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Global Africa: From Abolitionists To Reparationists *

Ali A. Mazrui

I am greatly honored to be giving the first Bashorun M.K.O. Abiola Distinguished Lecture. I am grateful to the African Studies Association (ASA) of the United States for giving me this role.

Although the first Abiola Lecture is being given today, the decision to launch such an annual event was taken by the ASA more than a year ago. That was of course before Chief M.K.O. Abiola entered the presidential race in Nigeria from which he seemed to have emerged the victor—but the results were never officially confirmed.

But there is another side to Chief Abiola's concerns. This is the crusade for reparations to be paid to black people for hundreds of years of enslavement, exploitation and degradation.

Africa has experienced a triple heritage of slavery—indigenous, Islamic and Western (Robertson and Klein 1983). The reparations movement seems to have concluded that although the indigenous and Islamic forms of slavery were much older than the trans-Atlantic version, they were much smaller in scale and allowed for greater upward social mobility—from slave to Sultan, from peasant to paramount chief.

Indigenous systems of slavery were *uniracial*—black masters, black slaves. Islamic forms of slave-systems were *multi-racial*, both masters and slaves could be of any race or color. Indeed, Egypt and Muslim India evolved slave dynasties. Western slave systems were the most racially polarized in the modern period—white masters, black slaves (*biracial*) (Winks 1972; Klein 1986; Lewis 1990).

Because the trans-Atlantic slave trade was tied to expansionist global capitalism, the Western slave trade itself accelerated dramatically. Millions upon millions of African captives were exported in a very short period. Today in the western hemisphere there are some 150 million people with African blood (Harris 1982; Thompson 1987).

The agenda for the reparations crusade must therefore begin with the horrendous consequences of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. That crusade alone may take a generation. Perhaps in the future there has to be a different kind of crusade for reparations from the Arab world—where the calculations have to be of a different kind (Willis 1985, 182-98).

But the Organization of African Unity (OAU) has not, in any case, limited itself only to the slave trade alone. The OAU's Group of Eminent Persons is charged with devising strategies and modalities for a campaign to obtain reparations for colonialism and its aftermath, as well as for enslavement. The Chairman of the Group of Eminent Persons is Chief Bashorun M.K.O. Abiola, after whom this distinguished annual lecture is named. And it is because of Chief Abiola's special commitment to the crusade for reparations that the topic for this inaugural lecture addresses that evolving theme in African discourse (Asante 1993, 131).

Once upon a time there were abolitionists—committed to the proposition that slavery and the slave trade were evil, and engaged in a struggle to end them. Now a new moral and political breed is forming or expanding—the *reparationists*, committed to the proposition that the injustices of enslavement and bondage could not have ended with formal emancipation. They can only truly end with the atonement of reparations.

We define *Global Africa* as the continent of Africa plus, *firstly*, the diaspora of enslavement (descendants of survivors of the Middle passage) and *secondly*, the diaspora of colonialism (the dispersal of Africans which continues to occur as a result of disruptions of colonization and its aftermath). Ali Mazrui and his children are part of the diaspora of colonialism. Jesse Jackson and Edmond Keller are part of the diaspora of enslavement. Jamaicans in Britain are a dual diaspora—of both enslavement and colonization.

From Frederick Douglas To Moshood Abiola

While the abolitionist movement in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was mainly inspired by *benevolent changes* in the Western world, the reparationist movement in the twentieth century has been partly inspired by *malevolent continuities* in the black world.

The benevolent changes in the West which had once favored the abolitionist movement were partly technological and partly socio-normative. Innovations like the cotton gin made slave labor less and less necessary and less efficient for Western capitalism. The abolitionist movement found a more responsive political establishment as slave-labor became technologically more anachronistic.

In addition, the values of the Western world were in any case getting more liberalized in other fields—such as the extension of the franchise to the working classes in the nineteenth century, and the beginnings of movements for women's rights. The convergence of more efficient technologies and a more liberal ideology helped to boost the abolitionist movement in Europe and the Americas. These were the benevo-

lent changes in the West whose cumulative impact favored the abolition of the slave-trade and subsequently of slavery itself. Even the political emancipation of Roman Catholics in Britain was a cause which William Wilberforce championed just a decade before he was converted to the more radical cause of abolishing the slave trade and slavery.

The consequences of colonization are not merely research topics for scholars, but are also horrendous civil wars and a normative collapse in places like Liberia, Angola and Somalia. Here are the malevolent continuities of colonialism (Boahen 1985, 782-809).

The consequences of both enslavement and colonization are not merely themes for plenary lectures at African Studies conventions, but also the malfunctioning colonial economies in Africa and the distorted socio-economic relations in the African diaspora. Hence the malevolent continuities of both colonialism and racism.

On the other hand, the inspiration behind the reparations movement was not change but continuity. It was the persistence of deprivation and anguish in the black world arising directly out of the legacies of slavery and colonialism. The consequences of enslavement and colonization are not chapters in history books but pangs of pain in the ghettos of Washington, D.C., and the anti-black police brutalities in the streets of Los Angeles, Rio de Janeiro, London and Paris. These are some of the malevolent continuities of racism.

While the most historically visible heroes of the abolitionist movement were disproportionately white, the emerging visible heroes of the reparationist movement are disproportionately black.

The historically visible white abolitionists in Great Britain included William Wilberforce (1759-1833). The historically visible white abolitionists in the United States included the martyred John Brown (1800-59) and, in a special sense of abolitionism, the martyred Abraham Lincoln (1809-65). William Lloyd Garrison (1805-79), founder of the American Anti-slavery Society, was for a while the best known white American abolitionist.

This is quite apart from Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-96) the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), arguably the most important white female abolitionist influence in the history of the movement in the United States, alongside Lydia Maria Child.

There were of course also *black* abolitionists, including such towering and brilliant activists as Frederick Douglass (1817-95).¹ But by the very nature of the power-structure of the period black abolitionists had less influence on their own than did either slave rebellions, on one side, or white abolitionists, on the other. Black slave rebellions sought to challenge the *power* of the slave system; white abolitionists sought to challenge the *legitimacy* of the slave system. Black abolitionists attempted to be allies of both, but were weaker than either. Yet even in

their lonely isolation black abolitionists like Douglass and William Wells Brown displayed remarkable courage and heroism.²

While the abolitionist movement in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was thus disproportionately led by liberal members of the Western establishment, the reparationist movement in the twentieth century has been disproportionately advanced by the nationalist wing of black global opinion.

Western liberal humanitarianism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was precisely what had produced William Wilberforce in England. It had also produced John Brown and William Lloyd Garrison in the United States.

But the reparationist movement is a child of black frustration and black nationalism rather than white liberalism. It originally arose in the African diaspora, especially in the United States. "Where are my few acres of land and a mule?" There was a sense of betrayal among blacks following Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of 1863. The minimum social contract of emancipation had been violated. It was only a matter of time before blacks of the United States raised the flag of compensation.

And yet diaspora reparationists were usually concerned with reparations strictly for the diaspora. In the United States the effort reached the Congress, at least to the extent of mobilizing the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) to be more attentive to those of their constituents who were demanding restitution.

When the reparations movement finally captured the imagination of Africans in Africa, a wider normative shift had to occur. It was the African side of the reparations movement which moved it from a demand of diaspora blacks for restitution in their own countries to a new world-wide crusade for reparations for the African and black world as a whole.

The most resilient African culture in the diaspora is arguably the Yoruba culture. Defiant remnants of this persist from Cuba to South Carolina, from rural Jamaica to the ghettos of Brazil. Old Yoruba culture dies hard even in conditions of enslavement.

And yet by a strange twist of destiny, the demands for reparations on the eve of the twenty-first century in West Africa are also led disproportionately by the Yoruba. Chief M.K.O. Abiola stands out as a central figure in the latest reparationist phase. Without Chief Abiola, the reparations issue might not have become a concern of the OAU. Again paradoxically, it was Chief Abiola's friendship with President Ibrahim Babangida of Nigeria which helped to put the reparations issue on the agenda of the Organization. President Babangida was the Chairman of the OAU at a crucial time in the reparations saga. Of course, Babangida himself was not Yoruba, nor was the ethnic issue likely to have been on his mind on the reparations debate.

Nevertheless, this was a case where the Yoruba, who had proven to be a cultural vanguard under enslavement, were now part of the vanguard in the demand for reparations. But of course the movement is not ethnic, but Pan-African. The vanguard is expanding.

Empowering People and Centering the State

Damaged governance is part of Africa's case for reparations. After all, the older indigenous institutions of political accountability were effectively destroyed by Western colonization. In their place the West attempted to transplant new Western-style institutions of accountability. Unfortunately the new-fangled mechanisms turned out to be culturally unsustainable.

Parliamentary systems were reduced to a mockery within a decade of independence. Political parties rapidly atrophied. Electoral pluralism shrunk in one African country after another. And soldiers quite often threw the politicians out of State House with painful regularity (Mazrui and Tidy 1984, 226-84).

Is Africa owed reparations for this brutal political limbo? The West had enclosed ancient societies in new states. It had enclosed the age-old Yoruba in the new Nigeria, the age-old Wolof in the new Senegal, the age-old Baganda in the new Uganda. The underlying tension in Africa is how to reconcile ancient societies with the new states. The tension was created by the West because the new states were manufactured by the West. Is Africa owed reparations for the anguish of this dichotomy? If so, what form should reparations take?

Two forms of reparations are, at least in principle, non-monetary—first, how to empower the African people in relation to the new states, and second, how to empower the new states in relation to the world system.

Empowering the African people in relation to the new states is the challenge of democratization. Empowering the new African states in relation to the world system is the challenge of international centering.

How can the West help in empowering the African people in relation to the new states manufactured by the West? First, by reducing Western support for African tyrants. One of the happier consequences of the end of the Cold War is that the West can judge African rulers without the distorting prism of whether they were pro—or anti—communist. Many Western countries now, especially the smaller ones, are using stricter criteria of performance in human rights as a basis for determining their relations with African governments. Withholding support and legitimacy to more overt African tyrants is therefore definitely a contribution to the empowerment of the African people.

More positively, the West can increase material and moral support to democratic trends in Africa. Since 1990, some 20 African countries have taken steps towards democratization, if only to give greater freedom to the political opposition. Greater material and moral support to these trends by the West over the next half-century may itself constitute the beginnings of democratic reparations.

Thirdly, the West may help democratization by helping to eliminate or reduce economic impediments to democratization. In some African countries the debt burden is not only a handicap to economic recovery, but also a serious obstacle to the consolidation of the new fledgling democracies. In such situations Western debt-forgiveness could be a democratizing measure.

Fourthly, the West could help Africans deal with some of their own socio-cultural impediments to democratization, but without excessive Western intrusion. For example, the West may help African programs designed to empower women or increase female participation in development and governance (Wright 1993, 1-18).

If the democratic empowerment of the African people can be an aspect of Western reparations to Africa, Chief Moshood K.O. Abiola may be forgiven for having come to the United States in search of support against the Nigerian military government's veto on his election as president. Was this crusader for Western reparations to the black world demeaning his cause by asking the West to help him become president of Nigeria? Not if an aspect of reparations is Western help to empower the African people to control the new states (like Nigeria) which the Western world itself had helped to manufacture (Boahen 1985, 19-62). Ancient societies like Yorubaland and Hausaland needed to find a *modus vivendi* with new states like Nigeria.

The West created "the political mess" called "Kenya" or "Nigeria." Should the West be called upon to help tidy up that political mess? Western contributions to African democratization is one approach towards bridging that historic dichotomy. In that sense, Chief Abiola's appeals to Britain and the United States to help democratic forces in Nigeria was an aspect of his crusade for Western reparations more generally. Chief Abiola did not get what he asked for. On the contrary, he damaged himself at home without gaining abroad.

But it is not merely the empowerment of the African people over the African state which is at stake in the politics of reparations. It is also the empowerment of the new African state in the wider global system (Mazrui 1993, 1994, 105-26). How is this kind of global empowerment to proceed?

In fact one of the paradoxes of the 1990s is that the African people in countries like Zaire, Zambia and indeed Nigeria, have been trying to assert greater control over their governments at precisely the time when African governments have been losing influence on world

events. Since 1990 some 20 countries on the continent have taken steps towards democracy, sometimes voting out an incumbent. The African public is beginning to get empowered—but at precisely the time when the African state is more deeply enfeebled.

The momentous changes which have occurred in the wake of the end of the Cold War have, on the whole, marginalized Africa further. Former communist enemies in Europe have become more important to the United States than former friends in Africa. With the disappearance of socialist allies, Africa's influence in the United Nations has declined sharply, and Africa's share of world trade, global investment, and foreign aid continues to shrink (Mazrui 1986, 201-4).

How is the enfeeblement of the African state to be reversed? What role can reparations play in the future towards reducing Africa's marginalization while enhancing its global leverage?

One form of reparations would involve *capital transfer* in the tradition of the Marshall Plan after World War II. From 1948 to 1952 the Marshall Plan transferred 12 billion dollars from the United States to help reconstruct Europe after the devastation of war. In real terms the value of that amount was probably fourteen times the 1993 value of the dollar. The newly proposed *Middle Passage Plan* would in part also involve capital transfer from the Western world as a whole towards the reconstruction of both Africa and its Diaspora, after the devastation of enslavement and colonialism.

But the Middle Passage Plan need not limit itself to capital transfer. A parallel form of reparations could be *skill transfer*—to help transform the managerial and skill infrastructure of Global Africa as a whole. International scholarships for Africans would only be a minor part of this effort. More fundamental would be institutional changes in Africa itself in the direction of more genuine capacity building on a large scale, at different levels of society. Current capacity-building projects encouraged by the World Bank are at best touching only the surface. The Middle Passage Plan would be designed to lead to a true managerial and skill revolution in Africa.

The third form of reparations after capital transfer and skill transfer is *direct power-transfer* or *power-sharing*. Giving Africa greater voting power in the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) would constitute one kind of direct power-transfer. The basis of the proposed Africa's leverage in the Bretton Woods' institutions would not, of course, be because Africa was now wealthy, but to compensate Africa for being denied for so long a capacity to become independently wealthy in spite of all its resources.

Another form of direct power-transfer would be to give Africa a veto on the Security Council of the United Nations—not as a recognition of Africa's power outside the UN (as the other vetoes are) but as a recognition of the need to bring Africa into the mainstream of global

decision-making after centuries of deprivation. How the permanent African seat would be occupied on the Security Council is something which may have to be worked out between the United Nations and the OAU. The seat could rotate between East, West, Southern, Northern and Central Africa over a period to be agreed upon.

All these are options concerning the future empowerment of the African State against the background of both its historic colonial artificiality and its contemporary diplomatic marginality.

Of course, the distinction between empowering the African people (through democratization) and empowering the African state (through international leverage) may be analytically neater on paper than in real life. The crusade for reparations, inevitably, has to be multifaceted. Western direct support for African democracy and Western direct support for institutionalized African leverage in the world system have to be included in the agenda for reparations. If love is a many-splendored thing, so is reparations.

Ledger Of Reparations And Calculus Of Causality

One dilemma of the reparations debate is whether the compensation should be based on the damage done to the victim or the benefits obtained by the violator. Should the restitution be calculated on the basis of the pain of the slave or the profit of the slaver?

We are dealing not merely with the history of bondage, but also with the bondage of history. The history of bondage includes, of course, the history of enslavement and the slave trade. The bondage of history, on the other hand, is the extent to which, to a considerable degree, we are all prisoners of our history.

But how much of the here and now is a consequence of history? What are the limits of the bondage of history? If one were to construct a *calculus of causality*, the proportions of determination may be roughly in the following broad percentages in Global Africa.

The direct bondage of history, the consequences of what happened in the past, is about 40 percent of the causation of the present condition. In the African continent this includes the repercussions of the colonial boundaries and the entire imperial experience. We are all 40 percent history. In black America the bondage of history includes the consequences of enslavement and centuries of racial humiliation and cultural deprivation (Douglass 1960, 292-313; Quarles 1981, 319-25).

In the calculus of causality, 25 percent in Global Africa is determined by the contemporary global system and political economy. The contemporary global system continues to reaffirm the marginalization of the black world in the global scheme of things—from the prices of African commodities to black stereotypes in the Western media. This

includes the roles of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the whole agenda of North-South relations.

In the calculus of causality, 15 percent of the determinism comes from ecological factors. This includes problems of drought, soil erosion, floods, tropical diseases affecting animals and humans and the like.

Another 15 percent in the calculus of causality is for African leadership and choice of policies. Africans are in control of only 15 percent of their destiny. This is the arena of black choice and black political will. This is where philosopher-kings, ideology, diplomacy and negotiations make a difference.

The final five percent of causation concerns pure luck, chance and coincidence. This could range from an unexpected bumper harvest to an unforeseen global event.

The domain of reparations concerns especially the first two categories—the 40 percent bondage of history and the 25 percent contemporary marginalization of Global Africa. Where do we turn for additional resources for Africa?

The consequences of *slavery* in the United States did not end with the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, but continue today in the disproportionate black presence in American jails, the disproportionate black infant mortality rates, the disproportionate self-destructive juvenile black violence. The damage of the past is in the present. The black community is chained to the bondage of its own tragic history (Farley and Allen 1987, 408-19).

With regard to the benefits which the West derived from Global Africa, there were at least three phases. *The era of the labor imperative* was when the West was interested primarily in African labor—and was prepared to promote slave raids, the Middle Passage and slave plantations to ensure that kind of exploitation of African labor (Clarke 1993, 51-71).

The era of the territorial imperative was the era of colonization, when Africans lost their lands as well as their labor. Almost the entire continent fell under European imperial rule.

The era of the extractive imperative concerned the political economy of Africa's minerals, many of which were quite fundamental to certain sectors of Western industry. There were periods when Africa sometimes had 90 percent of the world's cobalt, over 80 percent of the world's reserves of chrome, half the world's reserves of gold and so on (Mazrui 1986, 312-13).

Should reparations to Global Africa be based at least in part on the benefits the West has derived from the imperatives of labor, territory, and extraction across generations? In addition to assessment on the basis of damage done to the victim, there is a case for assessment on the basis of benefit obtained by the violator.

The most difficult category to assess is one in which armed struggle against the villain turns out to be more advantageous to the villain than to the freedom-fighter. It may be worth juxtaposing three very different visions in this regard—the vision of the black revolutionary writer from Martinique, Frantz Fanon (1925-61), the vision of the rather shy English poet, Oliver Goldsmith (1730-74), and the Christian concept of the crucifixion as a form of redemption.

Frantz (alias Omar) Fanon was convinced that anti-colonial violence was a healing experience for the colonial freedom fighter. "At the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex, from his despair and inaction..."(Fanon 1968, 94).

If the crucifixion of Jesus was an act of violence, and it was at the same time an act of atonement and redemption, there are moments when Fanon's thought has points in common with Christian doctrine. In the words of Frantz Fanon:

Violence is thus seen as comparable to a royal pardon . . . The colonized man finds his freedom in and through violence (Fanon 1968, 86).

The crucifixion was violence as a royal pardon in the ultimate sense—redemption by the king of kings. The son of God was killed—so that human beings might live.

With regard to Oliver Goldsmith, he enunciated a vision of a good man who was bitten by a mad dog. Under normal circumstances the man would have developed rabies or hydrophobia—and experienced one of the most painful forms of dying in human experience.

But the man's inoculation against rabies was his moral worth. His morality was his vaccination:

That still a godly race he ran,
whene'er he went to pray . . .
The naked every day he clad,
when he put on his clothes . . .

On the other hand, the mad dog had evil appetites when it bit the good man. The moral fiber of the man was not only a protection for the man; it turned out to be fatal to the dog:

The dog, to gain some private ends,
went mad and bit the man . . .
The man recovered of the bite,
the dog it was that died.³

What really happened in the anti-colonial wars in places like Algeria, Mozambique and Angola was a remarkable reversal of who gained from the violence. Frantz Fanon was wrong about who gained by

violence. In the short run, the greater beneficiary of armed struggle in Algeria was not Algeria but France. France was purified by the violence, not Algeria. The war in Algeria destroyed the Fourth French Republic and inaugurated the more stable Fifth Republic. The Algerian war brought Charles de Gaulle back to power in France and he helped to launch France into new European and global roles. France emerged stronger after losing Algeria than she was before. And yet Algeria itself continues to bleed in new forms of post-colonial trauma.

The anti-colonial wars in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau helped to destroy fascism and political lethargy in Portugal (Mazrui and Tidy 1984, 133-44). Portugal had resisted every progressive formative European force in modern history—the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the Reformation the legacies of the American and French revolutions and the Industrial revolution. It took anti-colonial wars waged by Africans to dislodge Portugal from its age-old lethargy and reaction. In April 1974 a coup took place at last in Lisbon, Portugal, as a direct result of the colonial wars. The coup turned out to be the beginning of the modernization, democratization and re-Europeanization of Portugal. And all this because African liberation fighters had challenged the Portuguese fascist state in its imperial role (Davidson 1984, 237-8).

It is here that the paradox arises which contradicts Fanon and revises Oliver Goldsmith. It turns out that anti-colonial violence is a cleansing force not for the original victim but for the imperial villain. Angola and Mozambique are still in desperate condition—while Portugal is experimenting with modernization and democracy. Algeria is struggling with problems of instability and culture conflict—while the Fifth Republic in France remains relatively firm. Anti-colonial violence has helped the imperial villain—but has it helped the colonial victim? Fanon was right that anti-colonial violence led to moral rejuvenation. But who was rejuvenated—the colonized or the colonizer?

With regard to Oliver Goldsmith, let us assume that the mad dog was the imperial order and the morally upright man was Global Africa. When the mad dog bit Global Africa what really followed? We have to amend Goldsmith as follows:

The dog, to gain some private ends,
went mad and bit the man . . .
the man *suffered* from the bite-
the dog it was that *healed*!

This is very different from “the dog it was that *died*.” In the imperial order the villain has been healed—while the victim still suffers.

It is in this context that the case for reparations becomes stronger than ever. Even when Africans fought for their independence, the

short-term consequences were of greater benefit to the imperial order than to the former colonial subject:

The man suffered from the bite—
The dog it was that healed.

African-Western Encounter: A Cost Benefit Analysis

Reparations should partly be calculated on the basis of the suffering of the colonized person (the criterion of damage to the victim). But reparations should also be calculated on the basis of the healing of the hegemonic powers (the criterion of benefit to the villain).

On the other hand, one of the most obscene and perverse ironies of the *slave* era is that emancipation did result in compensation—but for the *slave-owners* rather than for the slaves. In the British West Indies this was clear-cut. Those who had slaves were regarded as property-owners. The forceful loss of their property was regarded as worthy of compensation. Most slave-owners therefore received reparations.

Ex-slaves, on the other hand, were regarded as moving from a worse condition to a better condition—from bondage to emancipation. There were no major voices in Britain in favor of compensating blacks for prior racial degradation, humiliation and exploitation of labor. Property was sacred, but labor apparently was not. Loss of property demanded compensation, but forced labor apparently did not. In the final analysis, there is therefore an unfulfilled moral debt yet to be paid to those whose labor had been plundered during slave days.

Emancipation in the United States had once included a form of reparations for each black slave—modest acres and a mule. This was fulfilled only for a few of the ex-slaves. Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee College was also a kind of partial reparations in the educational field (see Washington 1986). But in the face of centuries of enslavement, the effort at reparations in the United States was honored more in the breach than the observance. The unpaid void remained horrendous.

In the 1990s African Americans have been trying to reactivate the reparations crusade right up to Capitol Hill in Washington D.C. Those meager acres and a mule have accumulated considerable interest over the generations.

Led by black Congressman John Conyers, Jr. from Michigan and sometimes supported by such dissidents as Louis Farrakhan, the reparations crusade in the United States is seeking out appropriate strategies for action. In this case the demand is for compensating African Americans as the most immediate responsibility of the United States (Asante 1993, 117-24).

But American responsibility does not end with the *survivors* of the Middle Passage. What about those who did *not* survive the Middle Passage? What about the casualties in slave forts like Gorée and Elmina on the West African Coast before the captives were exported? Many of them died on land. What about the casualties in the slave raids before the capturing was accomplished? Slave markets in North America were responsible not merely for the captives who finally arrived intact for use on the plantations; the markets were responsible also for those who perished on the way from the slave raid to the American plantation. The demand end of the slave-trade was especially culpable for the whole system. The history of bondage includes those who were captured in Africa but did not survive to be enslaved in America. The bondage of history includes the consequences and aftermath of all these momentous events for subsequent generations in both Global Africa and the Western world.

The dog, to gain some private ends,
went mad and bit the man.
The man *suffered* from the bite
the dog it was that *healed*!

And yet it cannot be denied that the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s in the U.S., the anti-colonial movements in Africa from the 1940s, and even aspects of the global Cold War, all helped to reinforce each other—and produced important gains for Global Africa as a whole, as well as for African Americans (Williams 1987).

While hot wars like those of Korea, Vietnam and the Gulf endangered a disproportionate number of U.S. blacks, the Cold War in its literal sense (military preparedness without actual war) gave disadvantaged groups an additional career of potential advancement. In the *military-industrial complex* of the United States, blacks are over-represented on the *military* side and under-represented on the *industrial* side. The doors of military opportunities are more open for African Americans than the doors of industry. The military-industrial complex is lopsided for blacks (Cruse 1987, 382-85).

General Colin Powell could become the first black Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the *military*. There has never been such a high-ranking black equivalent in *industry*.

There is a school of thought which regards the black condition in the United States as a kind of internal colonialism—that African Americans are still a kind of subject people (Asante 1993, 167).

But if the colonial paradigm is applied today, we must recognize a shift from a British model of colonialism to a French model. In the first half of the twentieth century the United States as a system treated its African Americans very much as British colonialists treated the natives in their African dependencies. The British colonial order at

that time combined paternalism with highly institutionalized segregation. The natives were kept at arms length. Schools, social clubs, public places, lavatories, etc. were all racially differentiated. The U.S. doctrine of "Separate but Equal" was just a rhetorical American version of British racist paternalism (Cruse 1987, 19-24).

Then came the second half of the twentieth century, with such U.S. constitutional and legislative milestones as Brown *versus* the Board of Education of 1954 and the empowerment legislation of the Great Society under President Lyndon B. Johnson. What was overlooked was the unconscious shift from a British model of colonialism to a French model. French colonial policy allowed their subject peoples to rise very high as *individuals* in the central institutions of the metropole. Individual natives from the colonies rose high in France itself—while the group to which they belonged still remained subordinate in the total French hierarchy.

And so individuals like the late Félix Houphouët-Boigny, a native of Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast), was able to serve as a member of several French Cabinets in Paris under the Fourth Republic in the 1950s. But Côte d'Ivoire itself remained a colony.

Léopold Sédar Senghor, a native of Senegal, also served as a member of French Cabinets in Paris in the Fourth Republic—while his people as a whole were still being subjugated. The French colonial system permitted considerable *individual* social mobility—while retaining *collective* ethno-cultural subordination (Vaillant 1990, 64-86, 272-99).

The question which arises is whether the condition of African Americans has entered a similar French-style phase of neo-colonial status. Individual African Americans may rise to become a Secretary of Commerce or Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff. And Clarence Thomas can be confirmed to succeed Thurgood Marshall on the Supreme Court of the United States—just as Léopold Senghor of Senegal helped to draft the Constitution of the Fifth Republic of France. The Reverend Jesse Jackson has tested the system to its limits—exploring whether it is ready to live with a black head of state. Alas, No! (Cruse 1987, 374-91).

At the collective level, there has continued to be a *master nation* and a *subordinate nation* both in the French world and in the United States. But the struggle continues—and African Americans are part of the vanguard for change, a force for progress.

What Harold Cruse did not realize when he published his important book *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* in 1967 was that the crisis of the black intellectual in America was potentially a *permanent* crisis—world without end. The manifestations will vary, but the basic crisis is a bondage of history and ultimately irredeemable, until reparations are paid (Cruse 1967, 347-81, 520-32).

Conclusion

Perhaps one of the more basic cultural returns to the past concerns the issue of collective compensation. In ancient times, if a member of one tribe was killed by a member of another tribe, a debt was immediately created, owed by the tribe of the killer to the tribe of the victim. This debt was not subject to any statute of limitation. The debt stood until it was paid. It could be paid with heads of cattle—or with blood.

If the debt was not paid there was a serious risk of a long festering feud between the two tribes. Because responsibility was collective, individuals in each community could be unnecessarily at risk for a killing for which they were themselves not *directly* responsible. (They were culturally responsible indirectly.) The civilized way out was to pay the debt in cows and goats. In other words, the civilized response was to pay *reparations*.

This whole issue of reparations has, as we indicated, re-emerged in black politics in both Africa and the United States—reparations for hundred of years of black enslavement, colonization and racial victimization. A debt is outstanding between the West and the black world—a debt which is not subject to the statute of limitation.

Yes, indeed, at a summit meeting of the OAU, the Heads of State of Africa appointed me and eleven others to constitute a Group of Eminent Persons to explore the modalities and logistics of a campaign for black reparations world-wide. Our group of 12 members did indeed elect as chairman Chief Moshood K.O. Abiola, who seems to have been subsequently elected president of Nigeria in June 1993 but was prevented from taking office by the military.

Our Group of Eminent Persons on reparations elected as co-chair Professor Mahtar M'Bow, former Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). And we elected as our Rapporteur-General Ambassador Dudley Thompson, Q.C., a distinguished Jamaican jurist and diplomat. The Nigerian government under President Babangida promised us a preliminary budget of one half million dollars to enable us to make a start.

We do believe that the damage done to black people is not a thing of the past but is here and now. It lies in the disproportionate black faces in the jails of America, the disproportionate black infant mortality rates in the United States, the ease with which a black man in police custody in London (like a certain Mr. Lumumba) or in Paris (like a 17 year old Zairean boy) can get killed by the police—the cheapness of black lives from the sadistic streets of Rio de Janeiro to the masochistic streets of Soweto in South Africa (Wilson 1987, 20-62). The damage is *here* (Farley and Allen 1987, 1-6). And the debt has not yet been paid.

How will the reparations be paid? I have explained that there are at least three alternative modes—these are modern versions of ancient heads of cattle from one tribe to another:

(a) *Capital transfer* from the West to the black world—comparable to the grand precedent of the Marshall Plan to Europe.

(b) *Skill transfer* in the form of a major international effort to help build the capacities and skills of Africa and the rest of the black world. Redress is needed for the damage which is here.

(c) *Power-sharing* by enabling Africa to have a greater say in global institutions—such as more effective representation in decision-making in the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, not because Africa is rich but because it has been systematically enfeebled. We need to compensate for the damage which is here.

And why should all the permanent seats of the United Nations Security Council be given to countries which are already powerful outside the UN? Is there not a case for giving Africa a permanent seat with a veto—not because Africa is powerful but because it has been rendered powerless across generations? We need to redeem the damage which is here.

In the 1960s the United States invented the concept of *affirmative action*—an effort to make allowances for historic disabilities whenever minorities applied for jobs or sought other opportunities. It was a progressive step towards racial equity and socio-economic justice.

We now need to make a transition from affirmative action to a more comprehensive *affirmative reactivation* in the form of reparations. It is in fact the logical next step after affirmative action. Conservatives believe that the next step after affirmative action should be a free play of market forces. But the bondage of history denies the market autonomy. Residual racism is an impediment to the market. We have to move beyond affirmative action to the *affirmative reactivation* of the black peoples the world over.

There is a primordial debt to be paid to black peoples for hundreds of years of enslavement and degradation. Some of the causes of global apartheid lie deep in that history. It may take a generation to win the crusade for reparations—but a start has to be made. This will be one more aspect of reverse evolution back to ancient ways of settling moral debts between tribes. The damage is here. It is time to mend.

Notes

- * This is the text of the Inaugural Bashorun M.K.O. Abiola Distinguished Annual Lecture delivered on December 6, 1993, at the annual meeting of the African Studies Association of the United States held in Boston, Massachusetts, December 4-7, 1993.
- 1. See Douglass (1960, 1962), and Quarles (1981, 319-25). Also consult Douglass and Ingersoll (1883).
- 2. See Brown's *Clotel* (1969) a novel that denounced slavery and was intended to strengthen the abolitionist cause. Also see Brown (1850, 1852, 1867, 1968).
- 3. See Oliver Goldsmith's "An Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog" (1910, 72-3). The relevant stanzas of the poem went as follows:

This dog and man at first were friends;
 But when a pique began,
 The dog, to gain some private ends,
 Went mad and bit the man.

Around from all the neighbouring streets
 The Wond'ring neighbours ran,
 And swore the dog had lost his wits
 to bite so good a man.

The wound it seem'd both sore and sad
 To every Christian eye;
 And while they swore the dog was mad,
 They swore the man would die.

But soon a wonder came to light,
 That show'd the rogues they lied:
 The man recover'd of the bite,
 The dog it was that died.

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