the Black train passenger.

In thinking through the being/nonbeing analytical breakdown of the colonial dialectic, the work of Aimé Césaire resonates in naming the colonized position in Western epistemes that perpetuate a particular set of narratives on Blackness. Césaire (2002, as cited in Bogue, 2012) states that the colonial situation was not about “human contact but relations of domination and submission which turned the colonizing man into a classroom monitor, an army sergeant, a prison guard, a slave driver, and the Indigenous man into an instrument of production” (p. 36). The colonized person becomes the agent of the colonizer to continue Eurocentric hegemonies (neocolonialism), which further maintain the dehumanization of the racialized body. Moreover, in further describing the colonial process of giving nonhuman status to the colonized, Césaire asserts that “colonization = thingification” (2002, as cited in Bogue, 2012, p. 42). Césaire’s breakdown of the colonial dialectic can be observed in Fanon’s (1952/2008) train experience with the child, where the Antillean (colonized) becomes the representation of the “nonhuman” in the white imagination. Fanon’s interaction with the child and Césaire’s breakdown of colonization highlight the relationship between the colonized and colonizer, which is not strictly rooted in the state’s apparatus. There, one can observe the significance of decolonizing the mind for both the colonized and colonizer in order to engage in new worldbuilding.

In the introduction to *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon argues for a new humanism (p. xi), a reimagining of “human” and deconstruction of the concept as articulated by Western society, which has limited both the colonized and the colonizer, but more specifically the Black body, which has become a mere object to the colonizer. He states that the colonized develop an inferiority complex in a double process: first, the economic, and then, the internalization. Moreover, besides the economic restrictions on the colonized body, Fanon argues that there is in the hegemonic understanding, rooted in Western thought, of the subordinate Black body. This in turn is reflected in how society views the Other through the colonial or Western gaze and thus influences how the colonized think of themselves, which connects to Pease’s (2009, as cited in Bogues, 2012) argument on the role of the imagination in fortifying hegemonic ideas. In the conclusion of *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon notes, “O my body, always make me a man who questions” (p. 206), and proposes possibilities where the Black body is self-emancipated from colonial subjection. The practice of questioning and reimagining opens the door to challenging and rethinking Western epistememes, which in turn unlocks decolonial opportunities to pursue reparations.

In speaking to the liberation of the colonized subject, Fanon highlights the acquisition of that true freedom through a collective struggle. A decolonial approach to Caribbean reparations mirrors his ideas. The notion that liberation ought to take place through group working relationships provides the Caribbean redress initiative with a template for moving forward and implementing decolonial praxes. My intention is not to limit Fanon’s concept of a new humanity to “group collaborations,” but to apply his methodology to consider ways of reimagining how the Caribbean person attains liberation through collective radical (decolonial) struggle. A decolonial and collective struggle for reparations can possibly transform the everyday Caribbean person’s

psychological, political, and cultural consciousness. In speaking to the role of a “common consciousness” or in Bogue’s (2012) words, “common association,”²⁴ in the aspiration to develop a “new humanity” through a united front, Fanon (1961/2004) asserts:

This new humanity, for itself and others, inevitably defines a new humanism. This new humanism is written into the objectives and methods of struggle. A struggle, which mobilizes on every level of society, which expresses the intentions and expectations of the people, and which is not afraid to rely on their support almost entirely, will invariably triumph. (p. 178)

Fanon’s idea of a new humanity, as proposed in *The Wretched of the Earth*, is an approach to decolonization that achieves the highest level of creativity and cultural development, recognizing creative imagination in its analyses and thus creating an entry point for theorizing a Caribbean radical imagination. His access point to humanism ruptures the epistemes of European thought and encourages us to think through alternative praxes of liberation rooted in the imagination of the decolonized subject. He stresses the importance of the imagination in dismantling colonialism and mindsets imposed on the colonized through struggle. Additionally, Fanon locates the everyday people as central to the processes of liberation. It is through decolonial struggle with the general public that there is space for new epistemologies to be created. Moreover, the bulk of the responsibility does not rest on the bodies of a select few. Fanon’s proposed praxis is reflective of the “guerrilla intellectual”—that is, his method is in conversation with “points of struggle,” meaning that intellectuals must attach themselves “to the activity of the Black masses” (Rodney, 2001, p. 63). Fanon’s new humanism emphasizes that the “Third World” must discard European thought and create solutions for their development by using their Indigenous African knowledge.

²⁴ Bogue (2012) described “common association” as “a way of life” that includes the following: “(1) practices of radical equality beyond procedural equality; (2) an expanded notion of rights that includes housing, health, and education, a bundle of rights that might be called social; and (3) the development of participatory forms of democracy” (pp. 40–41).

The ownership of new worldmaking is not limited to racialized people and the Global South; it is a process that requires everyone's participation. The idea of a new humanity and the deconstruction and reconstruction of a world inspired by liberated bodies (the descendants of the enslaved and colonized) is also a theme in Fanon's (1959/1965) *A Dying Colonialism*. The text speaks to his experience during the Algerian Revolution in the National Liberation Front, which fought France for independence. In this work, one of Fanon's undertakings is the use of Algeria as a live case study to assess the nation, colonialism, its symptoms, and the bodies of the colonized and colonizer. Through anticolonial movements, he explores the occasion as a possible antidote to colonialism. He alludes to the concept of new humanism within the context of the Algerian Revolution:

The new relations are not the results of one barbarism replacing another barbarism, of one crushing of man replacing another crushing of man. What we Algerians want is to discover the man behind the colonizer; this man who is both the organizer and the victim of a system that has choked him and reduced him to silence. (Fanon, 1959/1965, p. 32)

In the above passage, part of the new humanity philosophy is clear: the goal of this new "being" is not to replace the European notion of the "human" with similar "savage" behaviours, such as slavery and colonialism, but rather to dismantle the West's system of knowledge production and substitute it with values that recognize the humanity of all, not just the colonized but the colonizer as well. On the final page, in the book's conclusion, Fanon elaborates that the "true" revolution changes "man" and society (p. 181). Consequently, the new humanity cannot be achieved solely on the part of the formerly colonized or enslaved. The dialectic must include the "organizer" of the white supremacist, capitalist, and patriarchal system that has dehumanized Black life and racialized bodies globally.

In *Toward the African Revolution*, the praxis of "true" human liberation is also displayed through Fanon's revolutionary actions during the Algerian Revolution. He echoes similar ideas

on the possibilities of a new humanity through anticolonial movements, where “authentic national liberation” (Fanon, 1964/1967, p. 103) occurs through collective struggle. Tracing the theme of a new humanism in the work of Fanon shows that to establish that new person, first, a formerly colonized individual through collective (anticolonial or decolonial) struggle must relinquish the ideologies of elitism rooted in European colonialism and perpetuated through North American neocolonial principles, which govern their livelihood. Second, through that collective struggle, the conscious body can conceptualize something new or revisit past discourses that are in competition with European articulations of the human, and thus open up space to transcend into this new being. The argument is that collective struggle enables the articulation of a new humanity and, by extension, can produce a new way of thinking about reparatory justice. Fanon’s notion of a new humanity offers the tools for reimagining what a decolonial reparations framework can be in the new worldmaking.

Sylvia Wynter’s Genres of Man in Making a Case for a Decolonial Reparations Framing

To strengthen the argument about extending Táíwò’s constructive view to include internal liberation of the self, I examine Fanon’s framework of new humanism in conversation with Wynter’s conceptualization of the “genres of the man.” In her dialectical conversation with Katherine McKittrick in the text *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis* (2015), Wynter proposes that three main events explain the universe’s genesis, our realities, and ourselves. “The First Event is the origin of the universe; the Second Event is the explosion of all forms of biological life” (p. 31), and the Third Event is the “origin of the human,” or the creation of *homo narrans*, a human with storytelling abilities that emerged from Africa. However, she argues, the Third Event has become dominated by European epistemologies, which have stunted the growth of the modern human, and therefore, it needs to be deconstructed and reimagined. Similar to

Fanon in his breakdown of the notions of the human, Wynter argues that an alternative concept must be constructed that is independent from Western epistemologies' articulation of "man." In her analysis of the praxis of "man," she classifies the human according to three categories: Man1 (*homo politicus*), Man2 (*homo oeconomicus*), (Wynter, 2006, pp. 122–123), and the third site (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015, p. 23), which has yet to be completed. In her analytical deconstruction of Man1 and Man2, Wynter (2006) states:

The humanist intellectuals of the Renaissance Europe replaced the earlier public identity Christian with that of the newly invented Man defined as *homo politicus*, and as such, primarily the political subject of the state. It was therefore to effect this secularization of its public identity by overrepresenting both its first variant of Man, defined as political citizen and/or subject of the state, and from the end of the 18th century onward, its second variant of Man—defined in now purely secular, because biocentric, terms as *homo oeconomicus*, and, as such, primarily as the Breadwinner/Investor subject of the nation-state—as if each such definitions of Man were at the same time definitions of the human itself. (pp. 122–123)

Man1 and Man2 are overrepresented and have moulded knowledge production in the Western world. In Wynter's analyses of the genres of man, one can see how the notion of the human has been conceptualized in the white imagination. Wynter's argument for a renaissance of the "human" as part of the transformative process of the Third Event complements Fanon's proposal for a new humanity. Wynter asserts the necessity of a new humanism that reexamines the historical Western makeup of the human, where racialized bodies (specifically Black life) are categorized as "nonbeings." These discourses have perpetuated anti-Black ideologies that manifest in the lived experiences of the colonized and colonizer, as evident in Fanon's encounter with the young boy on the train.

Wynter theorizes that Man1 sprouted out of the Renaissance as Christian Man, which was further articulated as *homo politicus*. This formation of the human was a response to encounters in the "New World" (Alagraa, 2018), in the wake of European expansion via primitive accumulation. Prior to Europe's expansion, the idea of the human was rooted in *homo religiosus*,

grounded in the “hegemonic and theologically absolute Scholastic order of knowledge” (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015, p. 15) during the medieval Latin-Christian European era. Christian beliefs were the template for the construction of the human through whiteness, and Christianity itself negated the racialized Other since that category of life fell outside of the religion’s framework of being.²⁵ The Copernicus leap created the premise for Man1, which would later morph from “Man-as-moral” into “Man-as-rational and political” (Alagraa, 2018, p. 165) in order to reflect the secular changes taking place in Europe. Copernicus’s proposal that the earth orbited the sun challenged the medieval Latin-Christian belief that saw the earth as a static mass located at the centre of the universe and prioritized “man” as the primary factor of the solar system (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015, pp. 13–15). The Copernicus Renaissance countered the monotheistic poetics of the “Heaven/Earth divide” and placed “man” in a precarious position (the fallen man), where “man” now had to self-govern according to “its/his reason” (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015, p. 15). Although *homo religiosus* differs from *homo politicus* in Wynter’s theory, Man1 grows from the theological order of epistemes (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015) that centralize whiteness. Copernicus’s postulations led *homo religiosus* through a process of reinvention to become *homo politicus* (Man1), whose poetics countered the *mythoi*, the origin story (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015, pp. 10–11), of the church and positioned “man” in a more active role in its destiny as a “rational citizen” (Wynter, 2006), a trajectory of life that is rooted in the white imagination.

In Wynter’s argument, the epistemological breaking of Man1 from *homo religiosus* via the Copernicus leap creates space to transform *homo politicus* into the contemporary postmodernist concept of “man”—*homo oeconomicus* (Man2)—through the intervention of

²⁵ Although some theological scholars have argued that Christianity has its foundation on the African continent, Wynter’s (2006) argument is that Europe’s notion of “man” during the medieval period was imagined in ignorance of the world and racialized groups who were not Christian in Europeans’ eyes and thus were considered “heathens” and “savages” (including the Irish and Christian-practising Africans).

Darwinism (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015). On the one hand, she notes, *homo politicus* establishes the understanding of the human from a *mythoi* perspective—that is, “man,” as narrated through the ideas of Christianity, was transformed into the human as a political subject of the state, as a logical being. On the other hand, the *homo oeconomicus* framing of the human was developed from a *bios* (biocentric) perspective through the natural sciences (Wynter, 2006), which promoted eugenics²⁶ in their understanding of the human. The Darwinian intervention worked with the natural sciences to “prove” the various stages of life, and the European construction of man was equated with the final stage of humanity. With *homo oeconomicus*, the racialized Other is still outside of the bracket of humanity; the “heathens and savages” are closer to the category of ape in the classification of living organisms and seen as the missing link between primates and the fully advanced “Western European humans” (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015, p. 31). Darwin’s philosophy is used to articulate the European as the “naturally” selected, whereas racialized bodies, or the “Black/Native/Other,” are the “naturally” rejected. The naturally selected are classified as the “breadwinners,” whereas the rest are “labourers” (Alagraa, 2018; Wynter, 2006; Wynter & McKittrick, 2015).

The separation of the *mythoi* and *bio* has its origin in racist ideologies, where whiteness is situated at the top of the racial hierarchy. According to Wynter’s (2006) construction of the representation or overrepresentations of “man,” the Black body sits outside the framework of human. The “white supremacist, capitalist and patriarchal” (hooks, 1997) epistemes that are

²⁶ The eugenics movement aimed to “improve” the qualities of human beings by selecting desirable traits. Practitioners and believers in the movement studied large families to identify the appearance of unwanted traits and demonstrate a genetic pattern that works through biological inheritance. The aim was to remove such traits from the population (Norrgard, 2008). However, the science intersected with a racist discourse that considered racialized people, specifically people of African descent, as undesirable nonhumans. This discourse became the central ideation of race theory, used to justify genocide, transatlantic slavery, and other acts of violence towards “undesirable” bodies.

rooted in Man1 and Man2 have perpetuated European thought in the social, political, and economic governance of the world and its systems (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015), including the education, healthcare, and justice systems. Consequently, they have created and maintained racist discourse where racialized bodies, particularly people of African descent, are constantly thingified or reside in the category of “nonbeing” (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015). These sets of knowledge production gave rise to and justified transatlantic slavery and other inhumane experiences in contemporary Black life, such as the prison industrial complex (Davis, 2000). Moreover, the continuous dehumanization of Black bodies postemancipation has been maintained through racial capitalism (Brissot & Jules, 2023). Bogue, in *Black Heretics, Black Prophets; Radical Political Intellectuals* (2003), uses Césaire’s *Discourse of Colonialism* to interrogate the Western world’s violent and discriminatory ideologies around the human:

And that is the great thing I hold against pseudo-humanism: that for too long it has diminished the rights of man, that its concept of those rights has been—and still is—narrow and fragmentary, incomplete and biased and all things considered, sordidly racist. (p. 37)

Césaire’s criticism, similar to that of Wynter and Fanon, leaves an opening for a Caribbean radical imagination to intervene in constructing a concept of a new humanity that is disconnected from European epistemes.

As noted earlier, the current transnational system of knowledge works within the *homo oeconomicus* framework. A “‘single model’ liberal (now neoliberal) monohumanist Western/Westernized transnational world system” (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015, p. 32) now dominates. This analysis speaks to Kamugisha’s (2019) construct of the present-day “Caribbean situation” as a mixture of “neocolonialism, postcolonial elite domination, and neoliberalism” (p. 1). What does it mean for Black life if the *homo oeconomicus* conceptualization of the human governs the world system? As highlighted prior, in the articulation of Man2, Europeans see

Blackness as residing between primates (located in Africa) and the fully evolved European human being. Therefore, Wynter argues that the racialized Other is, in the white imagination, still in a state of “nonbeing.” This is clearly visible in the public lynching of Black bodies, made available for consumption and reconsumption at will on social media platforms, as exemplified by the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Eric Garner, Daunte Wright, and many other Black people in the Americas, by white perpetrators (mostly law enforcement).

In the Caribbean, lynching occurs through an economic lens, which can be witnessed in the unequal and exploitative relationship the Global North has with the Global South via neoliberal transnational financial institutions (Meeks, 2023). For instance, the IMF and World Bank continue their exploitation of the Caribbean space through the implementation of economic regulations, such as structural adjustment policies, that limit the development of Caribbean nations or direct their “progress” to resemble American neoliberalism, so most tend to see little growth and more economic turmoil while a selected few benefit (Brissot & Jules, 2023; Brown, 2017; Escobar, 1995). Where the *homo politicus* human was rooted in “reason” and deviated from Latin-Christian medieval European beliefs, the secular break into *homo oeconomicus* has seen the neoliberal economic system become the “theology” that governs everyday life (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015, p. 26). Therefore, a new or alternative perspective of the human is necessary to attain the liberation of not just the colonized and the formerly enslaved but also the colonizer and enslaver. Like Fanon, Wynter, in moving forward, identifies the need to dismantle Eurocentric epistemologies of violent dominance, rather than have Blackness claim power and replicate hypotheses that exploit non-Black people, or even Black people via Black capitalism.

Wynter makes an intervention in delinking from Western epistemes with the third level (liberation of the human) of the “Third Event” (the praxis of being human). She suggests that the

third site is the premise of the Third Event, which is neither *mythoi* nor *bio* but a hybridity of both constructs of the human, which she conceptualizes as *homo narrans*. For Wynter, that hybridity is in constant motion and is constantly being reinvented, where the *mythoi* is in co-evolution with the *bio*:

I identify the Third Event in Fanonian-adapted terms as the origin of the human as a hybrid-auto-instituting-languaging-storytelling species: *bios/mythoi*. The Third Event is defined by the singularity of the co-evolution of the human brain *with*—and, unlike those of all the other primates, *with it alone*—the emergent faculties of language, storytelling. This co-evolution must be understood concomitantly with the uniquely *mythmaking* region of the human brain. (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015, p. 25)

In the above passage, Wynter asserts that the Third Event is a hybrid *bios/mythoi* centralized around language, storytelling, and verbal capabilities that only humans (including the racialized Other) have. As explored in this section, in the Eurocentric articulation of the human, the ideas of Man1 and Man2 have functioned independently of each other, and racialized bodies have been categorized as “nonbeings.” Wynter has now argued that both categories, in their isolated state, are rooted in Eurocentric ideologies and have kept human beings (*mythoi* and *bio*) static in being fully human, in being truly *homo narrans* in the hybridity of their co-evolution through storytelling and co-relations with the brain (natural sciences). Therefore, Wynter builds from Fanon’s arguments of ontogeny and sociogeny (the development of social phenomenon; Alagraa, 2018, p. 166), and his intervention of a new humanity. She points to the African continent, the same dehumanized and exploited region that produces “nonbeings” in the white imagination, as the site of the third level (liberation of the human) of the Third Event (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015, p. 31).

In her effort to further delink the third level of the Third Event from a Eurocentric construct, Wynter argues that Africa can be that third site to birth a new consciousness. She suggests, like Fanon’s interjection with his sociogenic principle, that there must be a discarding

of European understanding and expressions of the human. The European articulation of the human has allowed for continued exploitation and death of racialized bodies. The current *homo oeconomicus* framing of world governance through a neoliberal monohumanist school of thought, inter alia, has resulted in climate change, genocide, and poverty. Wynter's Third Event and Fanon's new humanity coincide in the epistemological break of sociogeny. Fanon makes the case for a new humanity through collective struggle and emphasizes the need to create a new being detached from European influences and acknowledges both the oppressed and oppressor throughout his work. Wynter, in her conversational exchanges with McKittrick, also refers to new epistemologies that are created through struggle (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015). However, Wynter articulates that this hybrid *bios/mythoi* is already in existence via the Third Event but is dominated by the Eurocentric constructs of Man1 and Man2 (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015). Wynter then proposes this "new humanity" (as argued by Fanon) or third level of the hybrid *bios/mythoi* is situated on the African continent, which is the foundational point of the authentic human—*homo narrans* (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015, p. 31).

Like most theories, Wynter's proposed hybrid *mythoi/bio* does come with limitations. One critique I offer is that Wynter's knowledge production in creating new epistemologies that are independent of Eurocentric ways of being and knowing operates from a site of the intelligentsia class, which is hard for the everyday person to access. It is difficult to translate her ideas into policies and governance, which influence the "bread and butter" issues of the ordinary people. Take, for example, the language she uses to articulate and describe racial capitalism. The terms *homo politicus* and *homo oeconomicus*, in most cases, are not part of the language of persons outside academic institutions. Wynter requires interlocutors to access and translate her work; thus, there is a disconnect between Wynter and everyday people's material reality. One

can then pose the question: How can the general populace engage with Wynter's work in thinking of freedom from the institutions that exploit them? I am proposing then, to bring Wynter's ideas about the third level into conversation with Rodney's praxis of decolonization and Kelley's nine theses of decolonization (which I address in the next section) to think about what an alternative reparations discourse looks like—one that is grounded in the needs and experiences of the people negotiating everyday legacies of colonization in the Caribbean. After all, Wynter's analysis of racial capitalism and argument for the third level of the Third Event create space to think of the possibilities of reparatory justice in new worldmaking.

Decolonization and Reparations

Where Fanon and Wynter provide the template for internal liberation, Kelley (2003, 2021), like Táíwò (2022), offers approaches for decolonizing the institutional structures that reproduce white supremacy through racial capitalism. Kelley argues that reparations should not be a binary opposite of decolonization; rather, the two must be in sync with each other in articulating Black futures that are detached from Eurocentric epistemologies and ontologies. For Kelley, decolonization raises two fundamental questions: “What is required to reverse 500 years of history to make a new world?” and “How can we think of reparations and decolonization as complementary processes rather than at odds?” (2021, 32:44). He further argues that reparations are not about finance, but about justice and reconciliation in fostering futures that eradicate all forms of racism and exploitation. There, one can see the common thread with Fanon's concept of new humanism, Wynter's postulation of the *homo narrans*, and Táíwò's constructive view of reparations. Fanon's new humanism argues for creating a new world that is not limited to the Eurocentric imagination, recognizing the role of the colonized/colonizer dialectic in the liberation movement. Wynter's arguments about the third level of the Third Event call for a

global liberation that is not located in Western epistemology. Táíwò's constructive view is concerned with creating a just system that engages with "material and social resources, formal rules and norms, and also with informal patterns of attention and care" (2022, p. 97). Kelley's central ideas on decolonization and reparations can be put into conversation with Fanon's, Wynter's, and Táíwò's notions of liberation in thinking of Black futures, and more specifically Caribbean futures and the matter of atonement in the process of new worldmaking.

Kelley's (2021) nine theses of decolonization support a vision of reparations that counters the main neoliberal reparations views. Thesis 1 states that redress cannot occur using the same oppressive instruments grounded in racial capitalism; rather, reparations must undermine these mechanisms. There, one can observe how Kelley's assertion aligns with, Táíwò's, and Fanon's position on the role of decoloniality in the framing of former colonized nations' sovereignty. Moreover, it speaks to Wynter's construction of the contemporary global order as a "neoliberal monohumanist episteme system"—a system that is built on racial capitalism (and has produced *homo oeconomicus*).

Thesis 2 asserts that "the question of land is fundamental to decolonization" (Kelley, 2021, 1:07:14) and that an expression of freedom that is not rooted in ownership or private property is needed. Where Fanon spoke to the decolonization of the mind and subsequently the economy in the new humanity discourse, Kelley has pushed the argument further by recognizing in his analyses the decolonization of life itself, which includes occupied land (via colonialism and settler colonialism). This places Indigenous people at the forefront of the praxis in contesting environmental racism and racial capitalism. Moreover, the conversation on Indigenous Peoples' land can be extended to recognize collective land rights. In applying Kelley's second thesis, a critical evaluation must occur in reparations frameworks of tenets of "development," specifically

regarding infrastructure that can be detrimental to the environment. Thesis 3 continues the dialogue on land, underlining the relationship between spirituality and the land; because the land is connected to spiritual practices for Indigenous Peoples (and also arguably for Black people of the Caribbean, such as the Maroons, and the African continent), loss of land means spiritual theft. This conversation on spiritual theft becomes more complicated in thinking of the Africans who were stolen from their land and relocated to the Americas. Treating land as property entails borders and facilitates policing and surveillance, and, therefore, “we can’t begin to think about reparations let alone decolonization” (Kelley, 202, 1:08:45) if we do not rethink the way we talk about and practise ownership of land (and the reclaiming of spiritual practices associated with land). This leads to more questions that need to be explored in thinking about decolonial praxes against private property and land ownership not only for Indigenous Caribbean people but for the Africans violently relocated to the Americas.

Theses 4 and 5 continue the discussion on decolonization and reparations working together. According to Kelley, Thesis 4 demands the abolition of all types of oppression and violence. This means, for instance, dismantling the military and prisons, opening borders, eliminating the body of constraints that enforce the heteronormativity of gender and sexuality (the oldest war is the one to control women’s bodies), and liberating LGBT2QI and Two-Spirited people. In his construction of true freedom, Kelley advocates strongly for recognizing the limits of the neoliberal construction of reparations, which negates such central principles in working towards a decolonized world. Thesis 5 advocates for authentic self-determination for all oppressed nations. In Kelley’s decolonial framing, the struggles of Indigenous Peoples, together with Africans’, are essential. Thesis 5 is critical of sovereign nations that still cling to treaties where Indigenous populations are colonized people on their own land and treated as such

through the “liberal monohumanist” practices of law and order, which have been used to carry out “precedented lawlessness” (Kelley, 2021, 1:10:10). (Arguments can also be made that Maroon sovereign nations such as the Accompong in Jamaica made treaties with former colonial parties in order to gain their autonomy; Johnson, 2015; Patterson, 1970). Like Fanon, Wynter, Lorde (1984), Táíwò (2022), and George Beckford (1999), Kelley believes that genuine self-determination cannot manifest within the structures and constitutions that encourage exploitation. Whereas many decolonial and anticolonial thinkers are critical of the liberal and neoliberal systems but do not provide a way to move forward, Kelley suggests there need to be censuses and participatory models that explore democratic forms of governance that existed before European invasion.

Thesis 6 demands the decolonization of history and thought to end epistemic violence through education (Kelley, 2021). Again, there is a connection to Fanon and Wynter’s proposals to dismantle or delink from Eurocentric epistemologies and ontologies in constructing liberation narratives or praxes. Kelley uses history as an example of where mainstream thought articulates time and space from the colonizer’s perspective. He argues not just for a change in the site of history from the colonizer to the colonized but rather for a rethinking of how history is told, which can include time as nonlinear. He offers a case study of the blues genre that uses Amiri Baraka’s framework of “blues time,” which “stretches, it’s flexible, it’s simultaneously in the moment, in the past *and* in the future” (Kelley, 2021, 1:11:57). In *A Dying Colonialism*, Fanon (1959/1965) asserted that freedom does not come from replacing one form of violence (colonial) with another (from the colonized), but rather from creating liberation fronts that recognize the humanity in persons (p. 32).²⁷ There, one can observe how Kelley’s proposition of

²⁷ This humanity is not constructed according to the Eurocentric notion of the “human” but is based on the decolonized imagination of the descendants of the “living corpses” (Bogues, 2012).

decolonization is in continuous conversation with thinkers such as Fanon. Drawing from Amilcar Cabral, Kelley concludes Thesis 6 by urging us to think of futures that create space to work with new challenges, new visions, contradictions, and struggles since there is little guarantee that liberated futures are near and colonialism has violently disrupted the advancement of African people.

The last three theses bring the decolonization and reparations discourse full circle and continue the intellectual exchanges with Fanon's, Wynter's, and Táíwò's work. For Thesis 7, Kelley resumes his critique of the liberal monohumanist global system's capacity to carry out acts of reparations and decolonization ethically and justly. He further emphasizes that the liberal democratic state is built on colonial domination and capitalist exploitation. Using the law as a case study, he underlines the limitations of trying to achieve redress by working within the modern state. To avoid engaging with the same legal mechanisms the exploiters use to justify their crimes against humanity, Kelley refers to using Indigenous legal methods to hold exploiter nations accountable.²⁸ Thesis 8 states that decolonization is not an "event" but a process that has not been completed anywhere. Moreover, power cannot be dismantled or gained just through protest; the deconstruction of the colonial projects and *homo oeconomicus* global system requires more work (Kelley, 2021). Thesis 9 pays homage to recently deceased Caribbean radical thinker and activist Andaiye (2020), who shared that "the point is to change the world." We must imagine new ways of being in the decolonization processes, which will result in a new world that leads to the end of nations, such as the United States and Canada (Kelley, 2021), and the *homo oeconomicus* global system.

²⁸ In Chapter 4, my work explores TWAIL as a decolonial intervention to hold Britain accountable for its crimes against humanity, including transatlantic slave trade and chattel slavery.

Kelley's nine theses offer alternative approaches to imagining a decolonial articulation of the Caribbean reparations movement. He underlines the importance of decolonizing institutional structures that reproduce racial capitalism in advocating for restitution for conquest, genocide, and transatlantic slavery. Equally important, he takes up the Indigenous question in more practical ways, which must be considered when thinking of reparations in the Caribbean. In the Caribbean context, Kelley's theses open the door to a more robust conversation on government-led reparatory justice. Like Táíwò, Kelley provides the ground to explore multiple frameworks that recognize the marginalized (primarily Indigenous Peoples) at the centre of the redress conversation in order to imagine new worlds. His arguments point toward an epistemology that interrogates and deconstructs the Caribbean's postcolonial structures, which have allowed for continuities of colonialism via neocolonialism, keeping the region in shackles.²⁹

Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored three reparations views to provide the foundation for how I am conceptualizing a liberation praxis for reparations for conquest, enslavement, and colonialism in the Caribbean context. Gleaning from the work of Táíwò, Fanon and Wynter, I discussed two main views of restitution - harm repair and relationship repair - and the radical approach to redress, the constructive view. The harm repair view looks at the historical wrongs experienced by a victim and aims to raise the victim's welfare to the level it would have reached if they had not been wronged, at the expense of the offending party. The relationship repair view aims to

²⁹ In using the word "shackles" to describe the Caribbean situation, I am thinking beyond economics to Western cultural values that inform Caribbean culture and have roots in the value system of the plantocracy governance of the region, which is rooted in anti-Black racism. In addition are the cultural values that steadily influence the Caribbean through mainstream media and social platforms such as CNN, BBC, BET, Instagram, Facebook, and so on.

restore a relationship that was damaged due to an immoral act. The two approaches serve their purpose within the neoliberal state. On the other hand, Táíwò's constructive view contributes to the new worldmaking discourse by advocating for the dismantlement of oppressive systems that continue to exploit racialized people, specifically people of African descent. However, it falls short by not addressing the decolonization process that people must go through to imagine a just world.

I argued for a decolonial framework that engages with internal liberation and systemic transformation. I focused on the decolonization of the mind by synthesizing Fanon's concept of new humanity and Wynter's notion of genres of man to deconstruct the Eurocentric epistemologies and ontologies that have been used to construct the "human" and "nonbeing." Racialized people have been grouped in the "nonbeing" category (as the racialized Other), which is part of how historical atrocities such as the genocide of Caribbean Indigenous Peoples and African enslavement were justified. This dehumanization is further exacerbated globally with North-South relationships. Fanon and Wynter offer a cartography for thinking of new ways of being that are independent of European thought, which opens the door to imagining different types of decolonial reparations frameworks. Building on Táíwò's constructive view with the new humanism discourse and exploring Kelley's nine theses of decolonization opens up space to think of Indigenous practical praxes in new worldmaking. In the upcoming chapter, I scrutinize the mainstream government-led redress movement in the Caribbean, CARICOM's reparations campaign, using the framework I have elaborated in this chapter, and underline how various groups in the region have taken up restitution.

Chapter 3:

“Revolution”—A Case for Caribbean Reparations

*It takes a revolution to make a solution;
Too much confusion, so much frustration, eh!
I don't wanna live in the park;
Can't trust no shadows after dark, yeah-eh!
So, my friend, I wish that you could see,
Like a bird in the tree, the prisoners must be free, yeah!*

– Bob Marley (1974c), “Revolution”

In this chapter, I examine the diverse ways in which reparations are articulated in the Caribbean, and explore the question: How is the case for Caribbean reparations being made? The chapter is split into two main parts. The first speaks on examples of grassroots reparations movements for transatlantic slavery and African chattel enslavement in the Americas, mainly in the Caribbean, then looks at examples of financial recompense; the second explores CARICOM’s reparations campaign and theorizes how the mainstream government-led undertaking has become the forefront of the contemporary-modern redress movement in the Caribbean. I interrogate how CARICOM’s machinery reproduces coloniality and maintains the “neocolonialism, postcolonial elite domination, and neoliberalism” (Kamugisha, 2019, p. 1) of the Caribbean space, consequently limiting the possibilities of transformative new worldmaking.

Part 1: Grassroots Reparations Movements

Early Reparations and Revolutionary Movements in the Americas

This interrogation of the mainstream restitution campaign undertaken by CARICOM starts with examining the origin story of reparatory justice in the Caribbean. Before the 20th-century repatriation claims of Marcus Garvey’s UNIA and Rastafari, there were already movements and discussions among people of African descent about the need for reparative

interventions (W. James, 1998). I explore some of the resistance movements and revolutions, grounded in the Black radical tradition, that continually disrupted the functioning of the colonizer's liberal monohumanist societies in the Americas. In these examples, one can observe the centrality of land to liberation, which ties into Kelley's (2021) second thesis of decolonization on the question of land. Moreover, to establish free communities, the African person ("fugitive," marooned or liberated) needed to disrupt the plantocracy societies and have a conscious awareness that the construction of their lives was not limited to the *homo politicus* and *homo oeconomicus* notion of the "nonhuman" or the "savage." I illustrate that these acts of resistance in community and consciousness building to escape slavery exemplify Wynter's (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015) notion of the third level of the Third Event.

The various forms of resistance in the Americas, such as Maroon settlements in Jamaica, quilombos in Brazil, Garifuna in St. Vincent, the Haitian Revolution, and Marcus Garvey and the UNIA, particularly where free settlements were created, can be seen as examples of reparatory justice premised on new worldmaking that included access to land and liberated consciousness. The groups in these examples contested the plantation societies and the devaluing of Black life in the Americas by creating alternative ways of being centred on access to land, while contesting private property and land ownership via liberatory praxes. My brief exploration of these case studies is not intended to be exhaustive or reproduce material already investigated by scholars, activists, or artists. Instead, I seek to underscore the significance of land and a liberated consciousness in establishing alternative realities as a way to map the complexity of decoloniality and reparations frameworks that challenge CARICOM's reparations campaign. Moreover, important to note in these histories is that restitution is not limited to financial recompense.

Maroon Settlements in Jamaica. One of the earliest examples of reparatory justice and new worldmaking in the Anglophone Caribbean occurred during the First Maroon War of Jamaica (1728–1739). The conflict involved the British colonial authorities and a group of African freedom seekers who had fled enslavement and created their own settlements in the country’s rugged interior (Johnson, 2015; Patterson, 1970). The etymology of the word “maroon” is contested, but some scholars have argued that it originated from the Spanish word *cimarron*, which means wild cattle (Johnson, 2015). Initially linked to property and nonhuman entities such as livestock, the term was first used to refer to escaped Africans in a 1626 document, in which it described Africans who had created autonomous communities in the interior of Jamaica after escaping their Spanish enslavers (Johnson, 2015). Johnson (2015) explains that the word came to define individuals who revolted and courageously stood up against the oppressive system. It is safe to argue that Africans embraced the term during uprisings to strike fear into their oppressors; therefore, acknowledging the mentality of the enslaved Africans before the revolts is imperative. To carry out acts of resistance, a liberatory consciousness was needed to disrupt the binary construction of the human and nonhuman (C. L. R. James, 1989). The revolts by the Jamaican Maroons and their creation of settlements exemplify this type of liberatory praxes.

Under Spanish colonial rule in Jamaica, marronage—a form of slave escape in the Caribbean and Latin America, marking a constructive effort by enslaved individuals to resist their oppressive circumstance and forge a path to freedom (Roberts, 2015)—had been prominent from 1509 to 1655. In the last years of Spanish dominance in Jamaica, from 1655 to 1660, three Maroon camps aided the Spanish in their fight against the British (Robinson, 2000). When the Spanish colonizers were defeated and left Jamaica, 1,500 Africans became free (Patterson,

1970). They would eventually move to the hills and join the Maroon settlements. For the next 30 years, these African Maroon communities, a result of Spanish colonialism, fizzled out of the colonial history books (Patterson, 1970). They were next mentioned again when freedom-seeking Africans left the British plantocracy system (Patterson, 1970). The initial interactions between these Africans and the Maroon communities were violent in most cases. However, they would eventually collaborate and merge to sustain their autonomy under the leadership of Maroons such as Nanny and Cudjoe (Patterson, 1970). At the end of the First Maroon War, there were four main Maroon settlements: two on the leeward side of the island—Trelawny Town in St. James parish and Accompong Town in St. Elizabeth parish—and two on the windward side—Charles or Crawford Town in St. George’s parish and Moore Town in Portland parish (Johnson, 2015; McKee, 2018; Patterson, 1970; Robinson, 2000). After numerous battles with the British, the Leeward Maroons signed a 15-point treaty, and then another was reluctantly signed by the Windward Maroons. The sovereignty of the 17th-century Maroon communities was partially dependent on their control of land where they could have an alternative way of life, different from how Blackness had been inscribed under Spanish and British slave societies. Autonomy³⁰ and land claims were forms of reparatory justice for Jamaican Maroons, based on collective rather than individual rights to property.

Quilombos in Brazil. As in Jamaica, land and liberatory consciousness were central components of 17th-century Brazil’s marronage, in which thousands of quilombos—settlements created by the formerly enslaved—were established across the colony. Quilombo dos Palmares, with a population of 20,000, was the most prominent and robust (Shore, 2022). It was made up

³⁰ The notion of autonomy for the Jamaican maroons can be debated, as they had particular limitations in how they could engage with people outside their communities. For example, one of the restrictions on their sovereignty resulting from the treaty signed with the British was a prohibition on supporting African freedom seekers who fled from slavery (Johnson, 2015).

of several settlements, which then formed a community. Hidden in the hinterlands of the northeastern part of the colony, Palmares sustained itself for nearly a century, from 1605 to 1695. Though quilombos were agrarian, most of their focus was on defence (Robinson, 2000; Shore, 2022). The quilombos represented Black resistance to plantocracies and a way of being that encourages us to think of a new humanity independent from “the neoliberal monohumanist construct of the human” (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015, p. 21). In speaking on the significance of quilombos to Afro-Brazilian activists in struggle against racial capitalism, Abdias do Nascimento (1968) states, “Quilombo does not simply refer to runaway slaves. Quilombo stands for free fraternal union, solidarity, coexistence, and community. A quilombo society is a stage of human and socio-political progress” (p. 263). In Nascimento’s articulation of the possibilities of liberation that quilombos offer, one can observe the connection with Táíwò’s constructive view on new worldmaking to transform a society; additionally, Fanon’s (notion of a new humanity achieved through collective struggle and delinked from the Eurocentric construct of the human is evident in Nascimento’s take on the possibilities of the quilombos. Like the Maroon settlements in Jamaica, the quilombos crafted opportunities for the freedom seekers to reinvent themselves and take on approaches that challenged the human/nonhuman binary.

Garifuna in Saint Vincent. Reparatory justice for the Indigenous Peoples of the Caribbean (identified variously as “Caribs,” “Arawaks,” “Taino,” and “Kalinago”) since the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1492, also involves access to land and a liberation consciousness. As this project focuses primarily on the African experience in the Caribbean, I highlight the example of the Garifuna—or “Black Caribs”—of Saint Vincent who descended from the Kalinagos from the southern part of the Caribbean (Windward and Leeward Islands) and enslaved Africans, who made their way to Saint Vincent following a shipwreck (Newton,

2014; C. Taylor, 2012).³¹ The language they speak underlines the Amerindian side of their ancestry and their radically different history (Taylor, 2012). For the majority of people in the Caribbean, their ancestral homeland is elsewhere, but for the Garifuna, the Caribbean is their sacred motherland (Taylor, 2012). In his analysis of the relationship between decolonization and reparations, Kelley (2021) argues that dispossession of land came with “spiritual theft,” because for Indigenous populations in the Americas, land has a deep connection with ancestors and spiritual practices. Therefore, the rupture between Indigenous Peoples and their land was not only a physical act of violence, but a spiritual one.³²

Historically, Indigenous Peoples of the Caribbean have fought colonial governments to get access to their sacred lands. The Garifuna were no different; they were known as antagonistic to Europeans and allied with other “Black Caribs” to confront the French and English colonial governments of Saint Vincent in the 17th and 18th centuries (Taylor, 2012). After the British took control of Saint Vincent in 1763, the Garifuna fight to maintain their sovereignty deepened; however, after their leader Joseph Chatoyer was killed in a final attack, the war shifted in favour of the colonial power (Taylor, 2012).³³ The British held 4,776 prisoners on the island of Balliceaux off the coast of Saint Vincent: 4,633 were categorized as “Black Caribs;” 102 as “Yellow Caribs,” and 41 as “Negroes the property of the Black Caribs” (Newton, 2014, p. 17). Putting this European racial hierarchy into practice, the British shipped the “real Caribs”—that is, “Yellow Caribs”—to the mainland of Saint Vincent, whereas dark-skinned Indigenous people, or “Black Caribs,” who were associated with Africans and thus not considered Indigenous, were

³¹ Scholars debate whether the Africans who created communities with the Kalinagos were enslaved people seeking freedom from neighbouring plantations (Pollard, 2014, p. 133).

³² In the conclusion of my research, I speak more on the spiritual connection that Indigenous Caribbean Peoples have with the land.

³³ I explore more of the final battle and its aftermath in the conclusion of my research.

shipped to Central America and provided with land (Newton, 2014). For the Garifuna, similar to the Jamaican and Brazilian Maroons, the land was connected to self-actualization, a form of independence that came with a liberatory consciousness contesting the *homo oeconomicus* construct of Man², where the Indigenous body is categorized as a savage. Kelley's (2021) third thesis speaks to the relation between land and spiritual practices. With dispossession of land came "spiritual theft," as land, for Caribbean Indigenous populations, has a deep connection to ancestors and spiritual practices.

Today, the island of Balliceaux is considered by many people to be a national heritage site due to its history. Currently, it is a privately owned part of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and was up for sale for US\$30 million (Garraway, 2019). To have a historically significant part of Caribbean history on sale on the international market has caused an uproar among Vincentians and Garifuna communities locally and internationally. The National Garifuna Council of Belize made a case to the Saint Vincent government to rethink its decision to sell the land in consideration of the significance of the island, not just to Indigenous Peoples but to the history of the Caribbean (Garraway, 2019). Balliceaux is sacred ground to the Garifuna, because on this island their ancestors were imprisoned and tortured by the British.

The Haitian Revolution. Unlike the other movements I have underscored thus far, which did not lead to total upheaval, the Haitian Revolution provides us with ontologies and epistemologies containing flashes of new humanity through collective struggle. Further, it underlines the significance of land and a liberatory consciousness in thinking through decolonial reparations. While there have been numerous uprisings of enslaved Africans across the Americas, only the Haitian Revolution resulted in the liberation of an entire colony. As I have illustrated in the previous cases of Jamaica, Brazil, and Saint Vincent, marronage occurred across

slave societies. Unfortunately, colonial forces eventually destabilized these liberation movements, though various iterations of the settlements created by the formerly enslaved still exist. In the case of Haiti, the revolution (1791–1804) witnessed Africans in the French colony of St. Domingue, which provided two-thirds of France’s international trade, defeating the French (under Napoléon Bonaparte), English, and Spanish in order to gain their independence and abolish enslavement (C. L. R. James, 1989; Robinson, 2000). The Haitian Revolution was a precipice of liberated possibilities. It encouraged revolts across the Americas, particularly in the US South and Bahia, Brazil (Robinson, 2000), and newly independent Haitians supported anticolonial movements in Latin America on the condition that once they gained their freedom, African enslavement would be abolished (Elnaiem, 2019). In his take on how the Africans had to overcome the odds to obtain liberation, C. L. R. James (1989) states:

The transformation of slaves, trembling in hundreds before a single white man, into a people able to organize themselves and defeat the most powerful European nations of their day, is one of the great epics of revolutionary struggle and achievement. (p. ix)

The “transformation” that the enslaved Africans went through to build their confidence to take on the European imperialist demonstrates the liberatory consciousness of the new “human” they constructed—a consciousness that came through “collective struggle” (Fanon, 2004, p. 103), when the African contested the liberal monohumanist construct of the Black body. The formerly enslaved created new ways of being through these revolutionary tensions. Furthermore, in this case, reparatory justice came with the land, as the people took over the colony of St. Domingue. Reparations came with the transformation of a society, and a people were in control of their destiny. The Haitian Revolution presents an example of Wynter’s argument of the third level of the Third Event, which has been discussed in chapter 2.

Marcus Garvey and the UNIA (1914–1930). The revolts I have previously described are associated with the lands inhabited by formerly enslaved individuals, predominantly in the colonial regions of the Americas, but Garvey’s aspiration for liberation and the establishment of a new world traces back to Africa. It involved a rejection of how Blackness was constructed by the white imagination, as well as how Black individuals perceived themselves (R. C. Lewis, 1998). Garvey, born in Jamaica on August 17, 1887, was a pan-Africanist who believed that for people of African descent to truly be free from slavery and its legacies, they must interpret their history (tell their own stories) and take control of their own destinies in Africa and its diasporas (Garvey, 1996; Hutton & Murrell, 1998). Rodney (2001), in his articulation of Black power in the Caribbean, acknowledged the significance of Garvey’s ability to mobilize Black people globally and also recognized him as the greatest spokesperson produced by the Black consciousness movement.

The UNIA was an instrumental part of Garvey’s “Back to Africa” campaign.³⁴ The organization was founded in Jamaica in 1914 under the slogan “One God, One Aim, One Destiny” (Campbell, 1987). However, since the colonial government would not allow its Black subjects to have democratic rights, Garvey took his cause to the United States, where in 1916 he officially launched the organization at Liberty Hall, Harlem, New York, then the epicentre of the Black diasporic world (Campbell, 1987; Clarke, 1974; R. C. Lewis, 1998). In the early 20th century, the UNIA became the biggest pan-African movement, with 996 branches across 43 countries and with a membership of over 5 million people (Campbell, 1987). People of African descent gravitated towards the ideology of Garveyism with its militant Black nationalist values,

³⁴ Garvey (1996) proposed a constructive solution—the “Back to Africa” movement—in 1916 to help Black people escape racial oppression and discrimination in the Americas and Europe by returning to their ancestral homeland, Africa.

which provided Black people in the African diaspora a connection to Africa while emphasizing self-determination for political and economic liberation (Campbell, 1987). Garvey's (1986) philosophy on Black emancipation echoed through the principles of the UNIA:

To establish a universal confraternity among the race... to prompt the spirit of pride and love; to reclaim the fallen... to administer and assist the needy... to assist in civilizing the backward tribes of Africa... to assist in the development of independent Negro nations and communities... to establish commissioners or agencies in the principal countries and cities of the world for the representation and protection of all Negroes, irrespective of nationality... to promote a conscientious spiritual worship among the native tribes of Africa... to establish universities, colleges, academies and schools for the racial education and culture of the people... to conduct a world-wide commercial and industrial intercourse for the good of the people... to work for better conditions for all Negro communities. (pp. 27–33)

The UNIA's principles provided members with a blueprint for self-actualization outside of the colonial and capitalist system, which kept Black people hostage to territories (as in the Americas and Europe) and constructions of the human that categorized them as nonhuman. Now, in the midst of World War I and the Harlem Renaissance, Africa was within the grasp of a people who had been historically disenfranchised. As the capitalist modern world was about to be reformed via World War I, another was being created that positioned Black people as the pioneers of their destiny.

Garvey undertook several initiatives in his attempts to uplift Black people. Here, I underscore three initiatives that are intricately connected to the UNIA's nucleus: the *Negro World* newspaper, the Black Star Line, and the Liberian colonization program. The first was a global newspaper used to push the principles, ideology, and news of the UNIA. Similar to reggae music in the case of the Rastafari movement (explored in Chapter 4), the *Negro World* became a weapon for Garveyites to share the doctrine of racial pride and mobilize Black people globally (Campbell, 1987). Through the reach of the paper, the UNIA was able to organize vast conferences. The *Negro World's* influence was so potent that in certain colonial territories, being

caught in possession of a copy would lead to imprisonment or death (Campbell, 1987; R. C. Lewis, 1998). The UNIA newspaper played a pivotal role in the lives of people of African descent globally. It not only disseminated information about Black rebellion and self-empowerment but also inspired and mobilized Black communities towards a unified goal of liberation (Cronon, 1973). It connected Black communities across continents, facilitating the exchange of ideas and strategies for resistance and self-determination (Campbell, 1987; Cronon, 1973; R. C. Lewis, 1998). Thus, the *Negro World* newspaper was an indispensable tool in the fight for reparations (in the sense of restoring the internal pride of Black people) and the creation of a new world for Black people. Its message of Black pride and self-determination was instrumental in empowering and uplifting Black communities worldwide, instilling in them a sense of hope and a vision for a brighter future determination (Campbell, 1987; Cronon, 1973; R. C. Lewis, 1998).

The second initiative, the Black Star Line, was an undertaking by Garvey to lead his people to economic independence and self-respect through the creation of a shipping line (Campbell, 1987; Cronon, 1973; Garvey, 1986). The Black Star Line was a significant achievement in the quest for economic justice and equality. It went beyond being just a shipping line, symbolizing hope and unity for Black people worldwide (Cronon, 1973). The project resonated with the aspirations of many Black individuals, who viewed it as a means to escape the vicious cycle of poverty and discrimination. Despite facing numerous challenges and setbacks, Garvey remained steadfast in his determination to achieve economic independence for Black people, and the Black Star Line project continued to inspire and mobilize people (Campbell, 1987; Cronon, 1973). His vision for the Black Star Line, coupled with the positive and hopeful

response from the Black community, especially in Jamaica and New York City (Cronon, 1973), indicates that the shipping line can be seen as an expression of self-help economic restitution. In the third initiative, the Liberian colonization program, the UNIA put into practice Garvey's overall vision of land as an act of liberation. His vision involved repatriating the African diasporas to the African continent, which Garvey viewed as a solution to the racial discrimination and oppression faced by Black people in the Americas and other parts of the world (Cronon, 1973; Garvey, 1986). Garvey's interest in the colonization project initially focused on Liberia, which was founded in the early 19th century as a settlement for formerly enslaved African Americans and was seen by some as a potential homeland for Black people (Cronon, 1973). In the early 1920s, Garvey attempted to collaborate with the Liberian government to establish settlements for African diaspora members but the Liberian government and the UNIA could not agree on the terms and conditions of the project. Ultimately, the project did not lead to the mass repatriation of African diaspora members to Liberia as Garvey had envisioned (Cronon, 1973). It is worth noting that while Garvey's vision of repatriation and the Liberian colonization project share some similarities, they are not identical. Nevertheless, one of the criticisms of the UNIA was its colonial articulation of the relationship it hoped to establish with Africa; one of its principles was "to assist in the civilization of the backward tribes of Africa" (Garvey 1986, p. 29). This depiction of Africa was similar to the European one of a "prehistoric and tribal" Africa. The UNIA's "Back to Africa" Black nationalist paradigm was limited partly due to the construction of Africa as a primitive space that needed to be saved. Consequently, arguments have been made that Garvey was an "African Westernizing elite" (R. C. Lewis, 1998, p. 146). As well, while some scholars and thinkers such as Horace Campbell and CLR James have accused him of being a Black capitalist due to his emphasis on individual

land ownership. However, I highlight this project in order to underscore the crucial role that land played in Garvey's vision of freedom for the African diaspora.

Summary. My cursory examination of the Maroon settlements in Jamaica, the quilombos in Brazil, the Garifuna in Saint Vincent, the Haitian Revolution, and Garvey's UNIA should by no means reduce these significant nonlinear movements to short summaries. I present these examples to illustrate the role that land and liberation consciousness play in new worldmaking—one that challenges racial capitalism, the very foundation of the modern world, and can be tied to decolonial reparatory justice approaches. These examples do not fit within the harm repair and relationship repair views of reparations. Instead, marronage, revolts on the slave plantations, and the creation of “sacred spaces” by the freedom-seeking Africans, for instance, the quilombos and the Maroon settlements, appear as expressions of reparatory justice, where a liberated consciousness and the claim to land as a collective right from a noncapitalist perspective are central aspects of restitution. In the following section, I scrutinize how reparations for transatlantic slavery have been constructed using the instruments of the colonial and former colonial powers and been limited primarily to financial recompense.

Financial Recompense for Transatlantic Slave

Unlike acts of reparatory justice that manifested from revolts by enslaved Africans, reparations as a legal undertaking for financial recompense works within the infrastructure of liberal monohumanist colonial states. Such endeavours started over two centuries ago in the United States. In the early period of abolition, newly freed persons made demands for financial restitution from their respective governments, their former masters, or both. These articulations for reparations mostly followed the harm repair view, which is not focused on transformative changes but on fulfillment of the nation's promises to citizens. The financial asks were relatively

small, but these acts were the early stages of claims for reparations using state mechanisms. For example, the first known successful reparations case for transatlantic slavery in the United States was that of Belinda Sutton in 1783, which became the legal template in advocacy for reparations (Araujo, 2017). Sutton gained her freedom after her master, Isaac Royall Junior, fled from Boston to England during the American Revolutionary War due to his close ties with the Loyalists.³⁵ After his death in 1781, Sutton received the amount designated to her in Royall's will. The payments stopped after 3 years, and Sutton took her case to the Massachusetts legislature to receive a pension as a form of reparations for her unpaid labour while working for the Royalls. The outcome of Sutton's request was an annual pension of £15.12, which was based on revenues taken from the Royalls' estate. Arguably, this compensation was the result of her master already agreeing to pay her that sum, or the fact that the Royalls were Loyalists (Araujo, 2017, pp. 49–50). Whatever the reasons, the doors of possibilities were now opened to utilizing the legal system to acquire redress for enslavement, a precursor to reparatory justice movements using the American legal system. The following year, supported by the Massachusetts legislature, Royall's estate ceased paying Sutton (Araujo, 2017, p. 50). Although she obtained only partial success, her story inspired the formerly enslaved and the descendants of the enslaved to advocate for varied forms of reparations, which manifested in redress as transformative or assimilated praxes.

Throughout the years, several initiatives and calls for reparations for transatlantic slavery have been cultivated. For instance, abolitionists, thinkers, and activists such as Frederick Douglass, Martin Delany, Queen Mother, and Mary Ann Shadd Cary, along with pan-African movements such as Garvey's UNIA and Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam, dominated the

³⁵ The British Loyalists were individuals that stayed committed to the British Crown in the political upheaval of the American Revolutionary War (Gould, 2013).

19th- and early-20th-century rhetoric of restitution. These movements laid the foundation for the modern-contemporary reparations movements. For example, in the United States, N'COBRA, an umbrella group of Black American reparations activists was established in 1987 (Frith & Scott, 2018, p. 11). N'COBRA's mission was to acquire full reparations for the descendants of formerly enslaved Africans in the United States for transatlantic slavery, Jim Crow laws, and the various manifestations of chattel slavery in contemporary society (Frith & Scott, 2018, p. 11), such as the prison industrial complex (Davis, 2000). From its inception, the collective embraced the reparations mantle, which has also informed CARICOM's reparations campaign (which will be discussed later in this chapter). N'COBRA (n.d.) currently operates multiple chapters nationwide and hosts conferences and community discussions in their respective cities.

Two schools of thought dominate the reparations discourse: Black nationalist and Black integrationist. Black nationalists are skeptical of the state's democratic ideas and believe in complete separation; they advocate for financial recompense, land (40 acres and a mule, as promised during the Reconstruction period), and sovereignty (Marable, 1995). Historically, the Nation of Islam has represented this political ideology (Curtis, 2002). The integrationists (or Black liberals), on the other hand, have argued for the promises made by the democratic state to dismantle the barriers that prevent minorities from having equal access to opportunities (Marable, 1995). Adherents of the liberal tradition aim to deracialize hierarchies of power embedded in the economic system and society (Marable, 1995). For instance, Barack Obama's political undertaking coupled with the support he received from Black political groups in the United States was grounded in a liberal ideology.

Key reparatory justice movements have found success in attaining financial recompense and have therefore maintained dialogues of restitution in liberal discourse. For instance, in 1994,

the Florida legislature investigated the 1923 Rosewood white riot, which had resulted in the torture and deaths of several Black people and the eventual burning down of the Black settlement of Rosewood by white people, driven by white law enforcement. The riot was sparked when a white woman stated she was attacked by a Black man (Glenza, 2016). A lack of evidence to verify her claim did not stop the massive atrocities experienced by Black people in the community. The Florida legislature approved \$2.1 million in compensation, which broke down to \$150,000 for those who could prove their residency in Rosewood in 1923. A second fund of \$500,000 was created for anyone who could prove an ancestral connection to the town in 1923 (Darity & Mullen, 2020).

Pigford v. Glickman is another case framed in the liberal tradition that further propelled reparations proponents. In 1997, Timothy Pigford brought a class-action lawsuit on behalf of Black American farmers against the secretary of agriculture, Daniel Robert Glickman, for acts of discrimination by the US Department of Agriculture. The plaintiff was granted \$1.25 billion in compensation but still had not yet received payments 10 years later (Darity & Mullen, 2020). Moreover, 400 African-American farmers built on the *Pigford* case, filing a class-action lawsuit in 1997 that asserted that from 1983 to 1997, the Department of Agriculture systemically discriminated against them and hindered their opportunities to receive loans. Of the 22,505 applicants, 13,348 received up to \$50,000. The most significant amount, \$13 million, was awarded to the farm collective New Communities (Darity & Mullen, 2020). To date, it is the largest class-action civil rights settlement in the United States (Frith & Scott, 2018). I highlight the two examples of the 1923 Rosewood white riot and the *Pigford v. Glickman* case to underline how reparations for transatlantic slavery and its legacies have been undertaken financially using

the harm repair view and to illustrate its limitation in not dismantling the system of racial capitalism.

Other reparations campaigns in the United States have not resulted in financial rewards but have attained different types of success. Building on the momentum from the *Pigford* case, reparations adherents pushed the Oklahoma legislature to investigate the 1921 white rebellion that resulted in the Tulsa riot. In two days, a white mob destroyed an entire Black community, which included churches, homes, schools, and at least 191 businesses (Darity & Mullen, 2020). The mob had access to six World War I airplanes and murdered at least 300 Black people. In 1997, US president Bill Clinton formed the Tulsa Race Riot Commission, and he encouraged universities and colleges to participate through research (Darity & Mullen, 2020). The decision unanimously favoured the victims and included recommendations to develop a redress program for Black Americans. However, the Oklahoma legislature “enacted no mandate and made no payments” (Darity & Mullen, 2020, p. 19). The 1921 Tulsa massacre and the response by local authorities to ignore the recommendations made by the commission underline how Blackness continues to be devalued in the *homo oeconomicus* apparatus of the state. During the 100th anniversary of the Tulsa riot, conversations about the massacre were shoved to the forefront on social media (Saint-Vil, 2021). My observations and interactions on social media indicate the political climate (since the public execution of George Floyd) has partially influenced these dialogues, which are driven by millennials and Generation Y. Recently, another reparations commission was established to work towards some form of recompense for the white rebellion, but so far, there has been more talk than action (Clayton, 2023).

One reparations movement that has captivated and encouraged numerous dialogues on social media is African Descendants of Slavery, which emerged online in early 2019 with the

hashtag #ADOS. African Descendants of Slavery is a social and political movement in the United States that advocates for the descendants of African slaves brought to America during transatlantic slavery. The movement seeks to address the legacy of slavery and its ongoing impact on the African-American community (Lynn, 2020). The online redress movement became extremely influential in encouraging conversations on reparatory justice during the 2020 US elections (Darity & Mullen, 2020, p. 26). It has also influenced how reparations for transatlantic slavery are understood by some contemporary thinkers in the United States (ADOS Advocacy Foundation, n.d.).

Two prominent Black American reparations scholars, William A. Darity and Kirsten Mullen (2020), draw from the tenets of #ADOS in their articulation of who qualifies for restitution for transatlantic slavery. Their proposed criteria are, one, the person must be a US citizen and provide evidence that their ancestors were in the country at the establishment of the republic; two, they must show they have identified as “Black,” “Negro,” “African American,” or “Afro-American” for at least 12 years before the start of the reparations program (Darity & Mullen, 2020, p. 258). This method of reparations may create Black hierarchies within American society, further marginalizing the subaltern within the current racial capitalist construct, leading to subalterns within that subaltern (Taylor & Liss, 1992). For instance, if two working-class Black families live in the same community but only one qualifies for financial recompense, that family may receive money and eventually move out of the community. The other family, even if it does not have any historical ties to slavery in the United States, may still be affected by the consequences of racial and class inequality, particularly if they lack the resources to support themselves. The result is that one family has now been included in the Black middle class, but the problem of systemic racism still prevails. Therefore, a hierarchal structure is reinforced rather

than transformed. Similarly, affirmative action in the 1920s saw a transition of Black families from the working class to the middle and upper classes, but it did not alleviate racism and classism in the United States and actually heightened the problem (Sandar & Taylor, 2012).

One could conclude that the #ADOS approach is counterproductive, as its methods serve to divide Black communities. The movement appears to negate people of African descent who do not have direct ties to enslavement in the United States but still live out the harsh realities of systemic racism, which is part of the legacy of enslavement (an indication of the parochial American mindset that the world revolves around the United States). Should the effects of racial capitalism and its byproducts, such as anti-Black systemic racism, be limited to people who are natural Americans, carry an American passport, and have historical connections to the United States? Black persons in the United States, regardless of their connection to the country, are typically read as part and parcel of a particular history of enslavement due to the colour of their skin. For example, East Africans may not have any ancestral relation to transatlantic enslavement in the United States, but they might face similar systemic barriers in the country due to their race. Moreover, Black migrants in the United States who advocate for justice and equity and in some cases dedicate their life to liberation movements might not qualify for financial recompense under this specific approach. Case in point, prominent pan-Africanist Kwame Ture, formerly known as Stokely Carmichael, who was born in Trinidad and Tobago to parents from that country, would not qualify for redress if assessed according to the precepts of #ADOS. Clearly, Darity and Mullen's (2020) intention is not to dismantle an oppressive system but to reap the available benefits that the US state promises—that is, access to capital and the middle classes garnered through the exploitation of the Global South.

The reparations movements I have briefly explored indicate how advocacy for restitution has primarily used the integrationist/liberal model and legal harm repair view. Furthermore, the highlighted cases have focused mainly on financial recompense. My objective is not to suggest that restitution movements are limited to financial undertakings but to show how popular reparations undertakings, particularly the ones that have been strictly financial, pose no threat to current capitalist regimes. Though the examples highlight primarily the Anglophone world in the 20th and 21st centuries, excluding the UNIA's global reach across languages, mobilization was also taking place in Latin America, the Spanish and French Caribbean, Europe, and a handful of African countries (Araujo, 2017). For instance, on the African continent, the Group of Eminent Persons was established in 1992 in Abuja, Nigeria, during a meeting of the Organization of African Unity (now the African Union). The mandate of the 12-member country collective was to pursue the objective of reparations for Africa (Howard-Hassmann, 2004, p. 84). Similar to many pan-African movements from the mid-20th century to the present, it was inspired by Garvey's work with the UNIA (Howard-Hassmann, 2004).

Part 2: CARICOM's Reparations Campaign

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

Before I explore CARICOM's reparations undertaking, it is imperative to know and understand the functioning and ideology of the regional economic initiative. CARICOM was established in response to the 1962 dismantling of the West Indies Federation (an Anglophone regional initiative), as a manoeuvre to "safeguard national sovereignty" (Gilbert-Roberts, 2013, p. 65). With the eventual support of the remaining member countries of the Caribbean Free

Trade Association,³⁶ the Treaty of Chaguaramas was signed in 1973, giving birth to CARICOM, which comprises the Caribbean Community and the Common Market (P. Lewis, 2022).

CARICOM was the first instance of a free trade area moving towards a “customs union” (Axline, 1978, p. 953);³⁷ moreover, it was keenly concerned with fostering integration in the region and facilitating direct foreign policy (P. Lewis et al., 2018, p. 3). Since its creation, the organization has become an essential Caribbean economic system and gained global attention and recognition as an international subsystem (Mullerleile, 1996). The West Indies Commission, which reviewed and set goals for CARICOM at the end of the 20th century, recommended that the regional initiative strengthen its relationship with its members and extend its membership (P. Lewis et al., 2018). Currently, CARICOM is made up of 15 member states, which include the nations of the Commonwealth Caribbean as well as Haiti, Montserrat, and Suriname. The organization also has five associate members.³⁸

As a transnational institution used to address welfare issues, CARICOM operates with a neofunctionalist approach towards integration. The theory of neofunctionalism posits that economic integration within a specific region, whether it be in trade or transportation, can lead to greater integration in other areas such as political and security cooperation (Rosamond, 2000). Essentially, this theory suggests that when nations start to work together in one policy area, the positive effects will spill over and motivate collaboration in other policy areas too (Rosamond,

³⁶ The Caribbean Free Trade Association liberalized transactions with manufactured products, created special arrangements for Less Developed Countries, and established a framework to administer trade in agricultural goods (Girvan et al., 2011).

³⁷ A customs union is a positive and collaborative agreement between two or more countries that aims to enhance trade by removing barriers and reducing tariffs. This agreement promotes unity and cooperation by establishing a common external tariff, which contributes to the growth and development of its member countries' economies (Axline, 1978).

³⁸ The members of CARICOM are Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat (a British overseas territory in the Leeward Islands), Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. The associate members are Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, and Turks and Caicos.

2000). Furthermore, a neofunctionalist approach aims to establish some form of integration in “low politics” sectors, which focus on social security, equivalent to the focus on strategic economic sectors (Rosamond, 2000). This integration will eventually lead to the creation of a high authority, an independent board developed from the institutions of socialization, which can advance the overall integration process (Rosamond, 2000). As the target economic sectors integrate, they act as a stimulus that generates operational pressures for integrating correlated economic sectors. Although CARICOM was created to further the integration process after the collapse of the West Indies Federation, it was actually created from the bowels of a free trade initiative (P. Lewis, 2022); hence, its mandate heavily emphasizes regional trade. Its lack of economic cooperation models beyond trade has led to heavy scrutiny by countries such as Jamaica, which has questioned its relevance (P. Lewis, 2022). This critique by the Jamaican government impacts the integration initiative, given its foundation was built on regional economic cooperation (P. Lewis, 2022).

Working within a modernization framework of development placed CARICOM in an interesting space.³⁹ The main objective of regional integration in the Caribbean is to foster a fast pace of development and guarantee the well-being of the general populace by “mobilizing the resources and capacities of the region within an integrated framework” (Benn & Hall, 2006, p. xv), which has its limitations due to the material realities of the region. That model of integration of marginalized economies (small states) to establish a significant voice in the global capitalist system duplicated the path of industrialized nations, which was problematic because it

³⁹ Modernization theory is the central paradigm used by “developed” nations to assess “Third World” countries’ social, poverty and economic, and political development (Isbister, 2006). According to neoliberal political and economic thought in the West, development is associated with capitalism, which brings with it technological growth and economic modernization. Modernization adherents believe that underdeveloped countries are at the status of traditional societies and are stagnant in their ways (Isbister, 2006).

discouraged alternative social and economic epistemologies and ontologies (Escobar, 1995). The collapse of the Berlin Wall caused a global shift in the 1980s, enhancing the neoliberal agenda under the guise of structural adjustment programs driven by the international financial institutions (P. Lewis, 2022) and governed by Reaganomics and Thatcherism. The political-economic theory of neoliberalism maintains that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by substantial private property rights, free markets, and free trade (Harvey, 2005). It is essential to think more critically about a decolonial reparations movement directed by a government-led regional integration entity designed and operated using a neoliberal framework. My intention is not to discredit CARICOM, because it plays an important role in pushing for reparations as a collective undertaking, but to examine how neoliberalism, a contemporary manifestation of racial capitalism, rooted in the *homo oeconomicus* “theology,” governs the direction of CARICOM.

CARICOM and Reparations: A Social Development Project

CARICOM’s reparations campaign is a 21st-century undertaking that is part of a larger discourse on redress for transatlantic slavery. The premise is that historical harms were committed against the Indigenous Caribbean and African people, and they deserve some form of recompense (CARICOM Reparations Commission, n.d.). Moreover, through the violence of conquest, enslavement, and colonialism, relationships between the Europeans and racialized people were damaged; consequently, some form of amends is needed to establish a healthy relationship (Beckles, 2013, 2021; Shepherd, 2015). A common misunderstanding among some sectors and academics in the Americas is that the idea of reparations for transatlantic slavery emerged from the 2001 United Nations World Conference Against Racism, Racial

Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance held in Durban, South Africa. As I articulated in the first part of this chapter, the roots of the modern Caribbean reparations movement, birthed through acts of revolt, precede the Durban conference. Moreover, as I explore in Chapter 4, the first Rastafarian, Leonard Howell, was a pan-Africanist teacher, grassroots preacher, mystic, and spiritualist (Hill, 2001, p. 9) who advocated for repatriation, which is a central tenet of reparations in Rastafari thought (Campbell, 1987).

Haiti's case for reparations was an important precursor to CARICOM's reparations campaign. The Durban conference played a significant role in Haiti's advocacy for reparatory justice, and in 2003, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, president of the former French colony, demanded reparations from France (Beckles, 2013). One of the primary issues of concern is that, whereas the British slaveowner class received £20 million from their government postemancipation, the French slaveowner class demanded 90 million gold francs from the self-liberated Haitians, in 1825, in the midst of the country's 21st anniversary (Beckles, 2013). This massive debt set the foundation for a cycle of economic poverty, which, in addition to internal and external factors, has held the Haitian people hostage since they paid manumission for their "freedom" (Beckles, 2013). According to Aristide, 90 million gold francs was equivalent to US\$21,685,135,571.48 in 2003 (Beckles, 2013). However, the promise of restitution ended abruptly when France (supported by the United States and Canada) invaded Haiti on February 28, 2004, and violently removed Aristide from office (Beckles, 2013). He was kidnapped and taken to unknown locations, making clear his time as the president of Haiti was over (Beckles, 2013). The pursuit of reparations by Caribbean countries is thus both important and very courageous. Haiti's drive for justice cost Aristide his presidency and the lives of many Haitians on the ground, strengthening the US grip on Haiti's sovereignty. Following the US and French intervention,

over 1,000 US troops landed in the first independent Black state in the Americas (Beckles, 2013). This example with Haiti speaks to the *homo oeconomicus* gaze (the audacity of the descendants of “nonbeings” demanding reparations) and actions used by France (Europe) to engage Black bodies on the issue of restitution. The CARICOM reparations campaign was established against this significant sociopolitical backdrop.

Beckles’ (2013) influential text *Britain’s Black Debt: Reparations for Caribbean Slavery and Native Genocide* was essential to the formation of CARICOM’s campaign (CARICOM, 2013). In applying the harm repair and relationship repair views coupled with an international human rights framework, Beckles (2013) made a practical case for the restitution of Caribbean Indigenous populations and Afro-Caribbean people and presented multiple ways in which justice could be served. Presenting comprehensive arguments for reparative justice as a way to repair the harm done to these individuals, he highlighted the crimes against humanity committed against them and the continued impact of these violent acts on victims’ lives. He also proposed that Caribbean reparations must be undertaken through a government-to-government approach to restore damage relationships. As a result, on July 15, 2013, the heads of government of CARICOM’s 15 member states made history by launching a claim for reparations from governments of eight European countries (Beckles, 2013). CARICOM based its claim on “the genocide perpetrated against the 15 million Indigenous people of the Caribbean” (Comissiong, 2019, para. 10) and “the multiplicity of ‘Crimes Against Humanity’ that were committed against the enslaved Black or African people of the Caribbean” (ibid).

Furthermore, to support their interdisciplinary and institutional claim, CARICOM member states worked towards establishing infrastructure to strengthen their endeavour. Four institutional structures were created in 2015: (a) the National Reparations Committees, (b) the

CARICOM Reparations Commission, (c) the Centre for Reparations Research, and (d) the Prime Ministerial Sub-Committee on Reparations (Comissiong, 2019). These four structures have been critical in building the government-to-government tactical entry point to lobby European governments and to establish some form of local materiality that can be maintained when local governments change. The National Reparations Committees are an effort by each CARICOM member state to establish a local task force that has the main goal of advancing the reparations movement on a national level (Comissiong, 2019). The idea for the committees was influenced by the Organization of African Unity's critical 1993 Abuja Declaration on Reparations (Comissiong, 2019; CARICOM's campaign was also influenced by the conversations taking place on the African continent on restitution). The declaration recommended that governments across Africa and its diasporas create national committees to gather data on Black experiences, disseminate the accumulated information, and then design educational courses that address the impact of slavery and its legacies, such as colonialism and neocolonialism (Comissiong, 2019).

The CARICOM Reparations Commission is composed of the chairperson of each National Committee. Its overall purpose is conceptualizing, creating, and directing the reparations campaign (CARICOM Reparations Commission, n.d.). The Centre for Reparations Research (CRR) is located at the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, Jamaica. The centre's primary function is to assist the CARICOM Reparations Commission in working towards its main objectives, which can take the form of conducting research or facilitating negotiations between international educational institutions and the University of the West Indies (CRR, n.d.). The Prime Ministerial Sub-Committee on Reparations, the last institutional component of the campaign, is a board comprising six sitting Caribbean prime ministers from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Haiti, Guyana, Suriname, Barbados (chair), and the

chairperson of CARICOM (Comissiong, 2019). The main responsibility of the subcommittee is to work closely with the CARICOM Reparations Commission and guide its direction based on the reports produced by the CRR (Comissiong, 2019).

These four institutional entities are fundamental to the institutional governance of the CARICOM reparations campaign, in which governmental bodies are advocating on behalf of their citizens, placing the moral, legal, and political initiative in a unique situation. Whereas reparations campaigns have typically held the accused local state accountable for crimes committed against humanity, as in the United States, the state-driven Caribbean approach holds European countries accountable for their governance and participation in transatlantic slavery. In thinking critically, one may question the possibilities of CARICOM's reparations campaign entering the conversation state-to-state within a liberal monohumanist structure.

CARICOM's campaign has been a collaboration between governments and trained experts from across the Caribbean. The first reparations regional conference was held in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in September 2013. The first day of the conference witnessed the push to establish the National Committees (CARICOM, 2013). The second day focused primarily on presentations from academics and experts in various fields, who connected some current trends in the Caribbean and Africa, for example, depopulation and underdevelopment, to legacies of transatlantic slavery (CARICOM, 2013). The third and final day of the historic conference concluded with a proposal for the structure of the CARICOM Reparations Commission (CARICOM, 2013). The next regional step for the campaign was the development of the CARICOM 10-point reparations plan in early July 2014 (CARICOM Reparations Commission, n.d.).

The 10-point plan provides a framework for how CARICOM member states are articulating restitution. The vision of the government-led campaign is not focused on individual Caribbean governments but on a social development project that can support the growth of the region. The legacies of conquest, colonization, transatlantic slavery, and chattel slavery frame the 10-point plan. The CARICOM Reparations Commission begins the plan with a call for a “full formal apology” by the governments of Europe (Shepherd, 2015, p. 4). Next, it focuses on repatriation—the idea that Africans in the diaspora whose lineage traces to transatlantic slavery have a legal right to “return home” to Africa if they wish to do so (Evans & Wilkins, 2019). Third, the CARICOM Reparations Commission⁴ (n.d.) argues that the governments of Europe committed genocide against the Indigenous Peoples of the Caribbean; therefore, a development plan is required to rehabilitate the respective Indigenous communities. Fourth, cultural institutions such as museums and research centres must be established to support Caribbean nationals in documenting and sharing their narratives (CARICOM Reparations Commission, n.d.). Fifth, the Caribbean’s current health crisis is connected to “nutritional experience, physical and emotional brutality, and overall stress profile associated with slavery, genocide and apartheid” (Matthews, 2017, p. 97) and must be systematically addressed.

The next five tenets of the plan further illustrate the construction of the CARICOM reparations campaign as a social development project. The sixth point advocates for eradicating “widespread illiteracy that has subverted the development efforts of the Caribbean nation states and represents a drag upon social and economic advancement” (ibid). Seventh, the plan promotes an African knowledge program to establish bridges of belonging and to address the “cultural and social alienation from identity and belonging” (ibid) that resulted when Africans were violently taken from their homes and moved to the Caribbean. Eighth, following emancipation, formerly

enslaved Africans were not directed to any professional or psychological rehabilitation programs to address the trauma experienced in enslavement; therefore, to initiate the healing and reparative process, a reparative justice approach to truth and education must be adopted (Shepherd, 2015). Ninth, the scientific and technological underdevelopment of the Caribbean reflects the legacy of slavery in the region and must be addressed by the transfer of technology (Shepherd, 2015). Tenth, the Caribbean governments that surfaced postslavery and during the independence movement have inherited the heavy burden of poverty and underdevelopment. In moving forward, debt cancellation for Caribbean states is a necessary step towards reparatory justice (CARICOM Reparations Commission, n.d.).

Three other points were added to the plan: (a) the creation of the Caribbean Sustainability Fund, to be financed by the former colonial governments; (b) the removal of public monuments, statues, and holidays that celebrate European imperialism or are associated with transatlantic slavery;⁴⁰ and (c) the recognition of October 12, the day in 1492 when Christopher Columbus landed in the Caribbean, marking the commencement of the genocide of Indigenous people and the African Holocaust (Comissiong, 2019). Although these points are not typically highlighted on public platforms, they have served important purposes since their conception.

The CARICOM reparations campaign is unique among reparatory justice initiatives for two reasons. One is that it recognizes the significance of working towards justice for Indigenous populations in the region, (Brissot & Jules, 2023; CARICOM Reparations Commission, n.d.; Shepherd, 2018). Second, governments are leading the processes of atonement (Evans & Wilkins, 2019). This differs from other recent reparations movements for transatlantic slavery in

⁴⁰ After protest from civil society, the Barbadian government removed the statue of British admiral Lord Horatio Nelson in the country's capital, Bridgetown, on November 15, 2020 (Sandiford, 2020).

the Americas, which have mainly been led by grassroots organizations or members of civil society.

The government-led CARICOM reparations campaign has made progressive moves in its advocacy for justice within a neoliberal framework. One success that is significant but not quantifiable (i.e., translated into law) is that the campaign has opened a public debate, motivating people to speak about reparations and think about their relationships with transatlantic slavery in ways that were not encouraged before. This has been part of my observance in community discussions I facilitated in Jamaica and in dialogues taking place on social media.⁴¹ The campaign might not lead to material recompense, but it can lead people into discussions that are in themselves reparative. However, although people are having conversations on reparations, the general public for the most part does not trust their respective governments and know what reparations would actually look like for Caribbean people as constructed by CARICOM (Eugene, 2019; Y. Williams et al., 2023).

For example, a 2014 *Jamaica Observer* article underscoring the £7.5 trillion in today's currency owed by Britain to the descendants of the enslaved in the Caribbean (Henry, 2014) garnered online comments from readers that illustrate the distrust that communities have of their government. These comments were gathered in another article entitled, "LOL! Good Luck Collecting That" (Jamaica Observer, 2014). Most of the remarks made by the public addressed the corruption of the Jamaican state. Mutty Pekins stated:

When will we start to focus on the real problems? If Jamaica got the whole £7.5 trillion, we would be back where we are in a few years. We have wasteful, corrupt, politicians who put party before country and a lazy corrupt populace who give them undying support.

⁴¹ In 2019, as part of my tenure as a visiting scholar at the Centre for Reparations Research, I participated in groundings sessions in the urban and rural part of Jamaica.

In the above quotation, Pekins is critical of the Jamaican state and criticizes the populace for supporting the government. Another commenter, Master_Pain, asserted, “I seriously hope that Britain does not even glance at anything named reparation to any failed BLACK state like ours. Jamaica failed because Jamaicans allowed it to fail.” There, the reader encourages Britain not to support CARICOM’s reparations campaign because Jamaica has not lived up to their expectations. However, Master_Pain, in response to Master_Pain would redirect the conversation and his idea of recompense. He stated:

I applaud and support any move for any empire that benefitted financially and otherwise to pay reparations. Folks who hear “Reparations” immediately sees and thinks \$\$\$... and why not? The Jewish people were paid (still being paid) for their pain and suffering... if this is owed by Britain to Jamaica, I wonder how much the Spanish owes Jamaica?

Moreover, there was criticism of what reparations demands are being made. For example, reader cliRey responded to CARICOM’s claim with this comment:

When do I pick up my cheque? In all seriousness, why don’t they advocate for debt forgiveness, giving these countries a fresh start? In my opinion, this request is more likely to be granted, than fighting for some ‘abstract reparations.’

This critique underlines cliRey’s lack of knowledge of the CARICOM Reparations Commission’s 10-point plan, in which debt cancellation is the last tenet. This is not an attack on cliRey; it illuminates my argument that the public is unfamiliar with CARICOM’s reparations plan. Generally, the public’s attitude is that people are owed some form of recompense; however, they are uninformed about the outcomes sought by the CARICOM Reparations Commission. For example, the public’s general perception of reparations, and rightly so, is receiving a sum of money in the bank.

In the earlier stages of CARICOM's reparations campaign, some of the opinion pieces in Caribbean newspapers illustrate the arguments against trying to get reparatory justice. For instance, in a letter to the editor of *The Gleaner* entitled "Reparations Hopes Unrealistic," author Kemar Cummings (2013) state:

The critical question ... supporters for reparations must face is whether or not the British government, and indeed the British people, can be made to pay reparations to their former colonies. A national state cannot be treated in the same manner as would a private citizen in a court of law, and, consequently, the filed appeals for reparations can come to nothing because no court can compel the British government to undertake any action. (para. 5)

In the above extract, the author explains that the British state is in a position of power, where it should not be held accountable for crimes against humanity. If that is the case, then the financial recompense paid by the German government to survivors of the Jewish Holocaust and their descendants should not stand as a just endeavour. This argument also indicates the "thingification" status placed on the lives of Caribbean Indigenous and African people. It highlights the importance of a decolonial view in advocating for restorative justice, as a consciousness transformation must occur for Caribbean people to see the significance of reparations to the region's development. Cummings further stated:

I feel that rather than expend valuable time and resources towards uncertain reparations that may never materialise, it is better to focus on how we can build a better future for ourselves with our own resources and efforts so that no one can ever enslave us again. (2013, para. 7)

These comments reflect similar sentiments expressed by British prime minister David Cameron during his 2015 trip to Jamaica. As underlined in Chapter 1, Cameron (2015) encouraged Caribbean people to forget about the past and look towards the future. However, the following year, he visited Auschwitz, Poland's Nazi death camp, and encouraged attendants (and international Jewish communities) to "never forget" this crime against humanity (BBC News, 2014). Once more, one can see how Indigenous and Black lives are "thingified."

However, one institutional gain that has been accomplished beyond Caribbean borders is the memorandum of understanding signed between the University of the West Indies and the University of Glasgow in 2019. The Scottish university admitted to its participation in African enslavement and promised to provide the University of the West Indies with £20 million to fund educational and research programs (Webb, 2019). This action by a European university was an important step that forced other European institutions, such as the Church of England and international banks, to think or speak about forms of redress for their involvement in transatlantic slavery rather than push the conversation aside as they have done historically.

In the concluding chapter of my project, I present three critiques of the CARICOM reparations campaign, which have greatly influenced my proposed perspective on reparations for liberated Caribbean futures. The primary aim of this perspective is to provide a comprehensive framework that considers diverse stakeholders and the complexity of undertaking reparative justice in the region. By critically examining the CARICOM campaign, I aim to highlight the potential shortcomings and suggest alternative approaches that could be more effective in achieving a new emancipation. I believe that this perspective can serve as a valuable contribution to the ongoing discourse on reparations in the Caribbean region.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored the various ways that cases for reparations are constructed in the Americas to better understand the CARICOM reparations campaign. I underlined examples of grassroots movements in the Caribbean that undertook reparatory justice as a transformation process. I briefly highlighted the Jamaican Maroon settlements, the quilombos across Brazil, the Garifuna in Saint Vincent, the Haitian Revolution, and Garvey's UNIA to speak on the role of land and liberatory consciousness in new worldmaking detached from the Eurocentric *homo*

oeconomicus construct of the human. Part of my objective in underlining these examples was to illustrate how resistance movements created opportunities for a new type of humanity. Moreover, I highlighted that reparatory justice movements in the Caribbean are not new and that people in the region had advocated for liberation before CARICOM's government-led restitution movement.

In thinking of reparatory justice in a financial framework using neoliberal mechanisms, I underscored some of the cases in the Anglophone world, specifically in the United States, where recompense for violent acts committed against Black people was taken up by state instruments. In two cases, the 1923 Rosewood white riot and *Pigford v. Glickman*, financial recompense was made to the offended party. In the case of the 1921 Tulsa riot, the federal government decided that the offended party and their descendants should receive some form of restitution, but the Oklahoma legislature still has not provided a reparations agenda. The more recent African Descendants of Slavery movement has taken up restitution in a divisive manner with its criteria for who qualifies for redress, which is the opposite of a decolonial intervention. These movements have been constructed in the Black liberal framework and thus have limitations. I highlight these examples to indicate how redress has been articulated postemancipation and its connection to CARICOM's reparations campaign.

The CARICOM reparations campaign has been constructed as a social development project. It is geared towards holding governments, institutions (e.g., the Church of England), and individual families that participated and benefited from conquest, enslavement, and colonialism accountable for their crimes against humanity. CARICOM's reparations campaign was established using modernization theory, which is rooted in racial capitalism and uses the harm repair and relationship repair views. From a neoliberal perspective, its campaign articulates

reparatory justice—that is, demands are made for the region to participate meaningfully in the global capitalist system. The campaign is a notable attempt to confront the damages inflicted on individuals and communities by historical injustices. It addresses the legacy of colonialism in the Caribbean region, where people have suffered from slavery, genocide, and other forms of oppression for centuries. In the next chapter, I turn to the principles of Rastafari livity as an example of reparatory justice that is grounded in a new humanity and new worldmaking.

Chapter 4:

“Natty Dread”—Rastafari Livivity as Praxis

Towards a New Humanity

*Dread, Natty Dread now,
Dreadlock Congo Bongo I.
Natty Dreadlock in a Babylon,
A dreadlock Congo Bongo I.
Eh! Children get your culture,
And don't stay there and gesture, a-ah,
Or the battle will be hotter,
And you won't get no supper.*

– Bob Marley (1974b), “Natty Dread”

In this chapter, I probe deeper into the topic of reparative justice through an exploration of the socioreligious and cultural movement of Rastafari—what Mutabaruka (2021a) calls the “Black Power spiritual movement.” My argument is that the Rastafari movement presents a distinctive outlook on reparations, as it promotes a delinking from the Man2 construct of the human, *homo oeconomicus*, which is frequently used to marginalize and subjugate racialized communities. By embracing this perspective, the Rastafari movement inspires the workings of the creative imagination in constructing a new worldmaking project that is not confined by colonial boundaries. This approach encourages the exploration and validation of alternative forms of knowledge, which are often dismissed or silenced by mainstream colonial narratives. Overall, I argue that the Rastafari movement serves as a prime example of how a Caribbean reparations movement can be constructed within a Black radical framing. It provides a unique opportunity to explore decolonial praxes that can inspire new ways of thinking about and constructing a more

just and equitable society. I hope that this starting point can be meaningful for thinking about reparations for other colonized or subaltern people of the region.

Amid tensions concerning the definition of Rastafari, my application of Rasta stems from Seretha Rycenssa's articulation of the socioreligious cultural movement. Rycenssa describes a "true Rasta" as a person who

believes in the deity of the Ethiopian monarch..., sees Black liberationist Marcus Mosiah Garvey as his prophet..., sticks to [their] path, does not shave, cut or straighten the hair, rejects the customs of 'Babylon' society ... [and] looks on [their] Blackness and sees that it is good and struggles to preserve it. (1978, pp. 22–23)

Babylon, according to Rastafari, is "Western political and economic domination and cultural imperialism" (Murrell, 1998, p. 1) or, in other words, the *homo oeconomicus* theological construction of the world (Wynter, 2006; Wynter & McKittrick, 2015). In Chapter 1, I referenced livity as the way of life of Rastafari.⁴²Livity can be understood as a relatively new set of epistemologies and ontologies that are "transmitted" and "transmuted" sets of praxes developed by enslaved peoples "to carve out an insurrectionary space of righteous and sanctified living despite the mental, physical and spiritual deathliness of slavery" (Shilliam, 2012, p. 340). Furthermore, livity is "discursively practised as 'word-sound-power' activity" (Shilliam, 2012, p. 341) to disrupt everyday Babylon syntaxes and meanings; for example, "dedicate" converts to "livicate" (Shilliam, 2012, p. 341; I speak on this matter more in my exploration of Rastafari acts of resistance and reggae music later in this chapter). Additionally, Rastafari's decolonial praxis is expressed somatically—meaning that the body is a "sanctified tabernacle" (Shilliam, 2012, p. 341), which breaks away from Babylon's notion of wage labour under capitalism. Rasta adherents then rely on their creative skills as artisans and technicians to make a living (Shilliam,

⁴² In my research, I use the terms "Rastafari," "Rastas," and "Rastafarians" interchangeably to describe adherents of the socioreligious movement.

2012). Rastafari sees the “market” as intricately tied to enslavement, and therefore, for Rasta adherents, freedom resides “besides/outside/despite the market” (Shilliam, 2012, p. 341).

Therefore, livity is a movement counter to the monohumanist ways of being (even though some Rastafari practitioners have taken up jobs within the Babylon system). Essentially, Rastafari livity encourages internal “humanization” (Shilliam, 2012), in contrast to the “nonhuman” and “savage” categorization that has been bestowed on the racialized Other through the Wynterian *homo oeconomicus* construct of the human.

In formulating a decolonial undertaking of reparations, my research traces the transformative and anticolonial practices of the Rastafari movement in Jamaica since the livity’s conception. Rastafari observes that the long legacy of Black resistance against colonialism created “a Black social psychology essential to Black liberation” called “Rasta works” (Hutton & Murrell, 1998, p. 36). Moreover, Rasta’s livity is informed by the movement’s seven principles, which are an extension of its praxis of “Rasta works”:

One, the belief in His Imperial Majesty (H.I.M.) Haile Selassie I as being the one whom the book of Rev. Ch 5. spoke of; the Conquering Lion of Judah and the Root of David; two, Marcus Garvey was the prophet who led us to H.I.M. and should therefore be given the place of the prophet in the Rasta hierarchy; three, that we fight against Black and white oppression; four, that Ethiopia is the holy land; five, is Repatriation: Africa for Africans at home and abroad; six, the Ital living, or natural way of doing things; *and* seven, the principle of reasoning, or being reasonable. (R. I. Williams, 2008, p. 17)

Reasoning is a critical aspect of the everyday for Rastafari; Rasta reasoning occurs in communal spaces, which are created for dialectical exchanges (Y. Williams et al., 2023). Moreover, the seven principles are not intended to limit Rastafari to a static way of being. Additional elements contributing to the livity of the movement have accumulated over the years, especially in its formative period and the struggle for identity, which in turn have contributed to the nonfixity of the principles (R. I. Williams, 2008). Further, as Rastafari has evolved, some of the principles

have been extended. For example, the third principle speaks to white and Black oppression, but anticolonial work goes beyond the binary categories of Black and white.

I am not suggesting that Rastafari's state of being is the ultimate instantiation of a new humanity or that to obtain reparations Caribbean people must undertake the ideas of the livity. Rather, I seek to show that Rastafari livity provides a cartography for the human liberation project within the Caribbean radical imagination in a reparatory justice framing. Also, my research embodies one of Rastafari's central ideas in the mapping of a new humanism—that is, the rejection of Eurocentric epistemologies and ontologies in the framing of “man,” which provides the former colonial body the space to produce new ways of being and knowing. Therefore, I examine Rastafari livity to underline a praxis of reparations that is grounded in the “gaze from below” (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015) —the subaltern perspective. Rastafari livity offers a different way of being that contests the Eurocentric construct of the “human,” similar to the quilombos, Maroon settlements, and the acts of the Haitian Revolution that I underlined in the previous chapter.

This chapter is divided into three main parts. In the first part, I underline how Rastafari livity embodies decoloniality through its consciousness and transformative practices (deconstruction of the *homo oeconomicus* world). I describe the brief historical backdrop that produced the movement, which includes “Rasta's psychology” (the *mythoi* or origins) and Rastafari's “dread history” (*biocentric/bio*). I then underline how since its conception, Rastafari livity has been challenging the dominant, Eurocentric construct of the “human” and enacting Wynter's notion of the *homo narrans* (“a hybridly auto-instituting, languaging cum storytelling species”; Wynter & McKittrick, 2015, p. 31) through its continuous metamorphosis, which in itself is an act of reparative justice. In the second part of the chapter, I introduce Rodney's

(1969/2001) Rastafari-inspired concept of groundings, which is a valuable tool for mobilizing and politicizing marginalized groups. Groundings offers an effective means of empowerment and encourages underrepresented groups to engage in political discourse and action. I close the section by illustrating how Rastafari philosophy in its praxis and cultural expressions (such as reggae) is connected to reparatory justice and could provide grounds for a decolonial Caribbean reparations movement that is relevant for all colonized Caribbean peoples— Indigenous, formerly enslaved, and formerly indentured. In the third part of the chapter, I describe some of the limitations of my proposal to use Rastafari thought as a gateway to a new humanity. Overall, this chapter suggests that Rastafari livity provides radical epistememes for the human liberation project and creative methods for transformative changes on issues of Black liberation.

Part 1: Rastafari Livity as a Mapping to the Third Level of the “Third Event”

To understand the *mythoi* and *bio* of Rastafari and its liberation praxis, it is important to recognize the socioeconomic, political, and historical conditions that produced the movement. Rastafari’s *mythoi* can be understood by exploring Rasta’s psychology, which is defined as “resistance and liberation psychology—the sum total of the organized and spontaneous campaign against racist subjection, fired by the burning desire to be free from all forms of social, economic, and political domination” (Hutton & Murrell, 1998, p.36). The Rastafari psyche is grounded in actions of resistance, which are “counterhumanist”⁴³ in response to the neoliberal monohumanist construct of the human. Moreover, the Rastafari psychology of redemption has its premise in Afrocentric ideas that promote positive aspects of African culture and traditions

⁴³ In Wynter and McKittrick (2015), McKittrick defined Wynter’s decolonial project as a *counterhumanism* initiative that aims to dismantle the *homo oeconomicus* governance of the world and create new ontologies and epistemologies that are equitable and delinked from Europe’s white supremacist articulation of the world.

(Hutton & Murrell, 1998). In his critique of the natural sciences (*bio*), Césaire (1996, as cited in Wynter and McKittrick, 2015) mentioned the field’s limitations in addressing the human predicament and proposed a hybrid science: “science of the Word” (p. 32), in which the study of the “Word” (the *mythoi*) then determines the investigation of nature (the *bio*). Rastafari psychology can be seen to produce the study of the “Word,” a factor in how Rastafari construct not just their psyche (the “Word” or the *mythoi*) but their biological makeup, which manifests in their acts of decoloniality. For instance, the representation of Rastafari with dreadlocks counters the representation of the European “man,” or what Audre Lorde (2007) called the “mythical norm.”⁴⁴

Establishing the Mythoi and Biocentric of Rastafari Livity

Four key factors laid the foundation for Rastafari’s *mythoi* and *bio*: (a) the emergence of Marcus Garvey; (b) the crowning of His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I as Emperor of Ethiopia; (c) the theological teachings of Leonard Howell, the “first Rasta” (Rastafari as theology); and (d) the Claudius Henry crisis (Rastafari as a political movement). The first three events feed into the *mythoi* of Rastafari psychology. The last event contributes to the *bio* of the movement, which is reflected in Rastafari’s acts of resistance against the eugenicist hierarchal framing of the modern and postmodern *homo oeconomicus*. Moreover, it underscores how Rastafari have conceptualized and performed their praxes of reparatory justice.

Although Garvey was not a supporter of the Rastafari movement and felt threatened by the growth of the spiritual livity, his Black nationalist philosophy, which centred Africa (as

⁴⁴ According to Lorde (2007), the mythical norm is “white, thin, male, young, heterosexual, Christian, and financially secure. It is with this mythical norm that the trappings of power reside within this society” (p. 116). Further, she said, “Those of us who stand outside that power often identify one way in which we are different, and we assume that to be the primary cause of all oppression, forgetting other distortions of difference, some of which we ourselves may be practicing” (Lorde, 2007, p. 116)

explored in the previous chapter), became a foundational teaching for the Black power spiritual movement (Campbell, 1987). On both sides of the Atlantic, founding myths situated Ethiopia as the birthplace of Christianity and a point of departure for Black humanity (Drake 1977, as cited in Bogues, 2003).⁴⁵ Moreover, to challenge the notion that the Bible is grounded in Eurocentric ideologies, some Rastafari asserted that the book was written by Black people (ancient Africans) for Black people (Murrell & Williams, 1998). They believed that Europeans, in the process of African enslavement, attempted to translate the scriptures but struggled to understand the written language of the ancient Africans (Howell, 1935/2015).⁴⁶ As a result, Europeans had their version of the scriptures, which they used to establish white supremacy and validate enslavement in Babylon, or the “New World” (Campbell, 1987). Retelling the Bible from an Afrocentric perspective positioned Christianity as an indigenous African religion. Garvey’s gravitation towards Ethiopianism was also due to the references to Ethiopia across the Bible; for example, Psalm 68:31 states, “Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God” (Thompson, 1982, p. 570). This helped mobilize the subaltern Black population across the world—in the case of Jamaica, Black people living in impoverished conditions (Hutton & Murrell, 1998)—especially those who turned towards Christian beliefs (passed on as part of the legacy of slavery) as a means for hope and liberation. Rastafari ideology gleans from Garvey’s “Rasta work” and as such, Garvey has become a prophet in the theological framing of the livity and part of the nucleus of Rasta’s *mythoi*.

The second factor that cemented Rastafari’s Afrocentric *mythoi* was the coronation of H.I.M. Emperor Haile Selassie I. On November 2, 1930, Selassie I was crowned as the King of

⁴⁵ Europeans referenced the entire continent of Africa as Ethiopia (Campbell, 1987).

⁴⁶ According to some Rastafari, Amharic is the original language in which the Bible was written by its Black authors (Murrell & Williams, 1998).

Kings, Lord of Lords of Ethiopia (Hill, 2001, introduction by Tafari) and the conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Augier et al., 2010). For Rastafari, Selassie I symbolizes independence, as he represents the part of Africa that was not colonized by the Europeans⁴⁷ (Hill, 2001, introduction by Tafari). In the groundbreaking text *Rastafari: Roots and Ideologies*, Chevannes (1994) interviewed 30 Rastafarians to understand the origins and practices of the livity. In his research, he documented myths in Rastafari ideologies that attest to the messianic position of Emperor Selassie I in relation to Garvey. Garvey had allegedly proclaimed that Black people should look towards the East for a Black king would be crowned, laying the foundation for the acceptance of Selassie I as the return of God, the Black Messiah manifested in the flesh, by disenfranchised Blacks in the diaspora, but more specifically marginalized Blacks in Jamaica's inner city of Kingston⁴⁸ (Wint & Nyabinghi Order, 1998). With the crowning of Emperor Selassie I, Garvey's divinatory role as prophet was intensified; his proclamation was seen as similar to John the Baptist's prophecy about the arrival of Jesus Christ (Chevannes, 1994). There is no evidence to indicate that Garvey made such a proclamation, but the Black power faith movement in Jamaica strongly believes he did (Chevannes, 1994). Interestingly, Garvey rejected Rastafari when it emerged in the 1930s. However, his Afrocentric philosophy is part of the livity's foundational tenets (Bogues, 2003; Hutton & Murrell, 1998), which are arguably more significant to Rastafari than the perception of Garvey as a prophet.

One of the individuals who created principles for the functioning of the faith and further established the livity's *mythoi* is Leonard Howell. A pan-Africanist teacher, grassroots preacher, mystic, and spiritualist, Howell is recognized as the first Rastafarian. He brought a theological

⁴⁷ This notion that Ethiopia was not colonized by Europeans is debated.

⁴⁸ Not all Rastafari believe that H.I.M. is God in the flesh. A well-known critic of that part of Rastafari doctrine is Mutabaruka (2021b).

underpinning to the Black radical movement through the Black messianic paradigm based on the coronation of Emperor Selassie I and the utopian concept of Ethiopianism. Howell created the first Rastafari community, Pinnacle, in Saint Catherine, Jamaica, and it ran from 1940 to 1954 (Bogues, 2003; Campbell, 1987; Chevannes, 1994; Hill, 2001; R. C. Lewis, 1998). Pinnacle became the ground for early Rastafari teachings and a communal space for groundings:

The community's operation was based on the principles of economic independence and communalism.... On "The Pinnacle" there were many Rastafarians, brethren and sistren, children and families, along with individual ones. The structure was set up whereby there were many artisans and skilled people dwelling together as a community. (Hill, 2001, introduction by Tafari, p. 8)

Moreover, Howell's (1935/2015) *The Promise Key* is a pioneering text of the Rastafari movement. It provides the movement's theological teachings, which are rooted in Afrocentric thought, and captures topics such as Ethiopianism, governance, fasting, and Eve (the mother of evil). It concludes with an announcement that Black people should stand up and own their inheritance. Integrating religion, politics, history, and healing approaches, it is structured by four contextual frames: Italy's attempted invasion of Ethiopia; the centring of Ethiopianism in the consciousness of Black people; the Black radical tradition discursive approach, which includes the retelling of the Bible from an Afrocentric perspective; and connections to other significant Afrocentric materials that advocated for the empowerment of the Black race.⁴⁹

The teachings and philosophies of Garvey, Selassie I, and Howell are part of the foundational theology of Rastafari, offering a counternarrative to the neoliberal monohumanist construct of the human and turning the origin story created in the white imagination on its head.

⁴⁹ These texts are Shepherd Robert Athlyi Roger's (1924/2000) *The Holy Piby: The Blackman's Bible* and Fitz Ballantine Pettersburgh's (1926) *Royal Parchment Scroll of Black Supremacy* (Bogues, 2003; Chevannes, 1994). For instance, Chapter 7 of *The Holy Piby* states, "Raise not weight of your finger on Marcus Garvey, neither speak ye against him.... Marcus Garvey [is] an apostle of the Lord God for the redemption of the Ethiopia and her suffering posterities" (Roger, 2000, p. 34).

The “nonbeing” was central to the reconstruction of the “human.” Rastafari’s purpose can be articulated as follows:

[Rastafari] is a conscious attempt by the African soul to free itself from the alienating fetters of colonialism and its contemporary legacies. To accomplish this freedom, Rastas have unleashed an ideological assault on the culture and institutions that have dominated the African diaspora since the seventeenth century.... They have also embarked on an ambitious endeavor of “steppin’ outta (out of) Babylon” to create an alternative culture that reflects a sense of their African heritage. (Edmonds, 1998, p. 23)

I am suggesting that Rastafari’s purpose can be associated with the movement’s *mythoi*. The Black power spiritual movement’s origin story disrupts Eurocentric narratives not only about Black individuals in the African diaspora (particularly in Jamaica) through a retelling of Black life, but also about Africa through its reimagination of the continent and Christianity. Ethiopia is seen as the site of the Garden of Eden and a “pure” civilization, and thus as heaven (Campbell, 1987; Chevannes, 1994). Africa, then, as a possible site for the third level of the Third Event (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015), becomes a liberation anchor in the construction of Rastafari’s *mythoi*, which is also underlined in the fourth principle of Rastafari, that Ethiopia is the holy land.

Whereas Howell brought the theological aspects to Rastafari, Claudius Henry extended the movement’s theology to political action. Henry fused repatriation to Africa with religious doctrine and political action against the Jamaican colonial government (Bogues, 2003). His political action against the colonial state was a response to his failed “Decision Day” prophecy. In October 1959, Henry proclaimed there would be a “miraculous repatriation” (Bogues, 2003, p. 167) and “Israel’s scattered children will return to Africa” (Chevannes, 1998, p. 62). Thousands of Jamaicans left their belongings to meet for “Decision Day,” which turned out to be a disappointment, since the miracle did not manifest. The failure of his prophecy resulted in Henry rethinking his “back to Africa” doctrine. In his rearticulated analysis of the colonial situation, he

labelled Jamaica a Black country, which as such must liberate itself from colonial bondage (Campbell, 1987; Chevannes, 1998).

Taking in the success of the 1959 Cuban Revolution, Henry was influenced to overthrow the Jamaican colonial government (Campbell, 1987; Chevannes, 1998). He created a three-dimensional approach in his ideas of liberation. One, Jamaica had to be liberated; two, liberation struggle had to take place across the British colonial Caribbean with Jamaica as the headquarters; and three, the anticolonial struggle had to extend to the British colonies in Africa (Chevannes, 1998). In an attempt to collapse Henry's and his followers' plan, the colonial police raided his property and confiscated a "cache and two letters" (Chevannes, 1998, p. 62). The letters were addressed to Fidel Castro and mentioned that the Rastafarian community were about to repatriate themselves to Africa and wanted to hand over Jamaica to Cuba. Henry was charged with treason for his attempted overthrow of the colonial government and his invitation to have a foreign power take over (Bogues, 2003; Chevannes, 1998; Spencer, 1998). The political environment in Jamaica became more intense when members of Henry's camp were arrested and charged for the murder of two British soldiers in guerilla combat that took place on Henry's estate (Bogues, 2003; Chevannes, 1998).

Henry's attempted coup moved Rastafari from theory to practice to initiate revolutionary change in the "Black country" of Jamaica. Henry and his supporters showed that Rastafari practitioners were not limited to one set of doctrines. Their actions, however, further intensified police violence against Rastafarian communities. Consequently, an intervention was made by a small group of Rastafarians, who asked the University College of the West Indies to make a detailed report that would indicate that the Rastafarian community was peaceful (Chevannes, 1998).

Rastafari and the “Science of the Word”

The summary of four key moments in the origins of Rasta sets the stage for my argument that Rastafari is an example of *homo narrans*. Henry and his followers’ transformation of Rastafari’s theology into political action can be interpreted as Rastafari’s *mythoi* or origin story informing its *bio*, which in turn creates a *mythoi-bio* hybrid that sprouts from the “gaze from below” in Rastafari’s praxes of reparatory justice. Borrowing from Césaire’s (2002, as cited in Wynter & McKittrick, 2015) “Science of the Word,” one can then postulate that Rastafari livity contests the Eurocentric *homo oeconomicus* “genetic codes” and “nongenetic codes” to create a liberated being that stems from Africa. Rastafari livity illustrates the decolonial “hybrid-auto-instituting-langaging-storytelling species” (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015, p. 25) where the “Rastafari being” or Rasta people and their full representation (including dreadlocks) become a decolonial praxis (i.e., “being human as praxis”⁵⁰).

The creation of this decolonial body is an act of self-reparations, as Rastafari adherents are claiming liberation and emancipation on their own terms. Rastafari works (political action to combat oppression, reflecting the third principle of the movement) to flip the eugenics world doctrine of the liberal monohumanist human (Man2) by asking the simple questions “Who Am I?” or “What Am I?” (Forsythe 1980, as cited in Edmonds, 1998). Rastafari’s *mythoi* changes the *homo oeconomicus* narrative of the world’s origins to centre the Black being in the story of creation and, in so doing, reimagines the possibilities of the Black being. However, the “human” qualities are not informed by *homo oeconomicus*’s sociogenic principle, but rather by Rastafari’s consciousness, which derives from an African psychology of liberation. There, one can see the connection of the liberated being as part of the process of Rastafari’s expression of reparatory

⁵⁰ Katherine McKittrick’s (2015) text on Sylvia Wynter is titled *On Being Human as Praxis*. It refers to the human body itself becoming the decolonial tool for liberation.

justice. The study of Rasta's psychology then influences the outcome of nature—that is, the consciousness impacting the political. As underlined earlier, Rastafari psychology changes the meaning of what it means to be African in the African diaspora; the African—the “nonbeing” or rejected body—becomes a template of a hybrid species that works towards human liberation, particularly for people of African descent. Resistance to coloniality is clearly visible in the actions of Howell and Henry and their efforts to centre Blackness (the African) in the liberation discourse.

Beyond the political and social movements of Rastafari, adherents also show acts of resistance in their everyday livelihood. For example, Rastafari livity displays forms of transformation through its expression of the “Word” (Edmonds, 1998). One can argue that the “Word” constructed in Rasta works represents the history of Africa, which extends the slave narratives; it speaks to the neocolonial situation of the Caribbean and proposes a framework of liberation that is reflective of the historical materialism of the Caribbean (the “Word,” or the ability to reason, is the seventh principle of the movement). For instance, the movement's concept of “I-an-I,” a notion of the individual that implies a divine essence (Y. Williams et al., 2023), builds on the idea that Rastafari's adherents are all children of the “Most High”; thus, unlike denominations of Christianity, Rastafari do not need a ministerial leader (Barnett, 2008; Edmonds, 1998). This individualism is not related to the individualism that is exercised in modern-day capitalism; it is based on relationship to a higher power and is communalistic in its practices (Shilliam, 2012). In Jamaican patois (and the English language in general), the word “mi” (me) is typically used as an object or subject (Edmonds, 1998, p. 33). Rastafari criticizes the usage of language that permits people to identify themselves as objects. As such, to challenge the “thingification” of beings in the English language, while drawing from older African

worldviews, Rastafari implements the “I-an-I” to illustrate that “people are active, creative agents and not passive objects” (Edmonds, 1998, p. 33). This is one of many examples where Rastafari deconstruct the English language to create their own “dread talk” (R. Augier et al., 2010; Bogues, 2003; Hill, 2001). Thus, “Rastafarians have invented a language, using existing elements to be sure, but creating a means of communication that would faithfully reflect the specificities of their experience and perception of self, life and the world” (Nettleford, 1976 as cited in Edmonds, 1998). The Rastafari practice of deconstructing the language of the enslavers and colonizers to create something new, “dread talk,” is an example of the “Word” in action—retelling the origin story and sharing the Black experience using the “gaze from below” framework. In addition to creating a new humanity, the praxis of Rastafari livity has provided methods to mobilize and politicize the disenfranchised.

Part 2: Rastafari Livity as Praxis: Groundings and Reggae

Walter Rodney’s Rastafari-Inspired Groundings Method

I now turn my attention to the Rastafari-inspired concept of groundings, which was coined by Walter Rodney, a Guyanese “revolutionary postcolonial theorist” (Bogues, 2003, p. 127). Rodney’s radical praxis of groundings through his activist work with Rastafari as a guerrilla intellectual provides a method to engage the general populace and the marginalized. In *The Groundings With My Brothers*, Rodney) articulated the concept and practice of groundings as a critical decolonial pedagogy within the Black radical tradition, centring the Caribbean historical and social realities in its analyses. The text presents a framework for intellectuals working towards dismantling the epistemological falsifications of imperialism (Okoth, 2019). By subverting the solidity of teacher-student power dynamics, Rodney created space that allowed both parties to be “active participants in the re-creation of knowledge” (Okoth, 2019, para. 7).

Groundings can be positioned as a body of work that provokes oral performance, as displayed in Rodney's ability to politicize the marginalized through "the Word," which he inherited through Rastafari "reasoning" tradition. In addition, through groundings Rodney highlighted his intellectual prowess and ability to revolutionize across classes, which is illustrated through the conversion of middle-class Jamaicans to Rastafari, committing class suicide as they "chant down Babylon" (call for the destruction of the *homo oeconomicus* system). The concept of groundings sprouts out of the Jamaican language and culture as a descriptor and a practice. Velma Pollard (1994, as cited in Bogues, 2003) makes the argument that through Rastafari transformative language, the meaning of "ground" was redefined as a praxis of being sociable. Historically, in the Jamaican national language, the word "ground" meant a space that is legal (established by the enslaved to plant their own food for trade or consumption), cultural, and physical. Following emancipation, it changed from a noun to an adjective; for instance, the smallest Jamaican dove is known as a "ground dove," as it prefers to remain on the ground. In breaking down the way groundings is used by Rastafari, Bogues (2003) notes:

In the discursive practice of Rastafari, when "grounds" became "groundings," the meaning was layered. Not only did it mean sociality—an equal meeting that breaks socially constructed barriers of race, class, and education—but the nature of such an encounter was marked by "reasonings"—a form of discussion in which each person contributed equally to discourse without any prior hierarchal claim of knowledge. (p. 129)

In Jamaica, Rastafari ideologies were critical to the development of Rodney's grounding discourse. It allowed him to speak across classes by utilizing African pride and history rooted in Rastafari teachings. However, Rodney pushed spiritual livity further by encouraging not just the liberation of the mind, but active participation in the transformation of society (Okoth, 2019). In thinking about a practical methodology in the undertaking of Caribbean reparations, one political tool that echoes through the historicity of the Black radical tradition in the Caribbean and on the

African continent is the “grounding” of theory and practice that some anticolonial movements embodied in their respective territories, reflecting their lived reality.

Amilcar Cabral’s (2009) concept of “weapon of theory” has parallels to Rodney’s decolonial pedagogy. The “new human” is foundational to Cabral’s weapon of theory, which advocates that ideologies guiding the process of decolonization must demonstrate an understanding of the historical realities of their environment. For example, in thinking about socialism in relation to the Caribbean and Guinea Bissau, Cabral and Rodney were critical of classical Marxist theories. According to the two revolutionary intellectuals, the Caribbean and African continent did not meet the necessary conditions to implement an orthodox Marxist revolution. Therefore, each territory, in undertaking a socialist transformation, had to create a form of socialism that reflected its sociocultural realities. Cabral and Rodney made the point that theories must be developed that reflect the social environment and historiographies of the region (R. C. Lewis, 1998). Therefore, in thinking about creating a template that embodies the Black radical tradition in the advocacy for Caribbean reparations, the grounding theories can harness anticolonial and radical Caribbean political thought that reflects the historical reality of the Anglophone Caribbean and rejects capitalism.

Rastafari decolonial traditions, such as groundings, have historically challenged hegemonic discourse, a power system that continues to dehumanize the racialized, specifically the Black body and the spaces it inhabits. For instance, Rodney’s groundings sessions with Rastafari communities were so impactful that they led to civil unrest, later called the Rodney riots (R. C. Lewis, 1998). The 1968 riot was a byproduct of the intense political climate at the time; it was sparked when the Jamaican government prevented Rodney from re-entering Jamaica

after he attended the historical Congress of Black Writers in Montreal⁵¹ (Bogues, 2003; King et al., 2002; R. C. Lewis, 1998; Waters, 1985). At the time, the Jamaican minister of home affairs claimed that Rodney was one of the greatest threats to the country's security (Gonsalves, 1978). In response, people who were in support of Rodney, mainly Rastafari adherents, university students, inner-city youth, and some academics on the left, organized a peaceful protest, but it eventually turned into a riot and three people lost their lives (Campbell, 1987; King et al., 2002; Waters, 1985). The Rodney riots serves as a compelling illustration of how the Rastafari-inspired groundings decolonial method effectively heightened the awareness of a historically marginalized community, ultimately leading to their active resistance against the neocolonial state.

The Emergence of Reggae

The creative arts can be essential instruments in politicizing and organizing civil society around matters critical to a society's development. In a televised interview, George Lamming (2014) asserted that "there is something fundamentally wrong with a society that is not aware of ... the central importance of art in the shaping of human life. Any society that is not aware of that is a barbarian society." Deriving from Lamming's articulation of the significance of the arts, I turn now to look at the ability of art to heighten the political consciousness of Caribbean nationals (Nettleford, 1993, 1999, 2009) for a decolonial reparations undertaking. In Rastafari in Jamaica, the creative arts, culture, and the method of groundings were fused into the politics of society to transform the country's colonial heritage.

⁵¹ In October 1968, some of the key Black radical thinkers of the time descended on Montreal to discuss, at the Congress of Black Writers, the unique challenges and struggles facing Black people around the world. They engaged in a comprehensive exploration of Black power, its historical context, and its significance, while grappling with the pervasive racism in the Western world and the colonialism prevalent in the Global South (Cumplings & Mohabir, 2021).

The praxis of Rastafari livity offers a cartography for delinking from the *homo oeconomicus* construct of “man”; in Jamaica, one can observe the role of “hybrid-auto-instituting-languaging-storytelling” (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015, p. 25) in transforming the cultural, social, and political tapestry of the society. In the late 1960s and into the 1970s, the hybrid *mythoi-bio* of Rastafari livity influenced Jamaican national identity with its embrace of African-inspired traditions and customs to counter the *homo oeconomicus* culture that permeated the postindependence neocolonial society. The Rastafari movement was the catalyst that produced a “shift of consciousness” regarding constructs related to Blackness and representation, which challenged the Euro-Jamaican status quo that suppressed notions and expressions of African-derived aesthetics (Chevannes, 1998, pp. 61–64). The embrace of Rastafari theology, mainly by the disenfranchised, marginalized, and young people, made way for the challenging of the Euro-Jamaican ideologies held by the working class. For instance, in the 1920s and 1930s, religions and cultures associated with Africanness, such as drumming, dancing, spirit possession, and polytheism, were considered “mud” traditions. In contrast, “gold” traditions were connected to the “real” religion, Christianity, which was connected to whiteness (Chevannes, 1998, p. 58). The eventual cultural acceptance of Rastafari livity in Jamaica engendered a sense of pride in African-associated traditions (Chevannes, 1998). This transformative cultural renaissance came in conjunction with reggae and the reasonings sessions that took place through groundings. Rastafari music and symbols became so intrinsic to Jamaican society that from 1972 to 1980, they were weaponized by the two dominant political parties in the country, the People’s National Party and the Jamaican Labour Party, to influence the political decisions of the general public (King & Foster, 2013).

Rasta music is a hybrid music that is reflective of Caribbean culture; it gleans from African rhythms, Western religion hymns, secular music, and cultural sounds creolized or indigenized in the Caribbean. As the evolution of rhythmic sounds in Jamaica, Rasta music has a history of over 400 years starting from the initial stages of African enslavement (Reckord, 1998). Reggae is the contemporary and most popular manifestation of Rasta music.⁵² It became a social and political medium for Rastafari to share their message of repatriation, oppression, slavery, self-empowerment, and Black consciousness, among other things. As the hybrid *mythoi-bio* of Rastafari aimed to create a “new” human without regard to the Eurocentric construction of “man,” Rasta ideologies were reproduced in reggae. In popular culture, music is one of the most central creative expressions used by people of African descent, and reggae is one of the universal sonic vibrations derived from the Caribbean. Since its conception the Rastafari movement has been consistent with its message about restitution for transatlantic slavery (Beckles, 2013). Reggae draws from the well of the Caribbean creative imagination; additionally, it encompasses the heartbeat of the memory of Africa through the spirit, which is manifested in the rhythmic sounds of resistance. Reggae embodies the spirit of Rastafari and shares its chants (blues) through poetic “dread talk” and the drum.⁵³ Moreover, reggae is Rastafari’s highest expression of self, inspired by deep racial memory (Campbell, 1987). One can observe how reggae is a countenance of the praxis of Rastafari livity that challenges the very essence of the *homo oeconomicus* construct of the “man” via its sonic vibrations. Furthermore, some of the themes in reggae are grounded in despair and disposition, with the hope of bringing forth an African

⁵² However, not all reggae musicians are adherents of Rastafari livity. Some reggae musicians may be involved in the culture of the genre but not adhere to Rastafari philosophies. Rastafari, however, did provide the genre with its ideologies and direction (King et al., 2002).

⁵³ The drum is the heartbeat of Rastafari’s sounds (Reckord, 1998).

diasporic solution via the music's ideologies of social change (Brodbber & Green, 1981)—that solution of liberation, as I have mentioned, is a “new” being and the chanting down of Babylon.

During the 1960s and 1970s in Jamaica, the topics addressed in reggae music reflected the everyday realities of the working class and marginalized people. Speaking to the political situation in Jamaica was central in the music, which triggered the Afrocentric cultural rush in the newly independent nation (King & Foster, 2013; Reckord, 1998; Waters, 1985). It is safe to argue that the topics the music covered were inspired by the reasonings that took place in groundings sessions, as exemplified with Leonard Howell's Rasta community, Pinnacle. In exploring the music, one can observe how reggae artists took on themes that are intertwined with Rasta discourse. For example, in speaking to the harsh economic conditions, reggae bands made popular protest songs, such as The Ethiopians' (1969) “Everything Crash,” which spoke to the failure of the Jamaica social system in the 1960s (King et al., 2002, p. 55; Waters, 1985, p. 99). Other bands scrutinized the Jamaican penal system, as the Maytals (1968) did in “54-46 (That's My Number).” Peter Tosh's (1978) “Dem Ha Fe Get a Beatin'” and Junior Byles' (1972) “Beat Down Babylon” likened the Jamaican neocolonialist government to Babylon (King et al., 2002, pp. 55–56) due to the policies that continued the oppression of the subaltern, working class, and poor Jamaicans. The Jamaican government was one target that Rastafari consistently chastised not only in their creative expressions but as part of their everyday life in encountering systemic violence. This critique is a central aspect of the seventh principle of the Rastafari movement: the ability to reason (R. I. Williams, 2008). Furthermore, in directly addressing the Rodney riots, the Wailers' (1973) protest song “Fire, Fire” provided social commentary on the violent incident that resulted in certain parts of Kingston City set on fire (Waters, 1985). The song's lyrics are simple but profound:

Fire, fire—they have no water....
Who you gonna run to?—Who you gonna run to?
Who you gonna run to?—They have no mercy.
Stand up and fight it—Stand up and fight it
Stand up and fight your fight
'til you give me freedom.
Come on and tell me true
Why you been treating me crude
You see the fire burning
And you don't know where you turning.
Fire, fire—fire, fire.

Reggae offers a perspective utilizing the “gaze from below” through what Bogues (2012) identifies as “traditions of the oppressed” (p. 30); that is, it offers a counternarrative to Eurocentric epistememes through the articulation of its creative and rhythmic sounds by the “nonhuman” and its ability to politicize and mobilize.

Bob Marley and Rastafari Livivity

By engaging with the Caribbean creative imagination, I now explore how the politics of reparations is conveyed in reggae by examining the lyrics of cultural icon Bob Marley. Furthermore, through my analysis of Marley's music, I illustrate that the very existence of Rastafari livivity is a call for reparatory justice, as it advocates not only for an external upheaval but also for an internal revolutionary consciousness shift. In my examination of Marley's creative and liberating artwork, I find themes of redress, inspired by how some of the concepts of Rastafari livivity are conveyed in his music. The identified themes are *emancipation*, *chant down Babylon*, *repatriation*, and *promised land*.⁵⁴ I develop these themes in relation to how my project takes up decoloniality, referencing Fanon, Wynter, and Bogues. The first theme, *emancipation*, speaks to the process of decolonization one must experience for internal liberation. The second theme, *chant down Babylon*, refers to destroying the contemporary-modern global

⁵⁴ I italicize the terms *emancipation*, *chant down Babylon*, *repatriation*, and *promised land* when they are used as themes in my discussion of redress in Bob Marley's music.

capitalist system. The third theme, *repatriation*, highlights the physical, mental, or spiritual return to Africa. The final theme, *promised land*, is an extension of *repatriation*, capturing the “movement of Jah⁵⁵ people” (Marley, 1977b) into a new space, “Zion” (the land of God). This last theme builds on and transcends the previous three themes to focus on a central aspect of liberation: land. The four themes are interconnected and work to formulate what Black radical reparatory justice requires: the liberation of self, destruction of the global capitalist system, and the establishment of just realities in decolonial spaces. More importantly, the themes do not occur in any particular order. Rather, they intersect with each other at various points. In exploring these themes in Marley’s music, I have selected the songs that most strongly support my hypotheses.

My construction of the *emancipation* theme in Marley’s music speaks with the ideations of decoloniality. It can be expressed as an awareness of “self” that takes place when the newly liberated human embraces Rastafari livity. As such, it is reflective of the seventh Rastafari principle—the ability to reason or to be reasonable (R. I. Williams, 2008, p. 17). Thus, for one to be capable of holding discourse as a Rastafarian, an internal liberation must occur. In my analysis of Marley’s music, *emancipation* is associated with the decolonization of former colonial subjects, mainly the descendants of what Bogue (2012) called the “living corpses” (p. 33). One of Marley’s (1980a) most renowned musical works, “Redemption Song,” stresses the importance of being able to “emancipate yourselves from mental slavery” in order to achieve liberation. Fanon, Wynter and McKittrick, and Bogue similarly outline emancipation as a process that must occur internally. Marley (1980a) sings:

Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery
None but ourselves can free our minds

⁵⁵ The term “Jah” is a shortened form of the Hebrew name for God (Campbell, 1987).

Have no fear for atomic energy
'Cause none of them can stop the time
How long shall they kill our prophets
While we stand aside and look? Ooh!
Some say it's just a part of it
We've got to fulfill the book.

Marley carries the sentiment of internal decolonization in the chorus of his iconic song. He emphasizes the importance of liberating one's mind from the hegemonic structures ("atomic energy") that have historically suppressed and continue to suppress Black life via racial capitalism. He concludes by referring to the "book"—the Bible—and promises made by God to the people. There, one can observe the connection of theology and emancipation in Marley's creative sound expression.

Rastafari's third principle, to counter oppressive forces across racial lines, aligns with the theme of *chant down Babylon*. Rhetoric about the destruction of Babylon—the contemporary-modern global capitalist system—permeates reggae, of which Marley's music is a prime example. Although one can *chant down Babylon* regardless of one's acceptance of Rastafari's teachings, the process of *emancipation* (the circular motion of redemption and self-actualization) makes one more aware of the colonial and neocolonial situation—the violent manner in which Babylon functions. The "new human," or liberated person (Rastafarian), can now directly speak to the horrors of Babylon, as addressed in Marley's (1979a) track "Babylon System," for instance. Rastafari's call for the dismantling of the system presents synergies with Fanon's and Wynter's postulations about destroying the system to create new possibilities detached from Eurocentric ideologies. In the song "Rastaman Chant," Marley (1973e) sings:

Hear the words of the Rastaman say:
"Babylon, you throne gone down, gone down;
Babylon, you throne gone down."
Said I hear the words of the Iyaman say:
"Babylon, you throne gone down, gone down;

Babylon, you throne gone down.”
And I hear the angel with the seven seals say:
“Babylon throne gone down, gone down,
Babylon throne gone down.”

Marley positions Rastafari as prophets who foretell the obliteration of the system that was built to exploit the working class, subaltern, and poor people, specifically Black people. The Rastaman or Rastafari adherents, in the stage of *emancipation*, recognize the collapse of the modern world and utilize scriptural references to support their belief. In the above extract, Marley starts the verse with the chants of the “Rastaman,” who prophesies the destruction of the racial capitalist global system. In an assessment of Marley’s music, Cooper (1995) states that his “apocalyptic imagery of imminent collapse graphically suggests the fall of Babylon and the implosion of the political system” (p. 121). The passage “I hear the angel of the seven seals” is taken from the biblical book of Revelation, which speaks of the destruction of the world and the return of the Black Christ (as interpreted by Rastafari) to battle the anti-Christ.

Repatriation is one of the most popular themes in reggae, which is reflected in Marley’s musical sermons. It is also one of the pillars of Rastafari livity and the fifth principle of the movement (R. I. Williams, 2008). My usage of *repatriation* is tied to the idea of creating something new that is independent from Babylon’s influences. Rastafari use reggae to speak on their politics of freedom, or as Clinton Hutton (2010) coined it, “repatriational freedom” (p. 33), which has its origins in West African spiritual practices that were violently disrupted by transatlantic slavery. Rastafari’s sociopolitical history, along with the livity’s embrace of African culture and advocacy for a “return” to the continent (i.e., Ethiopia), inspired the CARICOM Reparations Commission to include repatriation in its 10-point plan (Matthews 2017, p. 96). According to Rastafarian elder Ras Ishon Williams (2008), Rastafari’s fifth principle was inspired by Marcus Garvey’s notion of “Africa for Africans at home and abroad.” Furthermore,

Williams (2008) postulates that repatriation begins with the mind and heart recognizing one's immediate environment (in "Babylon"), which can lead to actions that will result in the "return" to Africa. Marley's (1977b) track "Exodus," from an album with the same title, captures the promises that come with embracing Rastafari livity—oppression and then salvation via "Jah Kingdom":⁵⁶

Men and people will fight ya down
When ya see Jah light.
Let me tell you if you're not wrong
Everything is all right.
So we gonna walk—all right!—through de roads of creation
We the generation
Trod through great tribulation.
Exodus, all right! Movement of Jah people!
Open your eyes and look within:
Are you satisfied (with the life you're living)?
We know where we're going
We're leaving Babylon
We're going to our Father's land.

The first two lines in the above passage speak to Rastafari as emancipated beings. Marley indicates that when they become self-actualized in the knowledge of Rastafari, they will experience oppression from the system. This is evident in how Rastafari have been historically treated in Jamaica. When the song states that Rastafari must "trod through the great tribulation," it refers to the obstacles they experience when they take on the spiritual Black power livity.

The final theme of reparatory justice in Marley's work centres on the *promised land*, or Zion. Part of the foundation of Rastafari livity is built upon access to land away from Babylon, leading to sovereignty. Garvey's (1986) philosophy, in his expression of the Black nationalist tradition, included ownership of land but also, more importantly, individual titles to property on

⁵⁶ Jah Kingdom is associated with Rastafari's concept of Zion (heaven on earth), which can be found in Africa (Ethiopia). Rastafari adherents established communities in Africa to bring to life their vision of heaven on earth. Jah Kingdom can also be reached spiritually and mentally through the full embrace of Rastafari livity.

the African continent to create a new Black-led nation. Although Garvey never got to execute his agenda of repatriation to the continent (in this case Liberia), some Rastafari adherents were able to fulfill his vision to a certain extent by repatriating to Shashamane, Ethiopia, in the early 1950s (Campbell, 1987).⁵⁷ Marley, in his music, captures the full reparatory experience in Rastafari thought with the ultimate end goal of making it to the *promised land*. The process of *emancipation* takes place through accepting Rastafari teachings, equipping the believer with the necessary intelligence to “reason” in order to *chant down Babylon*. This leads to *repatriation*, from the trenches of “Babylon” to the *promised land*. Marley (1980c) speaks to this Rastafari teaching in the song “Zion Train,” from the album *Uprising*:

Zion train is coming our way
The Zion train is coming our way
Oh, people, get on board
Thank the Lord
I gotta catch a train, 'cause there is no other station
Then you going in the same direction.

Marley is encouraging Rastafari adherents to get on the train that will take them to Zion. It is safe to argue that the “train” is the movement of Rastafari, with the ticket being the acceptance of the teachings and philosophies of what has been called the “Black power movement with a spiritual nucleus” (Mutabaruka, 2021a). For Marley, the notion of arriving in the *promised land* is underscored in “Rastaman Chant” (1973e):

I say fly away home to Zion (fly away home)
I say fly away home to Zion (fly away home)
One bright morning when my work is over,
Man will fly away home.

Traditionally, for Rastafari, Mount Zion is located in Ethiopia, where Jah has provided the practitioners of the livity with land. However, the *promised land*, similar to the theme of

⁵⁷ Shashamane is considered the *promised land* by some Rastafari practitioners and scholars. The argument can also be made that it has the potential to be a space expressing Bogue's (2012) concept of common association.

repatriation, is not strictly about being “elsewhere”; it can be the place where one stands, a state of being, or physical land, where one can dwell in freedom. The praxis of Rastafari livity displays how cultural expressions can be a transformational force for social change.

Building from the theme of the *promised land* and its material realities, I would now like to push the conversation further on how Rastafari envisions life outside of Babylon. As I have illustrated in Marley’s music, the idea of the *promised land* and its realization has played a central role in Rastafari’s philosophy. Rastafarians have created plans for a new society built on their own principles of sovereignty. For instance, Rasta practitioner and scholar Barbara Makeda Blake Hannah (2012) has created a blueprint for a “New African Zion” (p. 109) that would be located in Ethiopia (like Shashamane) due to the religious movement’s historical and spiritual connection to that nation. She proposes that the government of this New African Zion would be based on the constitution written by Haile Selassie I for the Ethiopian World Federation, the philosophy of Marcus Garvey, and the spiritual guidance of the Bible. The society would be communal, with shared ownership and land. People would earn money based on their income-earning skills, and surplus goods would be traded with citizens, companies, businesses, and other countries to address the nation’s needs. Hannah argues that the society would prioritize creating the most efficient technology and skills with the support of Rastafari artists and craftspeople. Moreover, the nation would be led by a Council of Elders in areas such as education, health, finance, transportation, women and children, religious observance, and international affairs. Each council member would serve a 5-year term but could be removed early if they fail to fulfill their duties efficiently. In terms of governance, Hannah continues that council members can also be democratically reelected or promoted to a higher position. During the initial phase of building this new nation, the First Administration would focus on constructing roads, housing, services,

and agriculture (Hannah, 2012). This is one of the ways in which Rastafari has constructed alternative ways of being outside and with the global capitalist system.

Part 3: Limitations of Rastafari Livivity as a Liberating Praxis

While my proposition that Rastafari livivity may be a site of the third-level hybrid *homo narrans* works in tangent with a decolonial perspective in the advocacy for reparations, this proposal has its limitations. As I stated earlier in this chapter, the goal is not to suggest that Caribbean nationals must become adherents of Rastafari; instead, my intention is to show an example of how an anticolonial indigenized Caribbean movement has conceptualized reparatory justice on its terms. One can possibly point out more fallacies in my argument, but for the purpose of this chapter, I underline three limitations of using Rastafari thought: (a) its patriarchal tenets, (b) its Judeo-Christian foundations, and (c) its Afrocentric nature. These limitations, however, are continually grappled with by practitioners and scholars of the faith on the ground, in academia, and in creative realms such as reggae, which may not occur in all anticolonial indigenized Caribbean movements.

One major flaw in the spiritual movement, and thus in my usage of Rastafari as a case study of decoloniality, is the male-centric principles of the livivity. Rastafari scholars have scrutinized the livivity to challenge its patriarchal tenets, which are an essential part of the movement's foundation. The connecting thread across their critiques is that the spiritual movement emphasizes Black liberation while relegating women to subordinate roles (Lake, 1998). Furthermore, Rastafari scholars underline how women in the movement resist and are reimagining their position in the faith. Maureen Rowe (1998), in *Gender and Family Relations in Rastafari: A Personal Perspective*, interrogates the livivity as a Rastafari practitioner and academic. She speaks to the sociopolitical and economic conditions that birthed the patriarchal

values of Rastafari and the factors that influenced male-female and family relationships as the movement grew. Rowe demonstrates that Rastafari sprouted out of the grey area between European (*homo oeconomicus*) patriarchy and African patriarchy. She defines European patriarchy in relation to wealth, where the man is the breadwinner (similar to Wynter's notion of Man2), and the woman, if she works outside of the home, provides a secondary source of income but is still governed by the man. In a situation where the man is unemployed or underemployed, and the woman is the breadwinner, the man is seen as emasculated. On the other hand, in African patriarchy, the man's authority comes from his "maleness"; therefore, the African male has value set upon him over the African woman due to the significant role that cultural values place on "being male" (Rowe, 1998, p. 73). Rowe proposes that Rastafari patriarchy derives from European and African patriarchy "to provide a theoretical base for practices that were accepted by the population but could not be explained" (1998, p. 74). Moreover, she recognizes that gender relationships were influenced by developments taking place in the wider society.

Consequently, these "theoretically unexplained" patriarchal values became part of the nucleus of Rastafari praxes. For example, Leviticus 15:19, in the Old Testament of the Bible (King James version), asserts that if a woman has an issue and that is of her blood (i.e., a menstrual period), she must be put away for seven days, along with anyone who has been in contact with her (Tafari-Ama, 1998). This segregation of women has been justified by claims that the Rastafarian brethren must also heed the same rules, in the sense that if by chance a male cuts a finger and there is a flow of blood, or if he has a "wet dream," he is not allowed to enter the tabernacle. However, in practice, Rastafari sistren have traditionally been the ones placed in isolation, not their counterparts (Tafari-Ama, 1998).

Rowe (1998) states that the 1970s witnessed the growth of the women's liberation movement in the "developed" world, which impacted the political landscape of the livity in relation to gender dynamics. Rastafari women were speaking up more concerning the subordination of women in the movement, and their progressive ideas were further enhanced by the more liberal men and women who were joining Rastafari in that period. However, new ideas to tackle gender norms were not well received by most of the elders (Rowe, 1998). Academics and some Rastafari adherents continue to grapple with the patriarchal framing of the movement to this day.

The second limitation of Rastafari livity is its foundation in Judeo-Christianity and the Bible. As indicated in the previous section, Hannah's (2012) blueprint for a new Zion is guided by the spiritual teaching of the Bible, demonstrating the significant role that the Bible plays in the very essence of Rastafari livity. Moreover, in my summary of Marcus Garvey's work and the recognition of H.I.M. Haile Selassie I as the coming of the Black Messiah, I noted that Rastafari has its grounding in Ethiopianism and Christian beliefs. An obvious criticism, in line with the work of Fanon (1961/2004), Lorde (2007), and Kelley (2021), is that the colonial instruments that have oppressed and continue to subordinate racialized people—particularly Black people—cannot be used as tools of freedom in the decolonization processes. As highlighted in the first limitation of Rastafari thought, the Bible has been used to justify the subordinate position of women in the movement and to maintain male leadership in the livity. Respected Rastafari elder Prof-I (2017) has been one of the public speakers who openly challenge Rastafari's usage of the Bible as a contemporary tool in the human liberation project:

I become in opposition to the Bible, that is where I find it, because if I was following everything in the Bible, women will become nothing. And when his majesty *was* crowned *in* 1930, and crowned Empress Menen Asfaw [the wife of Haile Selassie I] the same time, to show I-an-I that man and woman is equal in the sight of H.I.M.

In the above passage, Prof-I mentions the balance required in the gender equation when it comes to Rastafari livity and the gaps in the Bible concerning the role of women. His argument is that the Bible is a manuscript that does not reflect modern times, and as such it cannot fully represent male-female relationships. Furthermore, he states that Selassie I was coronated in partnership with Empress Menen, a recognition of equality.

One argument put forth to justify Rastafari's use of the Bible is that interpretations depend on the individual (Owens, 1976). Just as the various Rastafari houses have different cultural norms in regard to the roles of women (though women remain at the bottom of the hierarchy), they interpret the Bible differently, which plays an integral part in gender norms.⁵⁸ Through Selassie I, some adherents of the faith believe that they are given the prophetic eye to filter through the false messages of the "white man" (R. Augier et al., 2010; Howell, 1935/2015; Murrell & Williams, 1998; Owens, 1976). The Twelve Tribes of Israel house, on the other hand, does not view the Bible as a holy book that has been corrupted by the Europeans; instead, it embraces every word from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22 (Murrell & Williams, 1998). Although the various Rasta people have taken up an Afrocentric perspective on the scriptures, there is no one common Rastafari hermeneutic. Rastafari has taken a freestyle approach to making sense of the scriptures and understanding the Bible in the context of their lived realities (Murrell & Williams, 1998).

However, there are also Rastas who do not recognize the Bible as a tool of redemption.

For example, elder Mutabaruka (2021a) states:

In reality, the Bible, there are certain things that are invalid right now. It is not necessary, because after 4,000 years when a man wrote something, how do you live off that when science and technology and human beings and modern things have advanced? (1:18)

⁵⁸ Within the Rastafari movement, there exist several distinct "houses" or groups, each with its own set of beliefs, practices, and interpretations of Rastafarian principles. These houses may be viewed as different sects or denominations within the broader Rastafarian community.

Again, some biblical ideas have placed women in positions of subordination due to the violent patriarchy that existed when the Bible was written; hence, Prof-I's criticisms of the scriptures as well, particularly on the issue of gender equity. Mutabaruka (2021b) takes the argument further by underlining that changing "white Jesus" to "Black Jesus" changes the image of the Messiah but not the message, regardless of how it is filtered to reflect an individual's or sect's beliefs. Essentially, one who embraces the lessons of the Bible is still an advocate for anti-Black racism since the scriptures are rooted in white supremacy. Mutabaruka (2021a) notes that Rastafari is "a movement of people who are searching for liberation from white supremacy" and, thus, adherence to the book remains at odds with that intent. His position speaks to Wynter's (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015) assertion that the *mythoi* influence the *biocentric*, and Rastafari's ability to continually reinvent itself as a hybrid *mythoi-bio* in Babylon can be a template for the human liberation project. Therefore, it is essential to delink from colonial religious instruments, which have played a crucial role in the conquest, genocide, enslavement, and colonization of people of African descent and Indigenous people in the Caribbean.

The third limitation of Rastafarianism as a decolonial template is the Afrocentric framing of the livity. Although Afrocentric thought is used to combat white supremacy and to empower the disenfranchised African diaspora, it can also become a hinderance to the human liberation discourse. As noted, Wynter identifies Africa not only as the origin of the Third Event but also as a possible ground for the third level of the "hybrid-auto-instituting-languaging-storytelling species" (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015, p. 25). As expressed earlier, the idea is not "one barbarism replacing another barbarism" (Fanon, 1959/1965, p. 32), but creating new ways of being that recognize the colonized and colonizer in the liberation praxis. Afrocentric ideologies need not be read as somehow an expression of Black supremacy. Rather, I am proposing a

framework that embraces a new humanity not limited to any particular group of people.

Rastafari's recognition of Africa as the origins of humanity is significant in creating a liberation praxis, particularly for a people who have been dehumanized for over 400 years; however, in moving forward in the processes of new worldmaking, epistemes should not be limited to any centric gaze. The "gaze from below" is not regulated within a particular racial schema; it recognizes groups of people who have historically been oppressed and marginalized, such as people of African descent, Indigenous people in the Americas, and East, South, and Southeast Asian people (particularly those individuals brought to the Caribbean by European colonial violence, oppression, and greed).

Rastafari's foundation, particularly through reinterpretation of the Bible, is based on Black superiority, growing out of Garvey's Afrocentric and Ethiopianist philosophy. There is a strong Rastafari belief that Blackness is superior to whiteness. For example, some Rastafari will make such statements as "Black men were civilized when the white man was living in the caves of Northern Europe. The Throne of Ethiopia is older than the throne of St. George" (Owens, 1976, p. 57). This sense of superiority was central to building the confidence of a people who had been dehumanized through enslavement and colonialism. However, the human liberation project is not about switching the narratives so Black people are in a position of power at the expense of non-Black people. It is about dismantling all systems of oppression, in accordance with the third Rastafari principle. Rastafari adherents can extend the livity to further the process of decolonization, similar to what they do with language ("dread talk") and their representation of Black humanity (dreadlocks) in the white imagination. They must continue to be creative in their quest for liberation from white supremacy.

Conclusion

As the global conversation on reparations for conquest, enslavement, and colonialism becomes mainstream, reparative justice must be undertaken through a decolonial lens in new worldmaking. I have argued in this chapter that Rastafari livity and its guiding principles have flipped the *homo oeconomicus* construct of the “human” on its head, which is one of its most significant contributions to reparatory discourse in my research. Moreover, by studying Rastafari, one can observe how ontologies and epistemologies that counter Eurocentric thought can become the foundation for articulating a decolonial reparatory movement. Rastafari livity offers a cartography that catapults from the Caribbean radical imagination of Wynter’s postulation of the third-level *mythoi-bio* hybrid, which was built on Fanon’s concept of a new humanity. Rastafari’s *mythoi* disturb the *homo oeconomicus* construction of the world by recentring the world’s origin narratives (particularly Blackness) on the African continent. Likewise, Wynter hypothesizes that the third level can start in Africa. Furthermore, Rastafari livity offers a decolonial praxis already in motion, which I argue is an example of the “hybridly auto-instituting, languaging cum storytelling species” construct of *mythoi-bio*.

Rodney’s groundings practice, which has its roots in Rastafari livity praxis, has become a powerful tool for empowering historically marginalized communities and mobilizing and politicizing the subaltern and disenfranchised. Groundings place these communities at the forefront of the fight against colonialism, as seen during the Rodney riots. Moreover, it involves creating a safe space where people can come together and discuss their experiences with oppression and discrimination, as well as their aspirations for a more equitable society, as exemplified by Howard’s Pinnacle. This collective process fosters a sense of purpose and identity among participants, which can be harnessed for social change. The praxis of groundings

has proven successful in anticolonial movements, allowing communities to assert their agency and challenge the status quo. As such, I argued that the Rastafari-inspired method of groundings could inform the articulation of a decolonial reparations philosophy to mobilize and organize marginalized and subaltern groups in Caribbean societies.

Furthermore, through its philosophy in praxis and cultural expressions, Rastafari has provided the hermeneutics and a method to reimagine and work towards a decolonial Caribbean reparations movement. The 1960s and 1970s in Jamaica witnessed how Rastafari's cultural expression, particularly in reggae music, aided in nation-building (through anticolonial discourse) and created new ways of being that recognized Africanness (Blackness) as a category that confronts the "nonbeing" status of Blackness in the *homo oeconomicus* construction of the world. Moreover, my exploration of Bob Marley's music underlined how the arts can be used as a possible decolonial praxis to foster social and political transformation. I argued for the use of the Caribbean creative imagination to conceptualize a reparations framing that is not attached to elitism and that learns and works with the general populace, especially subaltern groups.

However, as with most anticolonial movements, there are limitations. The patriarchal, Judeo-Christian, and Afrocentric ideologies that are embedded in Rastafari have played central roles in the expression of the livity, which has resulted in necessary criticism of a movement contesting white supremacy while becoming an oppressive tool of women in particular. In the next chapter, I explore the role of international law in maintaining power systems that continue to subjugate the voices advocating for reparatory justice for conquest, slavery, colonialism, and neocolonialism. Building my analysis from the "gaze from below," I interrogate international law by proposing the application of TWAIL as a decolonial legal framework to move forward.

Chapter 5:
**“Small Axe”—Decolonizing the Legal Framework
of the Caribbean Reparations Campaign**

*Why boasteth thyself
Oh, evil men
Playing smart
And not being clever?
I said, you're working iniquity
To achieve vanity
But the goodness of Jah, Jah
I-dureth for-I-ver*

*So, if you are the big tree
We are the small axe
Ready to cut you down (well sharp)
To cut you down*

– Bob Marley (1973d), “Small Axe”

One of my overall goals with this research project is to make a meaningful contribution to the legal framing of reparations in the Caribbean. Reparations scholars and activists have utilized international law as an essential tool to justify their claims for redress, although the key players of the CARICOM reparations campaign have not yet presented an official legal case to the international courts. Though the undertaking of reparations for conquest, enslavement, and colonialism is a legal battle, most achievements in the case of the Anglophone Caribbean have been moral, such as the memorandum of understanding signed between the University of the West Indies and the University of Glasgow. As the cause for redress is transnational in its articulation, international law prescribes what reparations can be (Strecker, 2017). In this chapter, I continue the conversation on decolonial praxes in the “chanting down of Babylon” by interrogating the *homo oeconomicus* construct of international law that maintains coloniality within the context of the Caribbean reparations campaign. Subsequently, in scrutinizing the

liberal monohumanist legal framing of CARICOM’s redress campaign, I propose a radical intervention using TWAIL that is grounded in the “gaze from below.” I engage with the legal aspect of reparations to illustrate the limitations of making a legal case for reparatory justice in the process of new worldmaking. I seek to think through ways to reimagine Caribbean reparations independent from the legal epistemes and mechanisms that perpetuate the continuation of neocolonialism. In working towards that goal, the chapter unpacks into three main parts. The first section examines the liberal construction of international law, which is used to formulate current discourses on reparations. Moreover, it highlights how these laws are utilized to protect former colonial powers and other beneficiaries who participated in transatlantic slavery and African chattel slavery. The second section explores the decolonial praxes of TWAIL. The final part proposes a TWAIL perspective in thinking of new decolonial legal undertakings for redress.

Part 1: International Law

International Law and Reparations

In examining the neoliberal premise of international law and reparations, I explore Anthony Gifford’s (2000) seven legal propositions for constructing reparations claims. The propositions rely on a harm repair framing and are moulded and executed in the same *homo oeconomicus* system that continues to exploit Black life. A few of the propositions have been used by marginalized groups who, in some cases, received some form of redress—for example, Japanese Americans concerning internment camps and Jewish people concerning the Holocaust. However, when it comes to reparatory justice for transatlantic slavery and Indigenous genocide in the Caribbean context, the propositions lose ground within the streams of international law.

The first proposition argues that transatlantic slavery was a crime against humanity. To support his general position on African enslavement, Gifford references the Charter of the Nuremberg Tribunal, which defines crimes against humanity as “murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, and other inhumane acts committed against any civilian population ... whether or not in violation of the domestic law of the country where perpetuated” (Proposition One section, para. 2). History tells us that with the intent of expansion, Europe perpetuated various acts of violence, such as conquest, colonialism, and enslavement. The horrors experienced by enslaved Africans—from the time they were captured in Africa, during their journey across the middle passage, and in the intense further dehumanizing they went through in the process of “thingification” in the Americas or wherever they were dispersed—are well documented (Beckles, 2013). These violent acts fall within the perimeters of the United Nations’ 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and thus, according to Gifford the descendants of the enslaved have a valid claim for restitution.

The second proposition emphasizes that in the application of international law, the perpetrators who committed crimes against humanity must make redress, as articulated by the Permanent Court of International Justice in 1928. Although that particular argument tends to focus more on individual damages and losses of private property, the principle can be extended to recognize large populations of people (Gifford, 2000). One prominent example is the Jewish Holocaust, after which various forms of restitution were made to Jews by the German government. In 1952, Germany came to an agreement with Israel to make a payment of US\$222 million to Jews who fled Nazi-controlled countries during World War II (Gifford, 2000; Muhammad, 2013). Another example is the 1988 Civil Liberties Act in the United States, which was used to address internment and inhumane practices used against Japanese Americans during

World War II, resulting in the disbursement of \$1.2 billion or about \$20,000 per plaintiff (Gifford, 2000; Muhammad, 2013). The US government has yet to provide the descendants of the African enslaved with any form of reparations for transatlantic slavery and its afterlife, which include other forms of crimes against humanity such as Jim Crow laws and redlining.⁵⁹

The third proposition argues that there are no legal barriers preventing the claim of reparations (Gifford, 2000). For instance, the descendants of the Indigenous Waikato people of New Zealand put forth a case for reparations to the settler colonial state, although they were not the original victims of the crimes against humanity that were committed (Muhammad, 2013, p. 160). Furthermore, the hands that now control the state were not those that exploited and committed acts of genocide against the Waikato. Nonetheless, they are the descendants of the people who committed the crimes and reap the benefits of such violence (Gifford, 2000). By utilizing the British Foreign Compensation Act of 1950, the descendants of the victims were entitled to recompense (Gifford, 2000). Consequently, the Crown of New Zealand gave an official apology, there was a restitution of land lost, and financial redress was provided via the Waikato Raupatu Claims Settlement Act (Muhammad, 2013). The example of the Waikato counters the argument made by the descendants of enslavers to dismiss reparations for transatlantic slavery because there are no living formerly enslaved Africans who can make a reparations claim (Beckles, 2013). It also counters their argument that they did not participate in slavery, so the cause is void (Burden-Stelly et al., 2022). The Waikato example indicates that forms of redress can be made to the descendants of an oppressed group by the descendants of the

⁵⁹ Jim Crow laws involved the usage of the state apparatus to legalize racial segregation, particularly in the South (Glasser, 2000). Redlining is a process in which banks will not provide racialized people with loans to purchase homes in urban areas, in order to prevent them from owning homes in affluent (white) neighbourhoods. The US government supported this discriminatory practice, which began in the 1930s (Brooks, 2020).

group that caused the harm. In the case of atonement for genocide and transatlantic slavery in the Caribbean, this proposition comes with limitations, which are discussed later.

The fourth proposition calls for the creation of a transnational body that can advocate for Africans on the continent and in the diasporas who have undergone “famine, disease, and underdevelopment” (Gifford, 2000, Proposition Four section, para. 2). This proposition makes the case for African nations that have struggled to live up to their potential, due not only to internal factors but also mainly to external influences that dictate these nations’ sovereignty, such as the foreign debts that limit their growth (Gifford, 2000). Thus, Caribbean nations can be added to that cohort of Black-led nations residing in the afterlife of slavery. As addressed in Chapter 1, international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the IMF, continue to impose policies that maintain the system of exploitation on countries in the Global South. Furthermore, Black people who are minorities in countries such as the United States and Britain have no independent governments that can represent their voice (Gifford, 2000). As such, the argument is to have a transnational entity that can take up the concerns, and particularly the issues that are tied to the legacies of transatlantic slavery, of people of African descent globally (Gifford, 2000).

The fifth proposition then asks: “Who would be the defendants?” (Gifford, 2000). Similar to the work of Beckles (2013, 2019), Nora Wittmann (2013), Patricia Muhammad (2013, 2016), Fernne Brennan (2017), and Verene Shepherd (2018), this proposition states that claims of reparations should be brought against “the countries that fostered and supported the slave trade, legitimized the institution of slavery, and profited as a result” (Gifford, 2000, Proposition Five section, para. 2). Although Propositions 4 and 5 do not necessarily speak to any particular mechanism of international law, they do provide for a united voice for African states and Black people living in the diaspora. Furthermore, they encourage targeting organizations and families

who benefited from enslavement. As an example, a claim for reparations has been made against a Conservative member of parliament in England, Tory Richard Drax, whose family once owned enslaved Africans on their 250-hectare Drax Hall Estate in Barbados; the plantation still stands today (Lashmar & Smith, 2021).

The sixth proposition builds from the preceding tenets to establish an international human rights case for transatlantic slavery. It argues for intense research to be carried out by a group of experts to assess the levels of damage done to African countries and nations where chattel slavery and other forms of enslavement were practised (Gifford, 2000). These ideas can be connected to part of the CARICOM Reparations Commission's 10-point plan, in particular its fourth point about cultural institutions (Beckles, 2013; Shepherd, 2015). As detailed in Chapter 3, the fourth point advocates for establishing institutions such as museums and research centres in the Caribbean; these types of spaces can play critical roles in conducting research, collecting data, and raising the consciousness of citizens (Brissot & Jules, 2023; Evans & Wilkins, 2019). Research produced by these centres can further underline the violence, struggles, and rebellions of transatlantic slavery and colonialism. However, there must be a case study on every affected country to understand the damages done (Gifford, 2000). When comprehensive studies are carried out on how the Caribbean and Africa were affected by transatlantic slavery, the damages must be considered in a variety of categories, such as economic, psychological, cultural, and social, to name a few. Proposition 6 extends the reparations argument beyond the economic aspect to recognize elements that tend to be ignored—for instance, the psychological and cultural harm that the enslaved Africans and Indigenous people experienced and the intergenerational trauma that is embodied by the descendants of the enslaved (DeGruy, 2005; Shepherd, 2018).

The seventh proposition follows up on claims that cannot be settled by agreement, stating such cases will then be decided by a special international tribunal, which has yet to be formed (Gifford, 2000). At the moment, no court is competent to hear a claim for reparations for transatlantic slavery (Gifford, 2000). As argued in the preceding section, international law has been used by various groups of people to get some form of redress for crimes against humanity but seems to hit a roadblock when it comes to restitution for the genocide of Caribbean Indigenous populations and for transatlantic slavery.

The explored seven propositions have established the foundational tools needed to make an international human rights case against the enablers of and participants in transatlantic slavery within neoliberal structures. Other approaches have been developed to find justice for the crimes against humanity committed by Europeans during their imperial expansion. For instance, Mari Matsuda (2012, as cited in Beckles, 2013) envisions an epistemology that can be used as an entry point to thinking about implementing international legal mechanisms to advance the reparations movement. She argues that the United Nations Charter can be used to develop a case for reparations. In building a reparations case as presented by the Charter, three criteria must be met: “The injustice must be well documented... the victims must be identified as a distinct group... and the current members of the group must continue to suffer harm” (Matsuda, 2012, as cited in Beckles, 2013, p. 14). In reference to the Caribbean, the case proposed by reparations scholars such as Beckles (2013, 2018, 2019), Shepherd (2018), and Brennan (2017) meets all three criteria. In such a situation, a platform can then be given to leaders—for example, governmental bodies—to present their case to international legal entities (Beckles, 2013). However, though the criteria have been met, reparations for genocide and transatlantic slavery have been easily dismissed or negated by international law.

International Law as a Defence Mechanism

Scholars and practitioners have proposed and referenced transnational legal frameworks (e.g., Gifford's [2000] Propositions 2 and 3) to make a case for reparations for conquest, colonialism, and transatlantic slavery; nonetheless, international law has been weaponized by the beneficiaries of Caribbean Indigenous genocide and African chattel slavery. In their challenge of reparations claims, former colonial bodies such as the British have issued counterarguments (Beckles, 2013, 2021). The principle of nonretroactivity, which falls under the umbrella of international law (Beckles, 2013), is used to argue that transatlantic slavery was internationally legal at the time; therefore, the state cannot be held liable using modern laws, for the practice was not "internationally wrongful" at the time (Beckles, 2013; Brennan, 2017; Wittmann, 2013, 2017). Arguing that the transactions of Black bodies as chattel slavery were legally binding and normative practice, such a rebuttal works within a Eurocentric framework that disregards livelihoods outside of European borders (Beckles, 2013; Wittmann, 2013).

One can also ask, whose moral compass did the Europeans use to declare that slavery was legal internationally? The enslaved Africans did not abide by laws of chattel slavery, as evidenced by their acts of resistance and rebellions on the African continent, during the middle passage, through to the plantations across the Americas, and all the way to emancipation. They also resisted the continued exploitation and "legal" murder of Black bodies, such as the multiple cases of lynching (Beckles, 2013; Coates, 2017). The categorizing of slavery as a legal transnational practice negates the laws and the highly developed political institutions that existed on the African continent (Wittmann, 2013). Before the systemic functioning of transatlantic slavery, political and social relationships existed between people on the continent and between African societies and European and Asian ones (Wittmann, 2013). The audacity of Europe

holding on to that particular tenet of international law—the principle of nonretroactivity—as a mechanism of defence further indicates the arrogance of a people that continue to belittle the sociopolitical structures derived from Blackness.

Furthermore, as European countries that participated in transatlantic slavery make their case using the nonretroactivity principle, they neglect the fact that enslavement was illegal on European soil (Beckles, 2013; Wittmann, 2013). Britain encouraged slavery in its colonies to build its imperial project, but chattel slavery was not practised at home, as it was considered too barbaric for England’s “high society” (Beckles, 2013). Although the servitude of white people initially occurred in the “New World,” the introduction of African bodies to the Americas transitioned into chattel slavery, which further advanced the dehumanization of Black people (Beckles, 2013; Coates, 2017; Strecker, 2017; Wittmann, 2013). The counterarguments made by European nations and entities that benefited from transatlantic slavery indicate that neoliberal instruments and mechanisms will not favour African people in legal arguments for reparatory justice. The descendants of the enslaved are still viewed through the same gaze that their ancestors were, and seen as property (Walcott, 2021).

The nature of the rebuttals advanced by scholars and intellectuals to counter reparations claims illustrates how anti-Black racism is central in the dominant reparations discourse. Trying to excuse crimes against humanity by arguing that it was justifiable to enter the African continent, steal people from their land, destroy their communities, sell them across the Americas, and violently abuse them in multiple ways, while stripping them of their identity, shows how the devaluing of Black life still permeates international legal mechanisms. Therefore, in working towards a different approach to undertaking Caribbean reparations, there must be an exploration of international law (or something new altogether) that holds accountable the slaveowner

societies and institutions that participated in and benefited from the genocide of Caribbean Indigenous Peoples, transatlantic slavery, and African chattel slavery.

Various approaches to making reparations claims, as explored in Gifford's (2000) seven propositions and Matsuda's (2012, as cited in Beckles, 2013) intervention with the United Nations Charter, show that even when using international legal mechanisms, these same instruments can be used to dismiss the claims. Reparations scholars such as Strecker (2017), Wittmann (2013), and Brennan (2017) have also offered legal frameworks within international law to advocate for reparations; however, again, the process is dictated by the descendants of the people who benefited from conquest, colonization, and transatlantic slavery. The seven legal propositions have provided a legitimate case for various groups of people to make claims for reparations for crimes against humanity committed in the liberal monohumanist global capitalist system. The Jews, Waikato, and Japanese Americans have received some form of recompense (Gifford, 2000; Muhammad, 2013); yet for people of African descent and Caribbean Indigenous populations who live in the afterlife of genocide and slavery, redress seems to be just "noise" created in the former colonial spaces—as, for example, CARICOM's case for reparations.

The Eurocentric mechanism of international law shows that the instruments of oppression cannot be tools for redemption. Some oppressed groups have successfully used international law to argue for restitution; one would think, then, that the same legal frameworks could be used by the descendants of the enslaved to receive recompense. However, that is not the reality of Black life. The multiple reparations campaigns across the Americas (particularly in the Caribbean and the United States) for the descendants of the "living corpses" (Bogues, 2012) seem to fall short on obtaining a form of recompense that would bring about transformative changes.⁶⁰ The

⁶⁰ I refer to transformative changes because the CARICOM reparations campaign has not changed the Caribbean's precarious standing on the world stage, though it has resulted in acts of reparation from European institutions.

neoliberal framing of international law means that the Caribbean reparations claim must use a decolonial framework. TWAIL provides the space to rethink the legal arguments of restitution in the articulation of a decolonial Caribbean reparations endeavour.

Part 2: The TWAIL Network

TWAIL can be defined as a movement and network that produces legal scholarship primarily focused on the legacies of colonialism and slavery.⁶¹ It developed in the spring of 1996, when a group of Harvard Law School graduates came together to discuss whether it was necessary to develop a “Third World” approach to international law (Gathii, 2019). The first TWAIL conference was held at Harvard in March 1997, with the main objective being to “cross-examine international law’s assumed neutrality” (Eslava, 2019, TWAIL Spring, para. 2) and hold Western countries and multinationals accountable in addressing imperialism and decolonization. TWAIL works to understand international legal history and international laws and customs that perpetuate colonialism or the recolonization of “Third World” countries (Chimni, 2006; Eslava, 2019; Gathii, 2019; Nesiah, 2019). Gathii (2019) states:

TWAIL scholars seek to re-tell, re-write and re-configure international law by decentering some of its central myths.... In addition to re-writing and writing international law from a third world perspective, TWAIL scholars critically appraise international law doctrines, operative logics and normative commitments and assumptions.... TWAIL’s vantage point is critical of the universalizing mission and occidental authority of Eurocentric international legal scholarship and practice. (p. 2)

Like the “oppositional gaze” (hooks, 1992) through which Blackness challenges the racist and sexist gaze of whiteness with the aim of changing the human/nonhuman dialectic, TWAIL confronts white hegemony. It develops the legal tools needed to change the reality of the “Third

⁶¹ TWAIL is described as a movement and a network rather than a school of thought or institution to keep it open for change and growth beyond academia (Eslava, 2019).

World,” which is rooted, in most cases, in Eurocentric exploitation (Eslava, 2019). TWAIL scholars—or TWAILers, as they are referred to—play a fundamental role in creating decolonial legal praxes for confronting international law, thereby challenging epistemologies rooted in the European postmodern and neoliberal *homo oeconomicus* system. They encourage collective struggle in partnership with the working class and everyday people (Reynolds, 2018). In this section, my goal is to (a) address the role international law plays in creating and maintaining chaos, (b) summarize TWAIL coordinates, and (c) indicate how TWAIL has been constructed by guerilla intellectuals, and engages with grassroots communities.

Though some legal scholars argue that international law creates order, TWAILers make the case that international law has played a central role in producing disorder (Eslava, 2019). International law maintains a hegemonic structure of racialized and globalized capitalism through colonialism and neocolonialism (Chimni, 2006; Eslava, 2019). It has helped foster historical parasitic relationships and facilitated the shift of white imperialist power (from European countries to Euro-America). TWAILers are not proclaiming that “developing” countries are “innocent victims of the dark sides of international law” (Gathii, 2019, p. 5); however, they argue that from its conception, international law has served as a defence and legitimization of the West’s neocolonial and recolonization campaigns, carried out by bodies such as the IMF, World Bank, and multinational corporations (Gathii, 2019). TWAILers recognize that international law has historically perpetuated the ideologies of coloniality with a legacy of subjugation of the people and states of the “Third World” (Gathii, 2019). For instance, the United Nations Security Council, which consists of five veto-wielding permanent members, provides the world’s richest economies the power to vote in the Bretton Woods institution that sets the template for the economies of the former colonial nations (Gathii, 2019). The principle

of *pacta sunt servanda* in international law binds formerly colonized countries to obey treaties even though they played no part in the formulation of these treaties (Gathii, 2019). Formerly colonized nations that believe in sovereignty are relegated to the “subordinate and dependent position of third world elites to their former colonial powers and to multinational interests” (Gathii, 2019, p. 25).

In response to TWAILers’ position, some scholars have argued that international law can be a site of liberation (Gathii, 2019). For example, Paulina García-Del Moral (2003, as cited in Gathii, 2019) states that international human rights law can be a force for emancipation for women and girls. She underlines how a women-led activist and grassroots movement was successful in implementing international human rights law to protect women and girls in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico from systemic murder, rape, and abuse. In such cases where international law can make a meaningful contribution to the lives of the racialized Other, TWAIL can be a site for reconstruction. By uprooting traditional international law, TWAIL can create international legal frameworks that are delinked from Eurocentric epistemes and involve indigenized knowledge systems, such as that of the Rastafari.

TWAILers have developed five coordinates for their work. Coordinates are used rather than principles to reflect the fluidity of the network of scholars and activists; it resists academic canons that limit the inclusion of new generations of scholars and activists (Eslava, 2019). The idea is to position TWAIL as a decolonial praxis open to new methodologies and innovative concepts to combat international law (Eslava, 2019). The five coordinates are (a) history matters, (b) empire moves, (c) the South moves, (d) the struggle is multiple, and (e) the struggle is here (Eslava, 2019).

Similar to streams of the Black radical tradition as seen in Rodney (1969/2001), TWAIL recognizes the importance of history in its analyses:

TWAIL scholarship often takes several steps back from the present to gain an understanding of how international norms and institutional practices have merged and developed through specific historical conjunctures. The ‘discovery’ of the ‘Americas;’ the expansion of European imperialism over Asia and Africa ... are only some of these conjunctures ... [along with] countless moments of post-colonial violence by post-colonial states.

Paying attention to these varied histories has allowed TWAILers to trace the co-constitution of international law and imperialism, and more generally to challenge international law’s complacent linearity and unidimensionality by showing the skewed power dynamics that criss-cross the international legal order. (Eslava, 2019, History Matters section, paras. 1–2)

By tracing the history of violence that European nations inflicted on “developing” countries from the arrival of Columbus in the “New World” to more contemporary postcolonial modes, TWAILers seek to understand the role that history plays in the current issues faced by “Third World” states; for example, some of the crises in the Anglophone Caribbean (e.g., healthcare, education, debt) are a result of the legacy of transatlantic slavery (Beckles, 2021; Brissot & Jules, 2023). TWAIL focuses on how international law maintains a particular order of “being” and “nonbeing” in service of whiteness-rooted primitive accumulation.

In the following two coordinates, “empire moves” and “the South moves,” there exists a working duality (Eslava, 2019). TWAIL scholars and activists pay attention to the “international community” and the consequences its structures and institutions have for the environment of “Third World” people (Eslava, 2019). In TWAILers’ legal approach, imperialism is not solely a historical phenomenon; it moves across time and space, taking up residence in local, national, and international governmental bodies and private institutions through ideologies or material manifestations (Eslava, 2019). That approach is rooted in Marxist thought, which emphasizes that people create their own history, but under conditions that were established by the past (Eslava, 2019). In speaking to the duality of the second and third coordinates, when the empire

moves, the South moves, and the inequality gap between the haves and have-nots (states and regions) is deepened⁶² (Eslava, 2019). TWAIL can interject to address the limitation of neoliberal human rights law by arguing that “orthodox developmental policies and frameworks are structurally biased” (Eslava, 2019, *The South Moves*, para. 3). As highlighted, one can see how the first coordinate, “history matters,” is intrinsically connected to the second and third coordinates (Eslava, 2019).

The last two coordinates, “the struggle is multiple” and “the struggle is here,” speak to the creative and intersectional methodology that TWAIL must apply in countering international law (Eslava, 2019). As indicated, imperialism is not limited to the past, but exists within contemporary society. TWAIL scholars and activists must approach the fight from multiple fronts on a diverse and fluid terrain (Eslava, 2019). For instance, in adapting a feminist approach, TWAILers have emphasized the need to personalize the political due to the precarious status of nations and citizens of the “Third World” (Eslava, 2019). As multinational corporations and Western societies turn a deaf ear to the protests of the racialized Other, TWAIL practitioners understand that “the struggle remains, and must remain, always there, and always here” (Eslava, 2019, *The Struggle is Here* section, para. 1).

TWAIL, as a movement and network, has created space that is inclusive not only of legal practitioners but also everyday people in developing decolonial praxis. TWAILers can go beyond the traditional academic route that tends to ignore activists and everyday people (Reynolds, 2018). Scholars can glean “activist wisdom” from “street culture,” such as the BLM movement and the Global Afrikan Congress in addition to the arts, for example, hip hop and folk music (Reynolds, 2018, p. 167). Taking on Rodney’s (1980) guerilla intellectual praxis, TWAIL

⁶² One factor that requires exploration within TWAIL is how can one think about or articulate the unequal movement of marginalized people—Black people, Indigenous, and more—within empire.

scholars can “sabotage the power disparity” (Reynolds, 2018, p. 167). Wynter advocated for a similar methodology for the academic, which she coined the Augustine turn, in which they take and revise current systems of knowledge production “in order to create that which is imperatively emancipatory and new” (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015, p. 21). TWAIL creates space to think differently about the legal framework for Caribbean reparations, outside the neoliberal international human rights law tradition. In the next section, I make a case for using a TWAIL analysis as a legal framework in undertaking a decolonial Caribbean reparations movement.

Part 3: A TWAIL-Inspired Reparations Framework

A Decolonial Legal Intervention

Reparations are arguably the biggest threat to international law, since redress threatens to strip the “very identity” of international law, revealing its “dark” history (Anghie, 2018), a history that stems from crimes against humanity committed to establish and maintain the dominance of Western imperialism. The “discovery” of the Americas, the expansion of European imperialism across the African and Asian continents, and the numerous violent acts within postcolonial states are important historical conjunctures that inform international law (Eslava, 2019). Consequently, obtaining restitution by working with the Eurocentric liberal monohumanist construction that underpins the international legal system is difficult. TWAIL enters the conversation to interrogate the legacies of colonialism and slavery, international law, and international human rights and hold colonial powers and institutions accountable for acts of violence against people of the “Third World” (Anghie, 2018). It offers an important decolonial disruption and addresses some of the limitations of using international law in creating a case for Caribbean reparations.

My research makes the case for a TWAIL-inspired reparations framework (a term used by Nesiah [2019]). I do not claim to have the decolonial legal answer, but I am suggesting a radical intervention that counters the coloniality of international law and international human rights and works to advance the incomplete project of decolonization in the Caribbean. A TWAIL-inspired argument widens the trajectory of international law to incorporate actors that have traditionally been excluded, such as women, Indigenous Peoples, the working class, and “Third World” states (Nesiah, 2019). TWAIL has three valuable threads that inform my work. One, it recognizes the history of genocide of Indigenous Peoples (including, in the case of my research, the various forms of violence committed against people indigenous to Africa through transatlantic slavery); two, it argues for redress in the form of repossession of land and resources as a vital part of self-determination as constructed in international law; and three, it pushes for the decolonization of international law and encourages the “reimagining of new political possibilities for our collective futures” (Nesiah, 2019, p. 2). Using these three elements of TWAIL, I attempt to rethink trajectories for a decolonial Caribbean reparations movement.

In line with the third TWAIL principle, we can examine the role of social movements in “developing” countries in remaking international law from the ground up, with the intention of underlining a possible and practical method for establishing a decolonial Caribbean reparations movement. Legal scholars, practitioners, and activists indicate that international law and international human rights in the post-Westphalian world order are instruments that maintain the global capitalist sovereignty of Western societies (Rajagopal, 2003, p. 247) and that a decolonizing of international law that decentres Western imperialist agendas is needed. Kelley (2021) makes a similar argument in Theses one and seven on the dismantling of colonial and neocolonial instruments in imagining decolonial Black futures. In speaking on political

movements and their relationship with international law, I draw from Diani (1992) to define a social movement as follows: (a) it involves networks of informal interactions between a plurality of actors, (b) it is engaged in political or cultural conflicts, and (c) it organizes on the basis of shared beliefs and collective identities. Social movements have a precarious relationship with international law and international human rights, and confront the neoliberal structure of these transnational mechanisms. Historically, lawyers did not engage with popular social justice movements or mass politics, since such movements were seen as antagonistic to the state (Rajagopal, 2003, p. 233). Moreover, the institutions using international law worked only with the state and ignored resistance movements unless these movements were working to establish nations that were focused on self-determination. If there were domestic political tensions in a country, these same international institutions would avoid the instability but eventually build relations with the political victor (Rajagopal, 2003) and push neoliberal democratic ideals. However, this neocolonial approach has been subjected to criticism, initially by critical race theorists from the United States (Rajagopal, 2003). For these theorists, the liberal legal model is flawed (one can argue it operates efficiently in maintaining the interests of Western nations and multinational institutions) and neglects the role of law in everyday life and the role of civil society in the social transformation of the law (Rajagopal, 2003). This push-back has led to social movements being recognized in the spectrum of international law, albeit with stipulations determined by Western societies (Rajagopal, 2003). This is important because mass movements are playing instrumental roles in the reshifting of societies and extending the very structure of international law and international human rights (Rajagopal, 2003). This is evident in the case of the BLM movement (Reynolds, 2018).

Initially, the focus of mass movements centred on the state, but as racial capitalism continuously reinvented itself, social movements in “Third World” countries had to do the same (Rajagopal, 2003). In the 1950s and 1960s—the “postcolonial” period—mass movements in “developing” countries fighting for national liberation from colonial powers were mobilized by ideas of the “nation,” employed a robust class analysis with a socialist orientation, and had a goal of structural transformation (Rajagopal, 2003). Then, as the decolonization project was threatened by the restructuring of colonialism into neocolonialism, social movements went beyond the construct of the “nation” (Rajagopal, 2003). Fanon (1961/2004) underlines this point in two prominent essays, “On Violence” and “The Trials and Tribulations of National Consciousness,” in which he highlights the psychological factors of colonialism and the undertaking of anticolonial modes of resistance. One of the overarching themes of his work is the transcendence of human liberation in nation building. Furthermore, “history teaches us the battle against colonialism does not run straight away along the lines of nationalism” (Fanon, 1961/2004, p. 148); therefore, the liberation project must occur on multiple fronts. In his analysis of nation-building in the colonial situation of “developing countries,” Cabral (2009) notes, “National liberation is necessarily an act of culture.... We may consider national liberation movement as the organized political expression of the culture of the people who are undertaking the struggle” (p. 4). In the incomplete project of decolonization, one can recognize the influence of civil society on the state’s adoption of specific causes—for example, the Canadian and US governments’ strong campaigns on antiracism. Popular political movements have sprouted from different groups of people who were left out of the “independence” project, such as Indigenous Peoples and farmers. Such civil society movements (using knowledge systems produced from the “gaze from below”) have pressured international law and international human rights entities

to recognize campaigns that did not fit within the framing of the legal transnational and neocolonial apparatus of the state, resulting in crucial steps forward in the introduction of alternative legal frameworks (Rajagopal, 2003).

Social Justice Movement Transformation of International Law

Some popular social justice movements profoundly challenge international law using epistememes grounded in the “gaze from below.” One such movement is the Working Women’s Forum (n.d.), a large movement of women founded by Jaya Arunachalam in India in 1978. Serving as a union in the informal sector, it started with 800 members and now has over 550,000 members. Most members are working-class and financially poor women from the southern states of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Andhra; these identified states cover 3,407 villages and 2,129 slums under the governance of 15 branches (Rajagopal, 2003, p. 272; Working Women’s Forum, n.d.). Initially organized around credit, the Working Women’s Forum has now grown into a micro-credit and banking agency, trade union, nongovernmental organization for women, and a sociopolitical movement that prioritizes women’s issues to combat patriarchal structures (Rajagopal, 2003) that limit women’s access to fundamental resources such as banking. This approach is part of an attempt to confront the various forms of oppression that women experience (particularly issues of class and caste). The Working Women’s Forum has four main components: a micro-credit provider (through the Indian Cooperative Network for Women, which operates as a legal entity under federal government laws); a trade union (National Union of Working Women); family planning and health care services (provided by the Working Women’s Forum); and finally, movement or nongovernmental organization advocacy and mobilization of women on issues of political and cultural concern such as the caste system (Rajagopal, 2003; Working Women’s Forum, n.d.).

The Working Women's Forum challenges international law through its position as a vanguard of the new international order, where the global governance of sovereignties and nations is weakened due to fragmentation, and social movements are the main conduits to build planetary affiliations on issues such as gender, the environment, and human rights (Rajagopal, 2003). This then forces international law bodies to rethink their model of primarily working with nations on issues of civil and political rights and forces them to negotiate with the demands that global movements led by civil society are making outside of state sovereignties. Movements such as the Working Women's Forum continue to contest and reshape international legal principles and practices. A decolonial legal undertaking must recognize the significance of people from the "Third World" countering the hegemony of international law and practices, extend the legal cursor beyond Europe, and dismantle international law's colonial and capitalist framing.

Towards a New Legal Approach for the Caribbean

In thinking of reparatory justice in the Caribbean, I am suggesting a marriage between TWAIL, a decolonial epistemology such as Rasta livity, and Rodney's (1980) guerilla intellectual praxis, which can be a template that supports the development of an alternative legal framing for a radical Caribbean movement. Such an approach can allow decolonial practitioners to learn from social movements, which in turn can challenge international law at the grassroots level. The guerilla intellectual praxis encourages learning from the "point of struggle" that fosters social transformation (Rodney, 1980). Rodney (1980) calls for the guerilla intellectual to enter the academic arena, or other major institutions, to challenge the dominant terrains that continue the cycles of colonialism and neocolonialism. The guerilla intellectual is then set with the task of confronting dominant and anti-Black institutions, not head-on but through intellectual

occupation to dismantle theories, practices, and praxes that maintain power (Reynolds, 2018)—in this case, the *homo oeconomicus* structure of international law. This struggle on the intellectual terrain is where TWAIL intervenes to challenge the liberal model of international law by conceptualizing new approaches that decentre the Eurocentric perspective. This decentring is done by extending the legal framing of international law to “Third World” nations in the articulation of legal principles and structures that can hold the West and its institutions accountable for crimes against humanity (Eslava, 2019; Reynolds, 2018). Such an approach has been inspired by confrontations of systemic racism in the global political environment, such as the emergence of BLM and other grassroots movements, including popular arts such as hip hop (Reynolds, 2018). By engaging with urban cultural expressions, in addition to building on the work of organic intellectuals birthed by social movements (such as Rastafari’s praxis and cultural expressions), these practices can inform the decoloniality of international law (Reynolds, 2018).

A TWAIL-inspired view can also be a useful tool for scholars, activists, and educators who are involved in anticolonial reparatory justice movements since urban culture, which is primarily created by young people, and the arts can be agents of radical social change (Reynolds, 2018). To this extent, in conceptualizing a decolonial perspective in advancing reparatory justice, a grassroots decolonial Caribbean reparations undertaking can be developed as a social movement to influence international law. Urban culture can play a significant role in influencing international law. Civil society engagement in the redress process—which includes collaboration

with young people across the racial spectrum in the region—can also contribute in meaningful ways to a decolonial Caribbean reparations movement.⁶³

As underlined in Chapter 4, historically, the praxis of Rastafari livity and cultural expressions (and that of other Caribbean creatives) has played a significant role in speaking to power (locally, regionally, and internationally) and politicizing people in the region. For example, calypso, folk, and reggae music have been used not only to engage the masses but as a space for social commentary on issues during labour, independence, and postcolonial movements. Italian fascist leader Benito Mussolini’s invasion of Abyssinia (Ethiopia) with the help of the British and the French on October 3, 1935, created an international uproar among African diaspora communities (Rohlehr, 1990, p. 316). Significant pan-African figures such C. L. R. James, Amy Ashwood Garvey, and George Padmore were crucial in organizing a global response (Reddock, 2014). Caribbean creatives also played a part in confronting the colonial violence imposed by the Italians on Abyssinia. In the British colony of Trinidad, calypsonian Growling Tiger’s song “The Gold,” produced on February 4, 1936, spoke against colonial powers, expressed pan-Africanist sentiments, and recognized how Western world leaders were trampling international law in their ambition to exploit Black life (Rohlehr, 1990). The song describes Mussolini’s goal of extracting gold from the East African territory:

Stanza 1

The gold, the gold
The gold, the gold
The gold in Africa
Mussolini want from the Emperor

Stanza 2

Abyssinia appeal to the League for Peace
Mussolini actions were like a beast

⁶³ In the appendix, I have included an arts-based and youth-led Caribbean reparations project, which I developed partly as a response to Reynolds’ (2018) assertion about the role of arts and culture in transforming international law.

A villain, a thief, a highway robber
And a shameless dog for dictator...

Stanza 3

He said expansion he really need
He have forty-five million heads to feed
Why don't he attack the Japanese
England, France, or hang on to Germany? (Growling Tiger, 1936, as cited in Rohlehr, 1990, p. 317)

Through his music, we can observe Tiger's political commentary on the perpetuation of vicious acts of colonialism against people of African descent. He asks an important question: Why did Mussolini not choose to invade neighbouring countries or Japan in the goal of supporting his people? In the construction of Blackness as "nonhuman," African life is seen as less than and expendable to sustain European life. Hence, in the "white gaze," the enslavement of African bodies and colonization of the African continent by European countries appear to be just.

Moreover, as articulated in the previous chapter, reggae contains Black power elements at its core, in response to the liberal monohumanist system that has manifested in the postindependence Caribbean space as neocolonialism. For instance, Bob Marley's music is a stream of the Black radical tradition (Cooper, 1995). Furthermore, in Marley's (1980a) "Redemption Song," he sets the groundwork for a radical metamorphosis:

Old pirates, yes, they rob I
Sold I to the merchant ships
Minutes after they took I
From the bottomless pit
But my hand was made strong
By the hand of the Almighty
We forward in this generation
Triumphantly
Won't you help to sing
These songs of freedom?
Cause all I ever have
Redemption songs

In the song's opening lines, Marley highlights the dehumanization of the African. His lyrics paint the history of transatlantic slavery, which begins with the Europeans (the "old pirates") capturing Black people from Africa. He continues with the middle passage ("the bottomless pit"), which speaks to the violent horrors of the journey from Africa to the Americas. Later in the verse appears advocacy for self-determination ("But my hand was made strong / By the hand of the Almighty"), anchored in belief of God, which generates hope. Marley provides the outlet of liberation—the embrace of (Rastafari) theology.

My intention in briefly highlighting Caribbean creative expressions such as calypso and reggae is to underline how the people from the region utilize the "gaze from below" to work with the arts as a means to mobilize, inform, and challenge the status quo. In Chapter 4 I illustrated how the religion and sociopolitical movement of Rastafari uses culture and music as tools to raise consciousness among the working class and challenge the status quo. A decolonial Caribbean reparations movement can rely on this kind of innovation in educating Caribbean nationals on the significance of the reparations campaign. In turn, as seen with the Working Women's Forum, the grassroots movement can play an instrumental role in challenging international law using epistememes from the marginalized by drawing from a TWAIL–guerilla intellectual framework as a decolonial legal praxis. Furthermore, if strategized within a Black radical framework, the creative arts can play a significant part in the Caribbean reparations undertaking by challenging the colonial legacies of international law.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I investigated more deeply the complex topic of reparative justice within the context of a new worldmaking project. More specifically, I explored the liberal monohumanist construct of international law and its implications for the establishment of a

decolonial legal structure for considering reparations in the Caribbean, drawing inspiration from the framework offered by TWAAIL. Reparations scholars and lawyers commonly use a legal construct of redress, which is grounded in a version of international law that reflects neoliberal ideals. Advocating for reparations for genocide and transatlantic slavery using this neoliberal framework of international law comes with limitations, because the offending party can use the same legal instruments—including the retroactivity principle—to protect themselves. As a result, it is crucial to establish a decolonial legal structure that prioritizes collective interests and considers the historical and ongoing impact of transatlantic slavery on the Caribbean region. This requires a shift towards a more inclusive and equitable approach to reparative justice.

As such, my work employs a TWAAIL intervention, refocusing the legal principles of international law on the “Third World” and consequently holding former slaveowners responsible for their crimes against humanity. Inspired by TWAAIL, Rasta livity, and the guerilla intellectual praxis, a decolonial perspective can engage and learn from social movements and the creative arts in popular culture, as Rastafari did in Jamaica, which would be a significant step towards decolonizing international law. As observed, social movements such as Working Women’s Forum have become the modern-day vanguard in the new international order, playing a fundamental role in confronting international law from the ground up. A decolonial Caribbean reparations movement, if it becomes a people-led movement—that is, civil society is at the forefront—can influence the international legal system in acquiring recompense for the crimes committed against humanity in the European expansion project. A TWAAIL approach to undertaking the Caribbean reparations cause offers the space to create a Caribbean cultural episteme delinked from the neoliberal network of international law. Moreover, it centres “Third World” people—the descendants of the “living corpses” (Bogues, 2012) and Caribbean

Indigenous people—in the legal discourse, thus decolonizing the Caribbean reparations campaign.

Conclusion:

“Roots”—A Decolonial Intervention in Articulating Caribbean Futures

I n I are the roots.

– *Bob Marley (1977c), “Roots”*

The overall goal of my research project is to theorize the undertaking of Caribbean reparations as a liberating praxis in the region. The global reparations movement for conquest, enslavement, and colonialism opens space to unleash the radical imagination in envisioning decolonial Caribbean futures. I have illustrated why reparations in the Anglophone Caribbean, from the perspective of the descendants of the formerly enslaved and colonized, is a just, necessary, and urgent undertaking and how it has been articulated in mainstream political thought via the CARICOM Reparations Commission. Although CARICOM’s campaign has achieved some forms of success, it has been framed as a Caribbean stimulus package to “develop” the region using neoliberal instruments. Therefore, it is expected that the same system that exploited Caribbean people will continue the current neoliberal and neocolonial trends.

As an alternative, by gleaning from the cultural expression and philosophy of Rastafari livity, I have mapped an alternative articulation of reparations, one that is grounded in “the gaze from below.” Moreover, I established the grounds for a decolonial Caribbean reparations undertaking that is significant for all colonized Caribbean peoples—Indigenous, the descendants of the formerly enslaved,—and can be connected to a TWAIL approach. Essentially, my hypothesis is that a decolonial Caribbean reparations movement can set the framework for the decolonization of self and fulfill the political independence of the region, drawing from

Caribbean Indigenous and indigenized (Rastafari) epistemologies and ontologies that are delinked from Eurocentric thought. Moreover, a decolonial reparations framing can offer opportunities for us to think of alternative ways of living at a time of rising global consciousness about anti-Black racism. The reparations campaign can build from that moment but must do so in partnership with civil society and grassroots movements.

In addition, a decolonial reparatory justice movement in the Caribbean offers space to fulfill the incomplete independence project in the region (as I underlined in Chapter 1) by building on Caribbean radical thought. My central argument is to reimagine how a Caribbean reparations movement can be the catapult of a human liberation project to continue the process of decolonization. In his synthesis on the question of Caribbean studies, David Scott (2013) mapped two critical moments in Caribbean intellectual history that shaped the field. The first is M. G. Smith's 1955 *A Framework for Caribbean Studies*, a substantial study that disrupted Eurocentric study of the Caribbean in the social sciences through the "opening" of the question of Caribbean studies by a person of Caribbean descent. The second is the significant contribution of Kamau Braithwaite's 1975 seminal work *Caribbean Man in Time and Space*, which introduced the theory of creolization. Braithwaite extended the disciplinary domains of Caribbean studies by assimilating "the social arts with the social sciences" (Scott, 2013, p. 5). Where Scott identified two critical moments that informed the question of Caribbean studies, I am taking the position that a critical undertaking of Caribbean reparations can be a third juncture that produces social movements to discover various cognitive framings of liberated Caribbean futures. My research project is located at the precipice of this possible juncture and extends the conversation on Caribbean studies and the Caribbean intellectual tradition. The upcoming section builds on that third juncture by drawing from my project's overall arguments to make a radical

intervention in the reparations discourse. I proffer a framework for reimagining how restitution is articulated in the Caribbean space and diasporas through my critique of CARICOM's reparations campaign.

A Decolonial Intervention

In my theorizing of CARICOM's reparations campaign and Táiwò's (2022) constructive view, I propose an alternative perspective of reparatory justice that gleans from the praxis of Rastafari livity: a *decolonial view*. I have argued that, in addition to the decolonization of the state's apparatus, the individual must also go through a decolonial process. I would like to advance my position further to include a method for reparations. My proposed approach, a decolonial view, operates as a triangulation that encompasses theory and practice. Its three terrains, the mind (individual), superstructure, and method, are linked by a decolonial framing. Furthermore, they do not operate linearly or start with the decolonization of the "human"; instead, they all intersect and can function at any given point. This decolonial view builds on the work of thinkers, scholars, and activists in the radical tradition and their conceptualization and practice of liberation and freedom in the process of new worldmaking. Accordingly, I invoke Frantz Fanon's (1959/1965, 1964/1967, 1961/2004, 1952/2008) new humanism or new humanity and Sylvia Wynter's (2006; Wynter & McKittrick, 2015) genres of man as possible ways to think of liberation of the "human." Fanon and Wynter diagnose the colonized/colonizer dialectic to provide imaginable cartographies for liberation, which, in turn, offers possibilities to articulate human liberation in the intellectual terrain. In scrutinizing the superstructures, I engage with Robin Kelley's (2021) nine theses of decolonization, through which theory can translate into practical possibilities.

Lastly, I use Walter Rodney's (1969/2001, 2019) method of groundings to engage with the general populace, but more specifically the subaltern and the marginalized. Where Fanon and Wynter engage in the new humanism discourse to think through decolonization, Kelley and Rodney paved the way for how these outcomes can be achievable. My argument is that a decolonial approach to reparations must be driven by the everyday people, such as Rastafari adherents, young people, Caribbean artists, the working class, and other marginalized groups such as women, Indigenous people, formerly indentured etc. In my undertaking of redress, I take on the role of a guerrilla intellectual to be at the "points of struggle" (Rodney, 1980) with the people, mainly working with social movements that apply transformative practices in the Caribbean and its diasporas. By situating my work in Rodney's groundings, I am referencing and honouring someone who had not only an intellectual but also a political impact, in Guyana, Jamaica, Canada, the United States, Tanzania, and elsewhere. Moreover, I have seen the power of a groundings approach across borders, as I underline later in this chapter.

Similar to the various reparations perspectives, my proposed decolonial view presents some limitations at this time. Like the constructive view, it changes the conversation on redress to speak on the more significant issue of global decolonization. Though I am developing my view in the Caribbean context, my articulation of new worldmaking is not restricted to the Caribbean space because transnational flows of power significantly impact the region's social, cultural, economic, and political landscape. Hence, in thinking of liberated Caribbean futures, there needs to be the universal dismantling of racial capitalism, which keeps the Caribbean political and economic space in a state of dependency and impacts the social and cultural realities in the region. This global perspective of justice then makes the process more demanding and less practical in the modern-contemporary world. Second, one can ask how a radical change

can occur, given that some people have bought into the promises of neoliberalism. This is an important question to consider since the radical spirit that once ignited the Caribbean space during the labour and independence movements has faded. How do we reclaim that spirit of resistance to create a consciousness shift in the Caribbean so that reparations become part of the culture of a people? For instance, there may be a large number of Caribbean people whose idea of reparations is financial recompense to have purchasing power or to support their day-to-day livelihood. I imagine a liberation that is grounded in the Caribbean basin since it served as one of the original spaces of conquest, enslavement, and indentureship in building European wealth. More significant, praxes of a new humanity emerged from the grassroots in the region; for example, the Haitian Revolution witnessed the formerly enslaved gaining sovereignty over their lives (C. L. R. James, 1989). Therefore, positioning the reparations movement as a decolonial project in the Black radical tradition presents an opportunity through a collective struggle to think of and work towards a new world. Though my research has focused primarily on social and cultural transformation in new worldmaking, in thinking about challenging the global economic structure, one factor that must be centred in the nucleus of a new emancipation is the delinking from the *homo oeconomicus* construct of the political economy. Caribbean political economists from the New World Group, along with contemporary modern thinkers such as Patsy Lewis (2022), have proposed anticapitalist solutions for building Caribbean economies. In moving forward, I aim to further investigate these concepts and link them to my research's main argument for a decolonial reparations perspective.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ The New World Group was a collective of Caribbean political economists who emerged in the 1960s in response to the neoclassical economic system, which was imposed in the Caribbean during the independence movement. It gained considerable recognition for its critical analysis in response to the changing neoliberal policies of the 1970s. The thinkers sought to eliminate external influences on development that were imposed by organizations whose main aim was to enforce neocolonial frameworks (Bernal et al., 1984).

Part of my contribution to the Caribbean reparations discourse is to support the reimagining of the decolonial possibilities of the movement. Thus, for the remainder of this section, I proffer an interrogation of CARICOM's reparations campaign using my proposed decolonial view, but my intention is not to take away from the importance of the redress undertaking. My suggestion is to think about reparations as a transformative decolonial praxis to carry out a new emancipation. Kelley's (2021) ninth thesis, which builds from Andaiye's (2020) assertion that the "point is to change the world," sets the foundation to explore two questions. The first is "How can we reimagine Caribbean reparations independently from neoliberal epistemologies and mechanisms that perpetuate the continuation of neocolonialism?" The second is "What is required to reverse 500 years of history to make a new world?" By entering the conversation with Kelley's (2021) ninth thesis and understanding the history and the functioning of the institutional structure of the government-led Caribbean reparations movement, one can then ask, "What are the criteria needed to transform the Caribbean reparations campaign from a neoliberal project to a decolonial undertaking that creates a new world?" I do not claim to have the answers; however, my work establishes a decolonial foundation that can support us to envision redress differently.

Although there are several criticisms of CARICOM's reparations campaign, this research addresses a few of the tenets that promote neocolonialism through reliance on Western thought. In assessing CARICOM's articulation of restitution through my scrutiny of the 10-point reparations plan, I have identified four main gaps: (a) the state-to-state approach to reparations, (b) lack of youth participation, (c) representation of the Indigenous Caribbean in theory but not in practice, and (d) the question of the Caribbean diaspora. Additionally, to underline the complexity of a decolonial Caribbean reparations movement, I am inspired by Natasha

Lightfoot's (2021) multipronged approach. In her triangulation methodology, she recognizes the significance of gender, sexuality, and diaspora. In addition, she asks us in our construction of reparations to pay attention to the everyday social ills that are directly connected to conquest, enslavement, and indentureship. For Lightfoot, these categories are not adequately reflected in CARICOM's reparations trajectory and, therefore, the framework needs to be extended.

State-to-State Approach

In the application of a decolonial view, the state-to-state approach taken up by CARICOM's Reparations Commission must be dismantled or rearticulated to become a people-centred undertaking. The government-led reparations campaign appears to be completely state-led, excluding everyday people from decision-making processes. Moreover, though conversations about reparations have become more mainstream, the gap between civil society and the CARICOM Reparations Commission has widened. Grassroots organizations that have been foundational in pushing tenets of reparations have lately been pushed to the wayside. One example is the Rastafari community, which, since its origin in the early 20th century in Jamaica, has built part of its doctrine on a decolonial praxis of repatriation—moving “back” to Africa physically, spiritually, or both. The Afrocentric religious group set up a community in Shashamane, Ethiopia, in the 1960s, and later on established communities in other parts of the African continent such as Tanzania, Zambia, and Ghana. Through the livity, Rastafari have been challenging colonial and neocolonial ways of being, utilizing this alternate way of being delinked from oppressive systems to obtain reparations. Practices of reparations from a grassroots level have been active in the Caribbean space since before the state-to-state approach and are not included in the CARICOM campaign. The Rasta community has not been invited to the

CARICOM table to formulate reparations, nor has its decolonial approach of livity been embraced.

Another people-centred grassroots movement that has been central in laying the transnational groundwork for the CARICOM Reparations Commission is the Global Afrikan Congress. This pan-African organization has been a key voice in advocacy and global dialogue on reparations for transatlantic slavery. Not only has it pushed for Caribbean reparations while working across the region, but it has mobilized people and organizations in the Caribbean diaspora and formed chapters in Toronto, London (United Kingdom), and Washington (United States), among other places (Global Afrikan Congress, 2019). The group also stood against the US and French governments when they kidnapped Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide after his call for reparations from France (Beckles, 2013). In August 2022, the Global Afrikan Congress hosted an International Reparations Conference at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, Barbados. As the global youth ambassador for the Global Afrikan Congress and one of the conference's main organizers, I observed how the public responded to a people-centred movement. Governments and private institutions were partners for the conference, but the Global Afrikan Congress and community members in attendance controlled the narrative by setting the conference's tone and making it a people-centred project. Although organizations such as the Global Afrikan Congress have been crucial in the advocacy for reparations using a decolonial framing, they represent a small percentage of Caribbean nationals advocating for redress and are not represented in CARICOM.

My argument here is for the Caribbean reparations undertaking to strengthen its international voice vis-à-vis the former slaveowner societies and colonial societies that robbed Indigenous Peoples (in the Americas and Africa) of their lands. The everyday people must know

about the movement and have an active say in its direction, which will also prevent the spread of misinformation that could result in the initiative's obsolescence or collapse, as has happened with other regional movements. The CARICOM Reparations Commission's reparations movement has echoes of the West Indies Federation. The latter was established in hopes that an integrated Caribbean could result in a politically independent region, which would be enhanced if a single government was formed, intensifying the region's bargaining power on the global economic market (G. Lewis, 2004). Ultimately, the interests of various political groups in the region, in addition to external stakeholders, played a crucial role in the collapse of this initiative (G. Lewis, 2004). The fact that the majority of the general populace in the Caribbean was not politicized around the benefits of the West Indies Federation negatively impacted it, as their voices were not deemed important in decision-making, causing a fundamental rift between the grassroots level and policy- and decision-making level (G. Lewis, 2004). This is not to simplify the collapse of the West Indies Federation but to underline how the lack of politicization of the general populace facilitated its demise.

The CARICOM Reparations Commission seems to be disconnected from grassroots initiatives that advocate for reparations. Grounded in the neoliberal tradition, the CARICOM Reparations Commission leads its cause on a nation-to-nation front. Due to the history of racial capitalism in the region, one can safely argue that this particular method will not lead to a liberated Caribbean but rather build infrastructures that will, to a certain extent, provide resources to Caribbean nationals, such as educational opportunities in the West, but in general continue the dispossession of the poor and marginalized, as Kelley points out. This further strengthens the Caribbean's position as a spoke in the wheel of the West's *homo oeconomicus* system of governance. Civil society must be included in the reparations discourse in order to

arrive at common ground, as the reparations movement offers the Caribbean another chance to carve its own destiny—navigating and, more importantly, pushing back against the neoliberal policies that currently dictate the region’s path.

In building from my proposed decolonial view, I suggest that Rodney’s indigenous Caribbean affirming methodology of groundings offers a way to reimagine the Caribbean reparations movement. One example in which Black people from the Caribbean and its diasporas came together in a groundings reasoning session occurred in 2019 at a communal space called the Yaad in Kingston, Jamaica. This reasoning session, which I participated in, was centred on the significance of the Caribbean reparations movement. The space consisted of people of different classes, ages, genders, religions, nationalities, and educational backgrounds. While some academics and journalists were present, most participants were members of community organizations doing social justice work in Jamaica or the African diaspora. Public conversations, such as this groundings session, can organically take place to help determine what reparations means for everyday Caribbean people—that is, to identify the points of hurt that need repair.

Two of the main points that came out of this reasoning session were a lack of trust in Caribbean governments’ handling of repair and questions about how Caribbean leaders engage with civil society. This mistrust of Caribbean governments is not limited to that particular session and is echoed in mainstream discourse. For instance, in Chapter 3, I provided examples of people’s engagement with and pessimism about CARICOM’s reparations campaign to illustrate the complexity of reparations in the Caribbean space, which requires specific types of responses that reflect the intricacies of the region’s realities. Additionally, the distrust underscores how groundings with communities can help reparations adherents learn how the general populace is thinking through reparations.

The Youth Question

A fundamental question that haunts this dissertation is: Why is the participation of young people in a decolonial reparations movement critical to new worldmaking? One of the obvious reasons to have young people participate in a decolonial reparations movement is that youth under the age of 30 make up over 60% of the Caribbean's population (CARICOM Commission on Youth Development, 2010). In strategizing around a sustainable and decolonial reparatory justice movement, Caribbean youth, as the largest demographic in the region, should not just participate in but engage with the processes intimately. Kelley's (2021) eighth thesis asserts that decolonization is not an event but a process, suggesting there must be a rite of passage from one generation to the next—from the older to the younger generation—to continue the decolonization process. Therefore, youth participation must be an essential aspect in new worldmaking.

Although the Caribbean region has youth movements and initiatives on the ground as well as those taken up as part of government programs, in most cases the young people are seen as a box to be checked off but not directly involved in social transformation. In my examination of CARICOM's 10-point plan, no part touches on the role of young people. Traditionally, politics conceptualized in the form of elections and public policymaking have centred on the role of the "adult" and "authoritative" (Kallio & Häkli, 2013). Often this has resulted in the exclusion of children, and the thoughts and opinions of young adults are thrust to the wayside (Kallio & Häkli, 2013). CARICOM's redress approach has taken up the same mantle of youth exclusion in conceptualizing reparatory justice. Extending my first critique of the exclusion of the everyday people and subaltern, the CARICOM reparations campaign is designed by a particular class and demographic, which continues to reproduce alienation and exploitation.

In speaking to youth participation in the reparations discourse, although steps have been made, more work needs to be done. Bureaucratic organizations have been established so that the movement can reach its objectives, but young people and their ideas should be part of the nucleus of the initiative, as the movement stands to lose cultural relevancy as past and current regional entities have. Currently, one prominent youth collective is advocating for reparations in the Caribbean, IKEMBA, which is based in Guyana and works out of the CARICOM Secretariat (Guyana Chronicle, 2022). However, a regional youth voice in the conversations on reparations does not yet exist. Youth input in the reparations discourse is crucial in bridging intergenerational gaps, in carrying the momentum of the movement, in continuing the process of decolonization, and in speaking the language of other young people, such as on social media platforms. At the same time, I do understand that not all young people are decolonial thinkers, geared towards transforming the reparations movement. Some have bought into the neoliberal project and what it has to offer, which is access to an imagined power and the capability to make purchases, and young people have been co-opted in spaces such as the United Nations, World Bank, and the Commonwealth. However, as I have argued, there needs to be an education program in partnership with reparations and TWAIL scholars, reparatory activists, community members, and nongovernmental organizations to develop a decolonial reparations project.

The Indigenous Question

To fully explore a decolonial view in relation to a radical reparations approach, it is necessary to speak about the Caribbean Indigenous question. I invoke Caribbean Indigeneity here to include the first peoples in the Caribbean (such as Indigenous populations in Guyana, Saint Vincent, and Dominica). Some scholars have argued that Indigeneity can also include indigenized Africans who were dispossessed of their own lands (in Africa) and then forced to

work on stolen Indigenous lands in the Caribbean, as well as indigenized Indo-Caribbean populations later brought to work on these same lands, often in the same ships that had carried Africans. However, for the purpose of this section, I am referring to the original inhabitants of the land and their descendants, in keeping with scholars such as Melanie Newton (2014) and Shona Jackson (2012). In the process of new worldmaking or a new emancipation, I argue for reframing reparations to also address Indigenous Peoples' histories by drawing from Kelley's (2021) proposed theses. He argues that the Indigenous question is a central aspect of reparations and decolonization as establishes the foundation to explore Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies (Kelley, 2021). That said, the matter of genocide and reparations for Indigenous Peoples of the Caribbean requires more attention. Conversations about reparations in the Caribbean must include Indigenous Peoples in a holistic way, not tokenize them. For now, my work explores the matter to underline a significant flaw with the Caribbean reparations campaign.

In moving towards meaningful and practical ways of articulating restitution in the Caribbean space, reparations adherents must advocate for redress for Indigenous populations for genocide and land appropriation. Such redress could include access to sacred lands, such as Balliceaux. In calling for the establishment of a knowledge program, the CARICOM Reparations Commission acknowledged in its 10-point plan that the region's Indigenous populations were "dispossessed of their land and continue to lack land security in the present day" (Strecker, 2017, p. 633). As underlined in Kelley's (2021) second and third theses, the question of land is essential to the decolonization process, which I underscored in Chapter 3 and in the case of Rastafari in Chapter 4; it produces versions of freedom that are not rooted in private property, which can allow people to flourish in thinking about and creating radical futures.

Furthermore, a decolonial view of reparations must recognize and draw from Indigenous epistemologies for restitution with some Caribbean states. Indeed, the Caribbean reparations campaign is the first of its kind to advocate for redress for transatlantic slavery from a collective perspective, and the first Caribbean reparations campaign to recognize the Indigenous Peoples on paper (Strecker, 2017). However, the conversation has gone no further, with little action in working towards a feasible agenda for the CARICOM Reparations Commission and the region's Indigenous populations. Reparations campaign leaders must have mandatory reasoning sessions to develop practical solutions for addressing the disconnect between the movement and vulnerable populations in the Caribbean, specifically addressing the lack of representation of Indigenous Peoples and neglect of the harms that colonialism wrought on them. Similar to how Rastafari, through their livity, has provided frameworks to challenge the "Babylon system," Caribbean Indigenous People's ways of knowing and being can possibly offer decolonial praxes to counter the "monohumanist Western/Westernized transnational world system" (Wynter & McKittrick, 2015, p. 32).

To undertake a reparations movement that is decolonial in its approach, old colonial instruments must be dismantled. The same "hand-me-down" mechanisms not only limit the process of decolonization for the Caribbean region but also stifle the quest for justice of Indigenous populations and other marginalized people in the region. In her critique of the Caribbean reparations campaign, Strecker (2017) states:

While former colonial powers bear the moral responsibility for original dispossession and land appropriation, the reality is that ongoing dispossession and land rights violations are being perpetuated in the contemporary post-colonial context, and post-colonial governments have an international legal responsibility to address the issue. (p. 637)

Similar to the work of Strecker, Kelley's (2021) fifth thesis on decolonization and reparations criticizes the nation states that still uphold treaties with Indigenous Peoples that continue the

same systems of exploitation through which the Indigenous populations were tortured, imprisoned, and murdered. In the application of a decolonial view, the conversation must go beyond paper representation of Indigenous concerns in order to fully undertake the process of decolonization that must transpire for reparations to truly become a liberation project. The ongoing struggles between the state and the Indigenous populations cannot be resolved mainly through symbolic representation in a 10-point plan; they require local conversations about restitution. If these issues are not rectified, reparatory justice may be seen, and rightfully so, as a moral movement grounded in hypocrisy.

Furthermore, if the current neoliberal-framed reparations demands were to come to fruition, one should be concerned with the precarious conditions Indigenous people would further be relegated to, considering their lack of voice in the CARICOM reparations campaign (in my conversations with Garifuna leaders in Belize and Saint Vincent). In moving forward, a decolonial reparatory justice undertaking must work towards healing the relationship between original Indigenous Caribbean Peoples, such as the Kalinagos and Taino, with the state. It must also recognize the intersections between African and Indo-Caribbean struggles and the complicated entanglements between social and racial groups. According to Guyanese American feminist scholar Shanya Cordis (2019), “the unique difference of the Caribbean requires grappling with ... the intimacies of the relationship between slavery, dispossession and the political formation of the indentured subject” (p. 25). Reparations, therefore, need to recognize the historical intersections and divergences between conquest and enslavement. At this point, I am not pretending to propose a solution for this incredibly complex problem, but simply indicating that we need to recognize and grapple with these intersections.

Other Limitations

In addition to the three aforementioned limitations, CARICOM's reparations plan also overlooks certain social issues that require a specific form of restitution. Women across the Caribbean face the same kind of gender-based violence that women, and especially racialized women, across the Americas face. Not surprising, Caribbean women and women's movements in the region have been at the forefront of progressive politics. For example, Red Thread in Guyana, Sistren in Jamaica, and more recently, the Life in Leggings movement have been some of the most prominent progressive social justice movements in the Caribbean. However, gender-based violence remains deeply rooted in Caribbean societies (Hosein & Outer, 2016). The CARICOM reparations campaign needs to be complicated by highlighting some of the grey areas that require more investigation in order to move towards liberated Caribbean futures. The matter of inequities when it comes to gender and sexuality in the Caribbean is important, particularly since Black and Indo-Caribbean women's bodies have been devalued through transatlantic slavery and indentureship (Hosein & Outer, 2016). In addition, within the Caribbean there are massive anxieties around queer sexualities, and the violence that befalls queer people is tied to slavery and repair (Lightfoot, 2021). The criminalization of queer lives in the region began with the inheritance of European legal and religious principles that enforced the Protestant work ethic to harmful effect. Addressing the legacies of these historical injustices ought to be part of a program of repair.

Moreover, a decolonial Caribbean reparations movement needs to consider the Caribbean diaspora. In her analysis of the Caribbean reparations campaign, Lightfoot (2021) raises two critical questions:

- (1) How [do we] account for reparatory justice among a people long mobile due to conditions far beyond their control?
- (2) How [do we] repair the lives of those who upon

exiling themselves from their homelands to seek “better” in the Global North met subpar education, subpar housing, exploiting labour conditions, and racial policing that all formed a modern reinforcement of the inhumanity of Blackness that slavery and its afterlives had long established?

The reparations discourse becomes more complex when it includes Caribbean nationals living outside the region in precarious positions. Their presence in other countries to attain better opportunities has largely been met with various forms of discrimination and, in some cases, death by police officers. For instance, on September 6, 2018, in Dallas, Texas, Saint Lucian-born Botham Jean, a victim of the broader system of US anti-Black racism, was shot and killed by an off-duty police officer while at home and sitting on his couch. So then, one must ask, what does reparatory justice look like for diasporic Caribbean people such as Jean and their families? This question further demonstrates the complexity of reparative justice for people of Caribbean descent in the diaspora, who must be recognized by a decolonial view of reparations.

Caribbean Futures

Historically, the anticolonial struggle, specifically in the Caribbean context, has been fought at the subaltern level. Though the political thrust comes from the subaltern, typically responding to bread-and-butter issues (e.g., the everyday realities of unemployment, limited healthcare, uneven access to food), they are traditionally excluded from the vital decision-making processes concerning their futures. In contrast, the decision-making group, the middle class, is reacting to bread-and-butter issues as well as focusing on their reputation (G. Lewis, 2005). It tends to shape the entire direction and processes of emancipation, as in the case of the West Indies Federation. However, the middle-class agenda does not lead itself to a collective struggle or open up opportunities for a type of newness that is grounded in liberation. Instead, the middle class supports individual actions and presents a class-biased understanding of the

Caribbean region and its people that is uncritical of a capitalist mode of production. It is my contention here that the general populace's involvement in a decolonial reparations struggle could change that paradigm, while recognizing that projects of decoloniality in the Caribbean have historically been dismantled, in most cases violently, as seen with the Grenadian Revolution, the Black power movement, the assassination of Walter Rodney, the massacre of Rastafari in Jamaica and Dominica, the banning of sacred African practices, and more.

However, a global consciousness shift among young people in particular (as expressed via social media), inspired by the public lynching of George Floyd, has created opportunities to push a reparations agenda working towards true sovereignty. If understanding of reparations becomes part of a widespread public discourse and advocacy organizations such as the Global Afrikan Congress become part of that movement, a new emancipation becomes possible. I am not suggesting that the general populace will bring unique praxes that magically establish blueprints for liberated futures; my argument is that the everyday person has an idea of what kind of world they would want to live in and how they would support processes of new worldmaking. Additionally, I recognize that in the region, the project of neoliberalism has been sold to nationals by governments and the global capitalist system; anticolonial reparations organizations, thinkers, activists, and nongovernmental organizations must collaborate to develop decolonial education programs in partnership with the general populace. This is not an easy task, but one that is possible through a collective struggle.

I would like us to think of a type of reparations that does not negate the voices of the working class, subaltern, and the marginalized, but considers the realities of the everyday people in the region as well as their desires—for example, access to quality healthcare and education. A reparations project that recognizes the region's history of conquest, enslavement, and

colonialism presents a unique opportunity for Caribbean nationals in the region to learn from the past and imagine futures where Caribbean people are not limited by the tragedies that gave birth to this cultural and political space. So then, what are some practical steps in the undertaking of a decolonial reparations movement in the Caribbean? How can we learn from past movements or initiatives in the Caribbean that have been decolonial undertakings?

One community-based project that provides a template for knowledge production is the Caribbean Institute in Gender and Development (CIGAD) program. Established in 1992, the program operates out of the University of the West Indies. It is grounded in Caribbean feminism frameworks and has four pillars: diversity and community, innovative instruction, research and outreach, and transformation (CIGAD, n.d.). Essentially, the program works with a diverse group of people from various professional and economic backgrounds who are guided by Caribbean scholars, activists, and practitioners, mainly in the area of gender and development (CIGAD, n.d.). Participants are encouraged to immerse themselves in action-oriented research that reflects the needs of the Caribbean. The transformational aspect of the program comes in the form of supporting participants with seed grants to undertake projects in their respective communities (CIGAD, n.d.). For example, a couple of projects that participants created in the program are “Women in Decision Making Positions in the Public Sector in Paramaribo” and “Establishing a Women’s Empowerment Continuum: The Women’s Resource Centre of Bermuda” (CIGAD, n.d.). An initiative similar to CIGAD can be created to work with the general populace on reparations. For instance, I intend to propose a youth-led Caribbean reparations project to the CARICOM Reparations Commission.⁶⁵ This youth-led project can work with various Caribbean

⁶⁵ I underline the youth as they make up more than 60% of the population in the Caribbean and can use technology to engage their respective communities. However, similar projects can be done with other marginalized populations in the region.

communities, academics, and regional institutions to do transformative work. In the appendix is a youth-led Caribbean reparations and arts proposal that speaks to how youth can use the arts as a transformative praxis in thinking through reparatory justice. A decolonial Caribbean reparations movement is as complicated as the region itself, but historically, Caribbean people have shown that our radical creative imagination works best at moments of new possibilities.

My arrival to the reparatory justice dialogue is that of a Caribbeanist who acknowledges that restitution for conquest, enslavement, colonialism, and neocolonialism in the Caribbean context must be undertaken as a decolonial project in order to produce transformative outcomes. Conversations on reparations are taking place globally, even within the mechanisms that maintain neoliberal power structures. For example, as the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015–2024) is about to expire, there is a global push from civil society organizations in the African diasporas to have a second decade for people of African descent focused primarily on reparations (Permanent Forum on People of African Descent, 2023). To this end, on the final day of the Second Session of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent,⁶⁶ June 2, 2023, forum members recommended a second decade to the United Nations. In my research project, I am very critical of such international instruments, as their advocacy for the human rights of Black people tends to consist of mere symbolic gestures. However, my proposed decolonial view can intervene by leveraging these international dialogues and taking the discussions to communities across the Caribbean through a youth-led arts reparations project. I am being not utopian but somewhat hopeful about a different and more productive way to

⁶⁶ The United Nation’s General Assembly on August 2, 2021, established the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent as “a consultative mechanism for people of African descent and other relevant stakeholders as a platform for improving the safety and quality of life and livelihoods of people of African descent (OHCHR, n.d.a, para. 1). Furthermore, it acts “as an advisory body to the Human Rights Council, in line with the programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent and in close coordination with existing mechanisms” (OHCHR, n.d.a, para. 1).

engage civil society in the Caribbean space. I agree with Kelley (2002) when he states, “We must recognize that the revolution begins with thought, with how we imagine a new world, with how we reconstruct our relationships with one another” (p. 63). He continues: “With unleashing our desire and building a new future on the basis of creativity rather than rationality” (ibid).

Community engagement is, I believe, a promising and practical next step for the Caribbean in establishing and advancing a decolonial reparations movement. In further establishing the significance of the imagination, I conclude my project with the words of Arundhati Roy (2014) in her envisioning of new worldmaking: “Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing” (para. 1).

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Appendix



Caribbean Reparations: Youth Engagement Arts Approach (YEAA) Proposal

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October 26, 2023

OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

The demands of the Caribbean Reparations movement⁶⁷ provides an opportunity for the region to participate in the global economy from a more qualified position. The movement takes in the historical and contemporary realities of the Caribbean and articulates the formula for the region's *right to development*. As argued by Hilary Beckles (2013), reparations is not aimed at punishing the offenders, the European nations that participated in the inhumane practices of native genocide, Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and slavery, but rather, is an approach to unity – the idea is to repair damaged relationships that has limited the growth of the Caribbean and its people.

In working towards the development of the Caribbean's future, its largest demographic – young people – should take on important roles in the advocacy for reparations. The *Eye on the Future: Investing in Youth NOW for Tomorrow's Community* report by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Commission on Youth Development (CCYD) noted that young people make up 60% of the region's population and that more investment in youth is required to provide them with additional opportunities to develop their creative and productive capacities (CCYD Report, 2010). As such, Caribbean youth should play central roles in the reparations movement which has now become a crucial discourse in the shaping of the Caribbean's future.

MOTIVATION

Unfortunately, there has been very little engagement from young people across the Caribbean in the reparations movement, which can weaken the momentum of the initiative. If the demands of the reparations movement are to be met, the cultural vibrancy of the youth should be rooted in social justice movement. Data indicates that when youth are marginalized or excluded from quality opportunities in a society, there are higher risks of them partaking in crime and violence (Ignite). Hence, the outcomes of youth participation in this historical movement goes across the development spectrum.

Research illustrates on an international scale, arts and cultural expressions have been important channels in orchestrating crucial development strategies in building healthy societies. George Lamming (2014) makes the point that any society that does not recognize the importance of the arts in human development is a fundamentally flawed one. As such, the arts provide possible entry points to engage young people in meaningful ways in the reparations discourse.

PROJECT SUMMARY

This project intends to work with the largest demographic of CARICOM Member States—young people, and merge their cultural production with the creative aspect of human development—the arts. Therefore, a youth participatory action approach frames this Caribbean reparations project. This methodology allows young people to be empowered through designing solutions for the recognize issues or limitations with the reparations movement. It creates a bridge for policy-makers, shareholders and youth to collaborate in the advocacy of reparations. The project will be led by the reparations working group (RWG). The RWG is a

⁶⁷ Caribbean reparations ten-point plan: CARICOM Reparation Commission developed a 10-point reparations plan to guide the ideals of the movement: full formal apology, repatriation, indigenous peoples' development program, cultural institutions, public health crisis, illiteracy eradication, African knowledge program, psychological rehabilitation, technological transfer and debt cancellation (Shepherd 2015, 4).

collaboration with the Centre for Reparations Research (CRR), the CARICOM Secretariat—the Culture and Community Development branch, *Ikemba*⁶⁸ youth organization for reparations and experts in specific areas.

OBJECTIVES

1. To engage and centralize young people in the Caribbean reparations discourse using the arts;
2. Create, improve and maintain healthy working relationships with policy-makers, shareholders and young professionals;
3. Develop a pan-Caribbean youth network that supports best ideas and practices in the advocacy for reparations.

GOALS

The project will be broken down into four phases to meet its objectives:

Phase 1: Community Engagement

Phase 2: Action Plan Youth-led Conference

Phase 3: Groundings/Countries Local Project

Phase 4: Youth Arts Forum at Caribbean Festival of the Arts (CARIFESTA) 2025

PROJECT OUTLINE

Phase 1:

Community Engagement/Outreach: Identify young people/youth collectives in the Caribbean that are doing progressive work in the arts and around youth development. This phase includes extensive outreach to communities, which includes group discussions and one on one conversations with community leaders and individuals across the region. The selection process should be led by the RWG.

Phase 2:

Action Plan Youth-led Conference: The selected individuals/organizations will attend an intensive 3 day action-plan conference at CARICOM, in Guyana. There, the RWG along with other partners will develop a reparations toolkit via workshops and presentations that will consists of essentials needed to equip each collective in the region with the necessary resources, language and support which reflects the project's objectives. One of the outcomes of the conference is to create a regional youth-led reparations network.

Phase 3:

Groundings/Countries Local Project: Each participating country's organization/individuals will create a local project on reparations that uses the arts to promote and engage youth in the public discourse in the reparations movement in their respective territories. The groups will be supportive by the RWG and members in the newly established reparations network.

Phase 4:

Youth Arts Forum at CARIFESTA: The fourth phase will witness the members from the participating countries

⁶⁸ The Ikemba youth organizations has been selected because it's the only active youth organization in the Caribbean that advocates for Caribbean reparation in a meaningful way.

present on their respective reparations projects at the upcoming CARIFESTA celebrations. In addition, the youth collectives will have a debriefing at the end of the forum to discuss the next steps of the pan-Caribbean youth reparations network. A report will be developed at the end of the two-year project.

DELIVERABLES:

- Youth will be politicized on the issue of reparations
- Participants will gain a set of skills which can be applicable across multiple disciplines
- Youth will have access to resources and personnel from CARICOM, CRR and other shareholders/partners
- The public discourse on reparations will be advanced through projects across the region
- Strengthen the working relationship between youth, policymakers and shareholders
- Centralize young people in the reparations discourse which carries out some of the recommendations of the CARICOM Youth Development Action Plan (CYDAP), such as youth in development and integration, youth vision and creating an action plan (CYDAP Report Draft, 2012).

PROJECT TIMELINE

Project Phase	Action Item	Timeline
1	Community Engagement	TBD
2	Youth-led Conference	TBD
3	Groundings	TBD
4	CARIFESTA Youth Arts Forum	TBD

CONCLUSION

Creative arts have always reflected the people of a region; hence, an artistic approach could be used to engage young people and encourage awareness on the matter of Caribbean reparations. If a healthy partnership is not built with the regional organizations involved in the reparations initiative and the youth in the region, then chances are, the movement will encounter serious turmoil since young people carry the rich vibrancy of the Caribbean and will be the ones to usher in further stages of this ongoing process. The proposed project places young people at the heart of the conversation with the decision-makers and shareholders in the reparations discourse. In each phase of the project—Caribbean youth have quality roles in the movement- this not only advances the reparations public discourse, but also builds leaders and responds to the recommendations of the CYDAP.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

International Coalition for People of African Descent; Pan-African Council (PAC); Caribbean Solidarity Network (CSN); Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean (CERLAC); CARICOM Reparations Commission; Centre for Reparations Research (CRR); University of the West Indies (UWI); Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

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