



A Message from Our Grandmothers

Greetings—we are your grandmothers. We have borne witness to your suffering, grief, and joy throughout the ages. We see you and you are not alone. We are here to tell a story. To remind you of what was lost and what you still possess.

It has been 400 years since we were brought to Virginia.

The African Story: We Were People Once

Listen my children: before the transatlantic slave trade severed African people from their homeland, the continent of Africa had a long and prosperous history—more complex than conveyed through mainstream education. There were many thriving kingdoms, including ancient Egypt, a civilization that set milestones in science, mathematics,

technology, and the arts. In the west of Africa, the kingdom of Ghana was a vast empire that spread across an area the size of Western Europe. Advanced and prosperous, Ghana traded in gold, salt, and copper between the ninth and thirteenth centuries, and like a medieval European manor, was controlled by one king among powerful local rulers. The kingdoms of Benin and Ife were led by the Yoruba people; the Ife civilization dates to 500 B.C.¹

Today, Africa is a rich tapestry with a population of 1.2 billion people living in 54 countries, nine territories and two independent states.² The communities and people living within Africa span across East, Central, and West Africa to the South's Horn, including countries presently known as Ethiopia, Kenya, and Zimbabwe; Cameroon, Chad, and the Democratic Republic of Congo; Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal; and to the north embracing the countries of Algeria, Libya, and Tunisia (which the Romans referred to as Carthage) and the southern countries of Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa.³

What Happened to Our People: The Transatlantic Slave Trade

Before 1619, across three and a half centuries—from 1501 to 1867—more than 12.5 million Africans were captured, sold and transported to the Americas. Although Portugal and Spain were the first European powers engaged in this trade, most European powers would become involved because of the enormous profit.⁴ In 1565, enslaved Africans were brought to present-day St. Augustine, Florida, the first permanent European settlement in North America.⁵

Despite Spain's early enslavement of Africans on the American continent, the introduction of slavery to the Virginia colony was significant because of England's central role in the transatlantic slave trade. The English system of race-based chattel slavery that evolved in the United States was unique.⁶

The English Colonial Segment of the Story

In 1607, the English formed their first permanent settlement at Jamestown, Virginia.⁷ In August 1619, an English privateer ship reached the Virginia Peninsula, where the colonial Governor secured the purchase of “20. And odd Negroes” in exchange for “victuals”—food. The Africans, my children, were sold into bondage and enslaved.⁸

The cargo of human beings came from Luanda, the capital of present-day Angola in West Africa, which at the time was a Portuguese colony. Most of the enslaved were thought to have been captured during an ongoing war between Portugal and the Kingdom of Ndongo.⁹ Between 1618 and 1620, an estimated 50,000 enslaved people, many prisoners of war, were exported from Angola. Three hundred fifty were loaded onto a Portuguese ship headed to the Spanish colony of Veracruz, when the ship was intercepted by two English privateer ships that seized some of the Angolan prisoners.¹⁰ In 1625, a count recorded 23 Africans living in Virginia's James River Valley scattered across the homes and farms of settlers.¹¹

What Happened Next: Creating Property out of People

Much has been written about the experiences of our people in early North America. While the conditions may have varied, whether in colonial New York performing cobbler's work¹² or part of the Southern plantation economy, cultivating tobacco in Virginia or picking cotton in the fields of Georgia, over the 250-year period from 1619 to 1865, enslavement—the violent conversion of us as people to someone else's use—was legal and in force. That meant people could become property, not merely indentured for a term of years: set apart from other people in perpetuity. Starting in the mid-1600s, as the numbers of enslaved persons grew—along with the fear of insurrection—colonies began developing structures to maintain control. First by enacting and expanding laws to prevent enslaved persons from becoming free through baptism or conversion to Christianity. Then by criminalizing relationships between indentured white and enslaved black persons. In stages, in Virginia in 1664 and again in 1667, Christianity as an avenue to freedom was foreclosed by statute.¹³ In 1662, the first anti-miscegenation law passed in Virginia, which also established matrilineal servitude status (meaning: if a child was born to a white father and an enslaved black mother, the child drew its social status from the mother—making that child property), banning

all sexual relations between “negroes” and “Christians.”¹⁴ My children, during this time many black and white people lived together. For that reason, in Maryland, an act of 1664 denounced “freeborn English women” who “forgetful of their free condition and to the disgrace of our nation do intermarry with Negro slaves.”¹⁵

A New Strategy: Forging False Solidarity by Policing People

In 1682, Virginia’s Colonial Council shifted its work force from English to African bond laborers, a decision made in part after the colonial governors put down Bacon’s Rebellion, a bloody uprising that in 1676 galvanized English and African laborers across class.¹⁶ What led to this rebellion? Formerly indentured white farmers demanding more land, which the colony acquired by expanding into the abutting Algonquin territories. Holding land, in turn, afforded fuller citizenship rights for those released from indentures. At the time, those who governed were more concerned with stability—in maintaining leadership and the colony’s security—and were reluctant to further antagonize their neighbors. After the rebellion was quelled, the Virginia governing elite learned an important lesson: forge social solidarity with the poor yeomen farmers and cultivate their allegiance. This was accomplished by providing incentives to the yeomen class to organize slave patrols in 1727 as a force to manage the growing slave system. The patrols’ function was to maintain bond-laborer discipline around the plantations and enforce the slave codes, which meant surveilling the enslaved population, capturing runaways, “suppressing any appearance of personal autonomy in a slave, and watching over or suppressing group activity by slaves.”¹⁷ More importantly, the creation of this “intermediate control stratum” made class divisions between the upper and lower orders appear to be erased, though not economically or politically, by creating a “white” community united to control enslaved blacks. This marked the beginning of a de facto inter-class white supremacist compact.¹⁸

Selling One’s Soul: Enshrining Chattel Slavery within the American Social Contract

What happened next, my children? Power was consolidated to secure the right to hold human property over and above the principles of the American Revolution and the emerging Republic, namely, liberty, equality, and protection of the natural rights of man.¹⁹ These interests became more clear during the Constitutional convention and the sectional power struggle between slaveholding territories and those territories where the economy was not directly dependent upon slave labor. Eventually, a compromise was struck in the form of the three-fifths clause of the United States Constitution (Article I, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution of 1787), which provided, for the purposes of representation in Congress, that enslaved blacks in a state would be counted as three-fifths the number of white inhabitants of that state. The three-fifths clause was one of many compromises enacted during the Constitutional Convention of 1787, which included prohibition of slavery in the Northwest Territories and the end of U.S. participation in the International Slave Trade in 1807²⁰—a principled act that, unfortunately, later allowed Southern slave holders to corner the domestic market on trading slaves held and bred in the United States. Far from eliminating slavery, America’s departure from the international slave trade in 1807 only further entrenched the institution domestically.

The Beginning of White Political and Racial Consciousness: White Labor and the Free-Soil Movement

In the early 1800s, social forces like an industrializing economy and the formation of early labor organizations like the Workingmen’s Party, which fought for better working conditions and the 10-hour day, produced a white worker consciousness that aspired to increase the social divide between the enslaved plantation worker and “free [white] labor.” The stress produced by shifting

post-Revolutionary conditions allowed the idea of whiteness and racialism to take root and fragmented the possibility of a unified labor movement's resistance to inhumane treatment under consolidating corporate power in the factories and on plantations.

As abolitionists and other members of the American public struggled to square their republican and Christian ideals with the use of people as property, lawmakers continued to enact legislation that delayed action on this moral question. Ideas supporting white racial dominance in American government and society, not just in owning chattel and property, more fully emerged in the aftermath of the Mexican American War of 1846–1848, where the dominant question became whether the United States should annex vast parts of Mexico, given the view that its population largely consisted of Indian or *mestizo*—“mixed” blood—a “mongrel race.”²¹ Opponents of annexation generally objected to incorporation of all Mexico on ethnic grounds, a view best represented by Senator John C. Calhoun in his Senate speech of January 4, 1848. Calhoun pointed out that the United States had never “incorporated into the Union any but the Caucasian race... Ours is a government of the white man ... in the whole history of man... there is no instance whatever of any civilized colored race, of any shade, being found equal to the establishment and maintenance of free government.”²²

Beloved, what follows is a gruesome chapter. The Compromise of 1850, which consisted of five laws passed in September 1850, including the Fugitive Slave Act, dealt with the issue of slavery and territorial expansion. Because California was admitted to the Union as a free state, the Fugitive Slave Act was enacted as part of a compromise to placate Southern advocates of slavery by requiring law enforcement officials to assist in the recovery of fugitive slaves, fining *regular citizens* who provided aid, and by denying a fugitive the right to a fair trial.²³ Imagine, my children, the fear and suffering in this—like the immigration raids of 2019 unleashed by the Trump administration, but on a wider scale—

the Fugitive Slave Act compelled all citizens, not just immigration officers, to assist in the capture of former slaves.²⁴ The Fugitive Slave Act proved to be catastrophic for formerly enslaved persons attempting to build their lives in the North. Over 20,000 left their homes and fled to Canada.²⁵

While the Fugitive Slave Act reinforced the impunity of whites as owners of human property, during this period, a movement grew demanding that white settlers be given free government land—violently appropriated through a series of Indian Wars throughout the 1800s²⁶—and that white persons would be the default “workers” in the Republic. Before the industrial revolution in the late 18th century, white journeymen in a trade could reasonably expect, in time, to become masters of their own work and to set up their own shop. The American Revolution was intended to make them “freemen” in the sense of being full citizens who, as independent actors, could protect their economic interests. From 1800 to 1860, there was a gradual transition from independent journeyman apprentice to wage laborer as artisan shops grew larger and consolidated under persons with the money to purchase the necessary tools and equipment. In the process, wage labor no longer afforded a reliable rite of passage on the road to economic independence. This was a blow to worker consciousness: formerly independent artisans were now paid wages and thus became, in their words, “hirelings”—“wage slaves.” As free white laborers felt increasingly displaced, they became fixated upon distinguishing themselves from unfree black slaves.²⁷

These conditions helped to create the free-soil movement, an antecedent of white nationalism and the Republican Party of Lincoln. The free-soil political party developed out of Northern anxieties about Southern expansionism and the extension of slavery, combining forms of “principled opposition” to slavery with considerable resistance to the presence of free blacks in their communities. Free-soilers advocated for and passed laws to prevent black people from entering their states, as in the 1853 Illinois law barring black settlement.²⁸

Representative David Wilmot opened the Northern free-soil campaign when he claimed to uphold the “rights of white freemen” and announced he “would preserve to free white labor a fair country, a rich inheritance where the sons of toil, of my own race and own color, can live without the disgrace which the association of negro slavery brings upon free labor.” In keeping with this exclusionary stance, in 1846, Representative Wilmot introduced to Congress the Wilmot Proviso, which called for the prohibition of slavery in the vast southern lands newly acquired from Mexico.²⁹ These lands, he believed, should belong to free white men. These strains are familiar today, as white nationalism erupts back into mainstream political and social discourse.

The dominant white cultural consensus, particularly following the *Dred Scot v. Sanford* (1856) decision, which held that “the black man has no rights that the white man is bound to respect,” was that the extraction of land, work and the arbitrary use of violence to hunt down or “punish” black people seeking freedom was acceptable.

Building a Foundation of Inhumanity

Looking back, children, it may seem the emerging colonial political structure that advanced the European-Christian dominated racial hierarchy which began to identify as “white,” was primarily a product of the dynamic shifts arising from industrial labor extraction and slavery in the 19th century. However, the construction of this hierarchy was built brick by brick beginning with dehumanizing perceived “outsiders” in increasingly racialized terms. Dating from the period of Spanish and English colonization, colonizers told stories—mostly biblical—that justified their extraction of human life energy. In the early 1500s, the Spanish conquistadors came to the island of Hispaniola, using violence to enslave the indigenous people to mine for gold and other items of value. At the time, it was believed that the “Indians” could be treated this way because they were “beasts rather than

men.” As the violence and extraction spread throughout present-day Latin America, one of the early conquistadors, Bartholome de Las Casas, later the Bishop of Chiapas, experienced a change of heart. Las Casas advocated from 1514 to 1530 to obtain a royal *cedula* prohibiting slavery in Peru, and in 1537, prompted a proclamation by Pope Paul III that the Indians are “truly men” and should not be treated as “dumb brutes” or deprived of their freedom and property.³⁰ Once the horrors of conquest had nearly decimated the indigenous population in much of the Americas, and the Catholic Church no longer sanctioned the abuse of those who remained, economic interest demanded the turn to a new source of disposable labor in the form of the enslaved African.

The Stories They Told: Constructing a Racial Order

Beloved, people over time have tried to make sense of their place in the world. The voices given the broadest platform are those in authority: leaders ostensibly guided by divinity (like the church), those possessing uncommon knowledge or expertise in an area of study (philosophers and scientists), or interpreters of our laws and codes of conduct.

Europeans were also influenced by an expanding view of the world. Before colonization of the Americas, it was believed the order of things was carefully mapped. Like Church dogma, “science” emerged as the new philosophical framework to help explain—and organize—the disorienting differences in color and characteristics of the people encountered. In 1664, French physician Francois Bernier, who had traveled widely, published an article on the subject of human differences. His own travel suggested to him a new method of classification “based on the facial lineaments and bodily conformations of the people.” Bernier settled on four general classifications of what would be called races—the Europeans, the Far Easterners, the “blacks,” and the Lapps.³¹ In the 18th century, anthropology offered other postulations about the nature of humanity’s order. George Buffon, writing

from 1749 to 1804, articulated an “environmental” basis for difference. Finding the white race to be the norm, he noted that all other races were “exotic” variations caused by excessive heat, which darkened the skin, or other conditions. Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, a German professor of medicine writing toward the end of the 18th century, divided mankind into five varieties—Caucasian, Mongolian, Ethiopian, American, and Malay, often referred to by the colors white, yellow, black, red, and brown.

It seems strange, but philosophical theories were routinely accepted as scientific fact. However, in the late 18th century, environmentalism as an accepted basis for racial difference gave way to the notion that black and white people derived from different origins. Those whose beliefs about multiple origins were grounded in theology, later termed polygenists, maintained that black people were not descendants of Adam and Eve, instead springing from a different “race” that evolved either from Cain’s offspring or from Noah’s disgraced son Ham. Others, like Dr. Charles White, an English physician writing at the turn of the 19th century, referred to the cranial developments from “lower to higher” animals, making sweeping observations about the emotional and intellectual similarity of blacks to apes when contrasted with white Europeans. And, at the end of it all, White invoked Genesis to support his “scientific” theory.³²

That “science” became equated with fact, no matter how unsubstantiated, provided fodder for institutionalizing racial hierarchy. By the end of the 1850s, nearing the Civil War, Charles Darwin’s *Origin of Species* (1859) became the new paradigm. While Darwin refuted the hypothesis of multiple species, highlighting the evolutionary mechanism of “natural selection,” he did not dispute the notion that some races are superior to others.³³ This was expanded upon in the Gilded Age, when Herbert Spencer’s social Darwinism maintained that races represented different stages along the evolutionary scale with the “white” race at the top. Distorting Darwin’s theory of natural selection, Spencer’s idea of society was a struggle between individuals,

between classes, between different nations and between different races. This, Spencer believed, was nature’s method of producing “superior men”—through survival of the fittest. Fitting neatly into the Gilded Age capitalism of the late 19th century, Spencer’s social Darwinism maintained that nothing could be done for primitive peoples. Since their civilization reflected their lower stage of biological evolution, he posited, dominant races would overrun the inferior races by virtue of greater quantity of energy and mental mass. Therefore, the “proper” role of government was very limited: to keep conflicts in society from exploding into open violence. Charity was to be eliminated—even for poor white people—because it interfered with “free economic forces.” According to this appalling philosophy, public education, free libraries, and all socialistic institutions would not result in improving society but pave the way to its degeneration.³⁴

Eugenics carried Spencer’s social Darwinist philosophy of hierarchy and elimination of the weak to its logical conclusion. Francis Galton, whose book *Hereditary Genius* (1869) launched the eugenics movement,³⁵ attempted to show that a small number of families with intellectual distinction tended to be related to one another, believing there were grades of races—with the Anglo-Saxon being superior. And, according to Galton, superior people had the obligation to reproduce, just as “defective” persons must be prevented from doing so. Not surprisingly, these ideas bled into American law. Ian Haney-Lopez’s illuminating book, *White By Law*, documents ways in which the law—specifically opinions of the U.S. Supreme Court—parsed race, whiteness, and “fitness” to become naturalized as an American citizen. From 1878 to 1924, the Supreme Court periodically heard cases, later known as the “prerequisite cases,” that attempted to interpret the Naturalization Act of 1790,³⁶ which grounded citizenship on being “white.” Lines of reasoning used to determine whiteness included “scientific evidence” (reference to “learned treatises” that purported to identify where various peoples fit along the racial spectrum) and “common knowledge.”³⁷

Eugenic arguments also informed the Immigration Act of 1924, known for severely curtailing immigration to the United States from non-northern European countries.³⁸ Therefore, beloved, it should come as no surprise that the white nationalism of the 21st century draws equally from the racial claims to land (soil) of the Free-Soil Movement and from the eugenic approach to regulating and removing “lower order” racial groups.

Our Children after Emancipation: Black Life Following the Civil War

What was life like for black people following emancipation and the end of the Civil War? Children, it was hard. Many of our great writers, like Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, James Baldwin, and Ta Nehisi-Coates have told stories about our people’s journey to find and live in safe spaces. As you know, leaving the Southern plantation did not end the suffering of black people. Following the Civil War, the Southern agrarian economy still relied upon black labor. Planters needed people to pick the cotton and harvest the tobacco or rice or any of the many other crops. At the same time, four million black people were released from slavery with no resources at all—no land, nothing but hard common sense (educating black people was illegal in most states), not accepted by trades for work, and certainly no money. So states from Georgia to South Carolina updated their Black Codes to criminalize black workers—in their minds, former slaves—who would not agree to return to work for white planters for no real wages (failing to work under these conditions was often called “vagrancy”). Other acts involving money, food, or failing to defer to white authority, like not averting one’s eyes on the street, led to “crime.” While the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution officially banned slavery when it was ratified in 1865, its exception clause laid the foundation for a new chapter in the exploitive labor extraction of black people. The exception clause states that “[n]either slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof

the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.”³⁹ Because the post Civil War South did not have money to maintain and operate their prison systems, in the beginning, convicted blacks were shipped off to local white farmers, who paid the convicted person’s fine to the court, then were held by that farmer to work off their fine on his property. Of course, like the expanding 21st century penal fine and fee system that continues to extract money and resources from individuals convicted of crimes, farmers continued to add fees and the cost of food and upkeep to the original fine. Black laborers had a tough time ever getting out from under it. In the 1870s, most Southern states commercialized the convict lease system by directly contracting out their convicted black persons to perform deadly, backbreaking work for corporations, like the railroad or pine tar extraction or mining concerns. In Alabama in 1873, 25 percent of all black leased persons (“convicted persons”) died.⁴⁰ Once convict leasing was publicly discredited toward the end of the 19th century, the labor extraction game merely shifted: the chain gang became the successor extraction system that largely built the system of southern roads in the 20th century.⁴¹

At the same time, the nation was struggling to reconfigure itself following the end of Reconstruction (1877), when blacks were especially vulnerable—left without federal assistance of any kind and forced to endure hatred, discrimination, and violence. Then the Supreme Court decision *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) made segregation the law of the land. We also know that blacks traveled far to find safe spaces, although most would have been satisfied to farm some of the land controlled by former rebel Confederate plantation owners—the promised 40 acres and a mule.⁴²

Traveling to Seek Safety

There were two waves of the Great Migration, which spanned from 1915 to the early 1970s, a mass movement of black people traveling to escape

lynching, violence, and communally sanctioned labor theft under share cropping and debt peonage, to find living-wage work in the industrial North when production was ramping up to build automobiles and to support the United States war efforts of World War I and II.⁴³

From 1940 to 1970, some five million of our people migrated to the urban North. The extensive institutional barriers to settlement encountered in northern cities like Chicago, Detroit, and Philadelphia are now well-documented. Practices and policies like redlining, restrictive covenants, and barriers to credit, not to mention educational and employment discrimination, made community life challenging in these new locales and led to black people being forced into ghettos and cut off from the rest of the community.⁴⁴

In the late 1950s through the 1960s, black people rose up to demand their civil rights. This commenced a period known as the Second Reconstruction, where a violent government backlash led to criminalizing poverty and to targeted enforcement of drug prohibition laws in black and brown neighborhoods. The resulting period of mass incarceration is best exemplified in New York, where enactment of the Rockefeller Drug Laws in 1973 led over time to the wide-scale construction of prisons that created jobs in increasingly economically depressed, majority white upstate communities and led to the containment of black and brown persons drawn from the state's poor urban areas and in the main from the seven poorest (and brownest) neighborhoods in New York City and from across the state.⁴⁵ Although mass incarceration in New York appears to have reached its peak in 2000 when the New York prison census reached over 72,000, decarceration efforts have only gotten the census to a little above 49,000.⁴⁶

The hard-fought push to close Rikers Island has generated a plan that reached the New York City Council. Closing Rikers is a point of contention for persons who are fearful of a decentralized jail system, for community members who do not want a

jail located in their neighborhood, and for abolitionists who do not believe in building more jails or prisons.⁴⁷ The question of how to achieve it is no longer simply an issue of enforcement and carceral management. Closing Rikers implicates our values and requires collective planning for the community's use of its resources. This is the domain of human rights.

What are the Costs of Inhumanity?

The violence spread by interlocking systems of dominance is incalculable. The American settler colonial system set in place a structure that continues to extract obeisance through institutions and social configurations like indenture and class. Adherence to the structures of patriarchy and white supremacy continues.

Costs have continued to accrue after generations of normalizing the slaughter of Native Americans by frontiersmen and "good" cowboys,⁴⁸ hunting down "dangerous" fugitive slaves or migrating blacks fleeing Southern servitude, and the all-too-common, unspoken yet in plain sight intimidation and battery (usually in white hoods) of the small black planter who achieved a little success—a good crop and ownership of his tool. These unconscionable acts only spawned more: the rape of a domestic worker returning home to her children, the hanging of a local man, the death of a woman in childbirth who was denied admission to a white hospital—the terrorizing of an entire people. Trumpian white nationalism has resurged from this cultural context, rising up from the detritus of a disintegrating social contract in the wake of deindustrialization, a vast and inequitable wealth divide that feeds plutocracy, a fire sale of natural assets—like the opening of the Alaskan Arctic Refuge—and the ongoing use of fossil fuel stoked by the illusion of "limitless growth" to prop up the position of corporate and individual interests.⁴⁹

Many ask why it is important to consider the enslavement of a people and its legacy, since many

like the current U.S. Senate Majority Leader believe that it is ancient history and no longer relevant since “none of us currently living are responsible.”⁵⁰ Perhaps if we recognize the interdependent economic, cultural, and social threads that have fanned out of this bloody institution, normalizing pervasive violence within American society—reflected in the punitive institutions of our prisons, our increasingly frequent mass shootings, and in the militarization of our public educational system—then we will understand why our punitive traditions and institutions continue to fail us as people—and as a planet—and work toward developing new norms and shared connections. Their effects are on display in relationships between persons across the gender spectrum, between black and white, and in the inequitable way in which communities have been organized and served. The damaging effects are all too visible when the life chances of black people are fragmented in every respect, including the way in which environmental hazards like incinerators, landfills, oil facilities, and diesel bus depots are routinely sited next to their communities.⁵¹ Yet the government remains wholly unresponsive to the charge of environmental racism and must be beaten by the media to investigate the mass lead contamination of water in places like Flint, MI and Newark, NJ; it is hard not to be angry.

Most damaging of all is our collective impassivity when persons are hurt. We now routinely witness the videotaped execution of black men by the police like Philando Castille, Alton Sterling, and Eric Garner.⁵² Garner’s death represents the true intersection of race and the criminalization of poverty. Garner was detained and choked to death for selling “loosies” (loose cigarettes) outside of a convenient store. My children, when has a poor man deserved to be choked to death for the illegal sale of a product? What has this history of violence done to our capacity to respond to abuses—the various shootings and massacres—Sandy Hook, Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland Florida, Las Vegas, Nevada?⁵³ It has accomplished this: our movements and capacity to resist are suffering.

We also see lethal force fully vindicated by law when John Crawford, a shopper at Walmart who happened to be a black man, considered purchasing an air rifle. He was killed by police in 2014 for merely picking up the item.⁵⁴ The pain of families seems endless after the home executions of black people just sitting in their yards in California or in their apartments, like Botham Jean, in Texas.⁵⁵

Blacks have long had to live with this kind of flagrant violence. But now it has re-engaged with an old subject—the target of nativism—and once again the American public is incapacitated as it witnesses the United States government’s move to contain undocumented families and children. People are being held in prison-like facilities across the country, not serving time for a crime but waiting in “civil detention” for a hearing to determine if they can legally remain in the country. Immigrants, including asylum seekers and legal migrants have been held for periods that span weeks to years. Up to 2,500 are children and parents fleeing violence and war in their home countries.⁵⁶ In effect, the cultural legacy of enslavement, dehumanization, punishment, and violence that allowed lynching, rapes, and later, the burning of individual property of free blacks and flourishing black towns like Tulsa, Oklahoma⁵⁷ and Rosewood, Florida⁵⁸ to become routine when targeting black people, has now expanded to others.

The Mythic White “Racial Compact”

Beloved, inhumanity is perpetuated when those who benefit from inequity are insulated. In the United States, patriarchy and white supremacy have protected and compensated the acolytes of these systems through a series of “bargains” (or miniature social contracts) that preserve the existing order and maintain control by according benefits to white skin and cis-gendered maleness. Despite rhetoric about rugged individualism and the promise of upward mobility when barriers to competition and free participation in the marketplace are removed, there has long been a shadow economy that paid another

supplemental wage based on whiteness and maleness.⁵⁹

As in the aftermath of Bacon's Rebellion in 1676, an emerging three-part "bargain" whose elements included economic security; a racial contract that provided benefits for white men; and male dominance was effectively struck between the governing elite and lower-class white men to secure their allegiance. In exchange for their support of the existing hierarchy, which translated into "patriotism" and service in the military, police force, and other structures, participants would receive economic security (secure membership in a working or "middle class"), affirmation of their role as head of the traditional family, and positions of local authority, like sheriff and border patrol agent, to protect the system. As you well know, my children, black people were not parties to this contract.⁶⁰ This unstated agreement now forms the basis of white nationalist demands to rewrite the American social contract, originally grounded in negative liberty Constitutional protections, to one that more explicitly predicates citizenship benefits on white maleness.

Economic security. During the colonial period, former European indentured servants and aspiring owners of property sought to bridge the enormous social and economic gap between themselves and the planter class in Virginia. Following Bacon's Rebellion and other joint actions by indentured servants and enslaved blacks attacking the colonial power structure, the planter elite cannily perpetrated a fiction of social (though not economic) equality among people who would identify as "whites" while managing to fill a necessary security function to protect their land and property. This was done by creating a specific role for those recently released from their indentures to serve as protectors of the colony from Native Americans responding to settler incursions on their land. Added to this function, white yeomen were assigned jurisdiction over hunting down the planter's human property—chattel—by forming the slave patrol. This created an apparent fellowship of one—white men—as against

black chattel. It also seemed to magically erase the very real economic difference between the plantation owner and subsistence farmer. This was one of many iterations of an archetypal relationship between members of the lower orders serving and protecting the upper orders: allegiance to a feudal lord to protect the manor; later, paid mercenaries fighting the wars of European kings; and in the late 19th century, the Pinkertons, a private police force deployed to protect corporate property.⁶¹ This power relationship is reproduced across racial lines - in the police, the armed forces, wherever a body is needed on the front line. And we have seen the disposability of these persons. Consider the 9/11 first responders, largely working class, who continued to serve a system that, over 18 years, had to be shamed and compelled to provide for their necessary care and support—much like the generations of veterans of America's successive wars.⁶²

The Racial Contract. The racial contract functions as an implicit agreement between white persons across class positions, specifically between the poor and the powerful, to participate in and support a structure that provides benefits based on whiteness. And while lower class men could never challenge the governing power structure, implicit in the bargain: blacks were never to be considered parties to the bargain (or people). In this way black people were not only the property or chattel of whites, but gradually became the essential element in a bargain struck by two other "white" parties. Working class white men would always be a "step up" from black people—reinforced by the scientific racialism of the 19th century. Stated another way in the *Dred Scott* decision, to be black was to be a definitional "non-citizen" who would not receive the protections of any institution. What did this mean? Mostly that black men (and women) would not receive a living wage: in the 19th century most unions would not admit blacks, and many were still segregated into the late 20th century. The impacts were felt at the most personal level. During slavery, marriages between slaves were not officially recognized—husbands and wives could be separated at any time at the whim of

an owner.⁶³ Post slavery, while black women could find household work as domestics, black men were unable to find work in the white economy, save in the kleptocratic debt peonage arrangements of share cropper and tenant farmer or other dangerous and low-paying work—or else by traveling away from their families to serve as Pullman porters on the railroad.⁶⁴

Male Dominance. White supremacy also reinforced the operation of patriarchy, which served as an added incentive to draw benefits from that structure. For hundreds of years in Europe and the American colonies, male dominance in the household and other social structures was upheld by the church and the doctrine of coverture. Particularly prevalent among persons who owned property, coverture was a legal doctrine which provided that a married woman's legal rights and obligations were subsumed under those of her husband—meaning, a wife did not have a separate legal existence. Like an underage child or a slave, she could not own property of her own or control her own earnings. In order to enter into marriage and the household of the male, a woman was required to give her property (or dowry) over to her husband.⁶⁵

The Faustian Choice of White Women. In this way, traditional patriarchy promised economic security to women by reaffirming their role as part—not separate—from the male. And for those who felt benefitted by this derivative status, it was in their interest to support the system of patriarchy. Over time, dating from the abolition and women's suffrage movements of the 1800s to 1920, to the rise of the women's liberation movement in the 1960s, tensions increased among women about where to best align themselves. Should they submit to the power of patriarchy or seek the protections of the Constitution? This division was highlighted during the struggle to enact the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in the 1970s. The ERA, first proposed in Congress by the National Women's Party in 1923, states, "Equality of rights under the law shall not be abridged by the United States or by any state on

account of sex."⁶⁶ Surprisingly, the foremost acolyte for preserving women's protections under patriarchy was lawyer Phyllis Schlafly, who is best known for her role spearheading the Stop Equal Rights Amendment (STOP ERA) counter movement against passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. Schlafly appealed to traditional women, by asserting, among other things, that the passage of the ERA would mean the erosion of traditional protections for women, including sexual assault laws, alimony, and the presumption of awarding custody of children to the mother.⁶⁷

Similarly, today, many ask: where do white women stand? In the 2016 Presidential election, 53 percent of white women voters supported Donald Trump, a known misogynist.⁶⁸ In a bizarre twist, Trump appealed to the female voting population in a way that was consistent with Schlafly's articulation of women's best interests under patriarchy. This certainly has been confusing to "feminists" who often act in a political space that fails to recognize the other non-dualistic (intersectional) dimensions at play. This is the same mindset that calls for unity under the banner of "Me Too," without giving voice to the particular trauma of black and brown women who have been sexually preyed upon—without protection of the law—by their white fathers, brothers, and sons for centuries. It is the same myopia that failed women when distilling the notion of "women's liberation" to birth control and the freedom to work outside the home—again a "privilege" that black women were forced to enjoy when raising their children on the wages of domestics when their husbands and partners were excluded from the white labor market, traveling for work, or today, incarcerated by the state.⁶⁹ Most of all, the mainstream women's movement raised up contraception in service of sexual liberation as a health issue while failing to acknowledge the controls imposed on the sexuality of poor black women—like Norplant in exchange for welfare benefits in the 1990s⁷⁰—and the litany of public health disparities suffered by black women, who continue to die from complications of childbirth—

three to four times more likely than white women—at an alarming rate.⁷¹

How have patriarchy and race intersected to control women? America was formed in settler colonialism where protection from “outsiders” like the indigenous population reinforced allegiance to the governing power. After emancipation led to the reality of formerly enslaved blacks ranging about unmoored from plantations, fears about miscegenation and race mixing proliferated,⁷² shifting the focus to containing this outsider population of formerly enslaved blacks. In this climate, the narrative of the marshal, the armed cowboy protector of new settler territories whose lands were being extracted during the 19th century Indian Wars,⁷³ alternated with Ku Klux Klan narratives valorizing the use of force to protect white women’s purity from hordes of ravenous black men.⁷⁴ In all cases, white male use of force is affirmed, if not heroic. Force used by others, even when protecting their own lives, is barbaric.

What is the impact of this? The frightening legacy, dear children, is violence. Today, the United States has over 393 million weapons in the hands of its citizens, or enough for every man, woman, and child to own one and still have 67 million guns left over.⁷⁵ While the wave of law enforcement in the 1980s—through the 1990s planted the image of black male violence and criminality as society’s problem, we continue to reel from yet another mass shooting in Odessa, TX: somehow lawmakers failed to criminalize the use of AR-style rifles in the general population.⁷⁶

Ascendance over Newcomers, Migrants, and other Provisional Citizens. White identity adapts to the shifting balance of power and politics of the time. It is galvanizing and generates a collective negative identity—one that is “not black”—for new persons wishing to become citizens. The Naturalization Act of 1790 premised citizenship on whiteness until 1952.⁷⁷ Successive changes to U.S. Census categories have validated shifting definitions of whiteness.⁷⁸

For those who immigrated to the United States and traveled the road to acceptance as legitimate American citizens, like the members of the Irish, Italian, Eastern European, and Jewish communities, a large part of that journey was the road to being accepted as “white.”⁷⁹ And whiteness was not monolithic. Instead, hierarchy was determined in relation to Nordic-Anglo Saxon Protestantism, with ranking based upon culture, geography, dark hair, skin, or non-Christian religion.⁸⁰ Today the new demographics reported by the Census of an “encroaching” majority non-white United States population within the next 20 years, shorthanded as “invaders” by President Trump,⁸¹ has led some to believe that the fundamental social contract through which most benefits flow—the conjunction of white supremacy and patriarchy—has fractured.

The Bargain is Broken

Today the implicit compact between men who govern and lower-class white males has frayed. The end of the long post-war manufacturing boom following World War II coincided with gradual deindustrialization in the 1970s. Then President Reagan’s attack on the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) in 1981, and unions generally, left labor substantially weakened.⁸²

The increasing loss of well-paid union jobs left many white men unemployed, unable to earn a family wage, and therefore, unable to maintain their role in the traditional family structure as head of the household.⁸³ Because of the changes in the economy and the necessity for a two wage household, women entered the labor force in record numbers and found that they were increasingly less dependent on the benefits of patriarchy. The backlash was fierce. Media attacks from traditional sectors of society were venomous, memorably targeting the television series *Murphy Brown*, which featured Candice Bergen as a white middle class professional who made the decision to have a child outside of wedlock. Vice President Dan Quayle led the attack on the show, stating the portrayal of *Murphy Brown*

as a single mother reflects the “breakdown of the family structure in America.”⁸⁴ However, the critiques of media and socio-cultural theorists like Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Charles Murray were largely well-accepted when they racialized and “problematized” childrearing outside of marriage, deeming it a problem of social disorder particular to matriarchal black families.⁸⁵ This demonization of black women served two functions: it highlighted their exclusion from the protection of patriarchy afforded to white women and served to remind white women that the barbs and threats of violence—being tagged “whore” or “slut”—awaited them if they stepped outside of the protective bounds of patriarchy.

What Has Become of Us?

My children, living in a society that held up one set of principles under the Constitution, while those in power entered into a politically convenient side agreement has damaged us all. It should not be at all surprising that the President of the United States has professed no adherence to a specific set of principles, no interest in human rights,⁸⁶ just his interest in obtaining the best “deal” for the American people. But who are the American people? What is in our best interest? And how can we be certain that power can act in our best interest when totally cut off from principles that permit it to govern?

Even as one structure dissolves, there is an opportunity to reexamine our values and who we are.

Human Values to Right a Capsizing Ship: Learning to Be Kind to One Another

And so, beloved, knowing what you know, let us remember that we are people. And, in spite of the theft of our humanity, sale into slavery, and oppression at the hands of our white-identified

brothers, we are all one people. How can we move forward?

Since we are all beings, we all must share in what is needed to live. If we take a lesson from the earth and the movements to sustain her, it is clear there is a price to be paid for limitless extraction. Because the question of how to organize ourselves for our collective survival is imminent, perhaps society will be forced to do what it has been unwilling to do—conduct a thorough reassessment and reworking of our collective values and resources and to engage in a truly democratic, self-determined process to plan how to use them. It is important to have a compass to guide us through this unprecedented task. Human rights are a good starting point.

Unlike the backward looking, precedent-driven approach to parsing our rights under the U.S. Constitution, a human-earth-centered examination of what is needed to live is forward looking. Because conditions, needs, and resources change, values that support living under these evolving conditions can never be static. And at their essence, human rights are what beings need to live. Kindness, sensitivity to the needs of others, are qualities that translate across the personal to the collective. Joseph Wronka offers a helpful perspective.

Technically, human rights do not exist. However, human needs do, and human rights provide the legal mandate to fulfill human need... Human rights mirror the social-environmental contexts of the time—values that have more or less crystallized into rights, often embedded in constitutions and/or other ethical codes of conduct, serving as guiding principles for a way of life.⁸⁷

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) enacted in 1948, which contains 30 Articles with guarantees of housing, education, health care, collective action, employment among them, is only a reference point. As we continue to better understand

ourselves and new needs are identified, we will find new ones.⁸⁸

And there is no absence of need. In New York City alone we must reckon with the continuing displacement arising from gentrification, deed theft targeting African American homeowners, and new development plans imposed from the top down without meaningful consultation with community members.⁸⁹ Barriers to fully participating in the life of the community continue to be high for families living in poor areas, usually black and brown, where the educational system has been historically under-resourced and the metrics for being catapulted into “good” schools—never mind the select few specialized high schools that open the doors to elite universities—are unfair.

Where Do We Go from Here?

Children, let us dedicate ourselves to enriching and supporting the growth of all persons across the life course, to ensure that healthy, affordable food is available to everyone, that nutrition, health and healing is centered with support for community gardens, farms and lands held in trust that house and sustain its members like the Cooper Square Community Land Trust, the most fully developed in New York City.⁹⁰ Throughout history and today, black people have been systematically deprived of land and communal control of our resources. We must organize to change this.

In all of this, art is front and center as a path to reconnecting ourselves to our emotions and to the experiences of others. As we learn to work, act and live more collectively, it is hoped that we will evolve a more holistic approach to addressing atomized problems. We must also learn new ways to be in relationship with one another. While communities must exercise bottom-up, self-determination in the use, organization and planning of its resources, movements should be built on the commitment of mutual support. Groups like VOCAL-NY and Jews

for Racial and Economic Justice (JFREJ) are examples of allies who work in partnership with community to expand spaces for those marginalized by incarceration, drug addiction, and HIV/AIDS, and who recognize the shared threat of white supremacy.⁹¹

Punishment and its enduring mark must be rethought. To indefinitely hold people out of society, unable to fully participate in their communities—work, or join professions and families—is an exclusion that impacts everyone. Automatically erasing a person’s conviction history by expunging their record after a short, reasonable period of time is an important first step.⁹² While the punishment system must be challenged, ultimately abolished, as a retrograde, trauma-reinforcing structure, it is only part of the problem. For many, reentry is not the first challenge—“entry” is. If most of the persons swept into the punishment system come from poor, black and brown, historically segregated and under-resourced communities where most have not been able to enter society as a full member with unfettered access to its institutions and opportunities for work and housing, what will these same people removed from the community and stigmatized by the prison system encounter?⁹³ Reimagining prisons and jails, while essential, is but one part of the equation. As we have witnessed from the community push-back on efforts to close Rikers Island, the question of reentry, which is really about resettlement and living together, transcends prison “reform.” It requires a wholesale rethinking about how we all can have a “place” in community with dignity and to create and implement a democratic plan for the use of our collective resources.⁹⁴ Politics alone will not get us there. Education, connection, and compassion will.

*Forever yours in spirit,
Your grandmothers*

¹ Christopher Ehret, "Africa in World History before ca. 1440." Ch. 1, *Africa's Development in Historical Perspective*, edited by Emmanuel Akyeampong, Robert H. Bates, Nathan Nunn and James Robinson. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014, pp. 50-52. See also, The Abolition Project, found at, http://abolition.e2bn.org/slavery_41.html

² Countries In Africa Population. (2019-10-01). Retrieved 2019-10-02, from <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/countries-in-africa>

³ List of African Countries by Area, *Statisticstimes.com*, March 12 2014, found at, www.statisticstimes.com/geography/african-countries-by-area.php

See also, Alistair Boddy Evans, Chronological List of African Independence, *Thought.com*, July 24, 2019, found at, www.thoughtco.com/chronological-list-of-african-independence-4070467

⁴The First Africans, Jamestown Rediscovery, found at, <https://historicjamestowne.org/history/the-first-africans/>

⁵ What was Happening in 1628 in the Southeast, 1628 Across the Continent, Colonial House Interactive History, Thirteen, found at, www.thirteen.org/wnet/colonialhouse/history/1628_southeast.html

⁶ Olivia B. Waxman, The First Africans in VA Landed in 1619. It was a Turning Point for Slavery in American History – But Not the Beginning. *Time*, Aug. 20, 2019. Found at, <https://time.com/5653369/august-1619-jamestown-history/>

⁷ Bruce, P.A. (1986). *Economic History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century, Volume 1*. New York: MacMillan & Co.

⁸ Waxman, The First Africans in VA Landed in 1619.

⁹ Thornton, John. The African Experience of the "20. And Odd Negroes" Arriving in 1619. *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 55, No. 3 (July 1998), pp. 421-434

¹⁰ Waxman, The First Africans in VA Landed in 1619.

¹¹ The First Africans, Jamestown Rediscovery.

¹² In the Northeastern colonial cities of New York and Philadelphia, enslaved blacks performed a wide variety of skilled work including blacksmithing, cobbling, carpentry and other artisanal trades. Roediger, D.R. (1999). *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class, Revised Edition*. London: Verso, pp. 23-27.

¹³ Martinot, S. (2003). *The Rule of Racialization: Class, Identity, Governance*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, pp. 65-66.

¹⁴ Martinot, Id. at 54-55.

¹⁵ Martinot, Id.

¹⁶ Martinot, Id. at 62-63.

¹⁷ Martinot, Id. at 66, 67.

¹⁸ Martinot, Id. at 67.

¹⁹ The ideals of the American Revolution were greatly influenced by Enlightenment Philosophy and the idea of natural rights and equality for all citizens. See, Julie Marks, How did the American Revolution Influence the French Revolution? *History*, May 1, 2018, found at, www.history.com/news/how-did-the-american-revolution-influence-the-french-revolution

²⁰ Malik Simba, The three-fifths clause of the United States constitution (1787), *Black Past*, October 3, 2014, found at, www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/three-fifths-clause-united-states-constitution-1787/

²¹ Gregory Rodriguez, Mongrel America, *The Atlantic*, January/February 2003, found at, www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2003/01/mongrel-america/305956/

²² Fredrickson, G.M. (1971). *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Date on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914*. Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, p. 136, citing from John C. Calhoun's Senate speech against the annexation of Mexico, January 4, 1849, in John C. Calhoun, *Works*, ed. Richard K. Cralle (New York, 1853-1857), VI, 410-411.

²³ The Fugitive Slave Act, editors, *History.com*, found at, www.history.com/topics/black-history/fugitive-slave-acts

²⁴ Rogelio V. Solis and Jeff Amy, Largest U.S. immigration raids in a decade net 680 arrests, *AP News*, August 7, 2019, found at, www.apnews.com/bbcef8ddae4e4303983c91880559cf23

²⁵ Bordewich, Fergus M. (2012). *America's Great Debate: Henry Clay, Stephen A. Douglas, and the Compromise that Preserved the Union*. New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks. See, The Compromise of 1850 and the Fugitive Slave Act, *PBS.org*, found at, www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2951.html

²⁶ Indian Wars Timeline, found at, www.datesandevents.org/events-timelines/26-indian-wars.htm

²⁷ Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*, pp. 43-87

²⁸ The Illinois General Assembly adopted the "Black Law" of 1853. Under this law, no black from another state could remain within the Illinois borders for more than ten days. Beyond ten days, he or she was subject to arrest, confinement and jail, and a \$50 fine, and removal from the state. If unable to pay the fine, the sheriff could auction the offending African-American to a bidder willing to pay the fine, allowing the guilty party to work the fewest number of days. Roger D. Bridges, The Illinois Black Codes, Historical Research and Narrative, found at, www.lib.niu.edu/1996/iht329602.html

²⁹ Free-Soil Party, *Britannica.com*, retrieved on October 3, 2019 at, www.britannica.com/topic/Free-Soil-Party

³⁰ Gossett, T. F. (1997). *Race: the History of an Idea*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 12-13.

³¹ According to Bernier, the "blacks" of Africa "have thick lips and flat noses. Their skin has a polished look and their hair is like a species of wool... The Far Easterners have a peculiar "turn" to their faces and oddly shaped eyes. The Lapps are short with large feet and large shoulders." Gossett at 32.

³² Gossett, 46-53.

³³ Gossett at 68.

³⁴ Gossett, pp. 144-175

³⁵ At its base, eugenics was the principle that traits and habits could be inherited. More than that, it placed an obligation on society to do something about controlling heredity, which later translated into preventing the reproduction of mentally defective or criminally inclined people. This resulted in a broad press for the legal authorization of sterilization. Although a bill authorizing the sterilization of the "unfit" was defeated by the Michigan Legislature in 1897, by 1915, thirteen states had empowered the government to render sterile certain "criminals and mentally defective persons in public institutions. By 1930, close to 30 states had enacted such laws. Degler, C.N. (1991). *In Search of Human Nature: The Decline and Revival of Darwinism in American Social Thought*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 44-45.

³⁶ The Naturalization Act of 1790 limited naturalization to "any alien, being a free white person who shall have resided within the limits and under the jurisdiction of the United States for a term of two years." Act of March 26, 1790, ch.3, 1 Stat. 103.

³⁷ Haney-Lopez, I. (2006). *White By Law*, Revised. New York: New York University Press, pp.47-65. The conflict over the use of the legal standard "scientific evidence" or "common knowledge" as the arbiter of race arose in the case of *In re Najour*, which was decided by a federal court in 1909. In rendering his decision, the judge referred to the treatise "The World's People" by Dr. A.H. Keane, which classified, "without question or qualification in any way, Syrians as part of the Caucasian or white race, and this they are, so far as my information and knowledge go." Id. at 48.

³⁸ Adam Serwer, White Nationalism's Deep American Roots, *The Atlantic*, April 2019, found at, www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/04/adam-serwer-madison-grant-white-nationalism/583258/

-
- ³⁹ Flores A. Forbes, How a 13th Amendment loophole created America's carceral state, *The Crime Report*, June 3, 2019, found at, <https://thecrimereport.org/2019/06/03/539754/>
- ⁴⁰ Mancini, M.J. (1996). *One Dies, Get Another: Convict Leasing in the American South, 1866-1928*. South Carolina: University of Carolina Press.
- ⁴¹ Lichtenstein, A. (1993). Good roads and chain gangs in the progressive south: the negro convict is a slave. *The Journal of Southern History*, 59(1), 85-110.
- ⁴² Henry Louis Gates, The truth behind '40 Acres and a Mule,' pbs.org, retrieved on October 1, 2019, at, www.pbs.org/wnet/african-americans-many-rivers-to-cross/history/the-truth-behind-40-acres-and-a-mule/
- ⁴³ Lemann, N. (1991). *The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America*. New York: Vintage Books.
- ⁴⁴ Coates, Ta-Nahisi. The case for reparations, *The Atlantic* (May 2014). Katznelson, I. (2005). *When Affirmative Action was White: an Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth Century America*. New York: W.W. Norton and Co., pp. 25-80.
- ⁴⁵ The original Seven Neighborhood Study conducted by the Green Haven Think Tank from 1979-1980 found that, at the time, 85 percent of the State's prison population was Black or Latino and that 75 percent came from seven neighborhoods in New York City: Harlem, Lower East Side in Manhattan, South Central Bronx, Bedford Stuyvesant, Brownsville and East New York in Brooklyn, and South Jamaica in Queens. The Seven Neighborhood Study Revisited, The Center for NuLeadership on Urban Solutions, found at, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58eb0522e6f2e1dfce591dee/t/596e1246d482e9c1c6b86699/1500385865855/seven-neighborhood+revisited+rpt.pdf>
- ⁴⁶ The Sentencing Project, State by State Data, New York Prison Population Over Time, retrieved on October 4, 2019, at www.sentencingproject.org/the-facts/#map
- ⁴⁷ Anakwa Dwamena, Closing Rikers: competing visions for the future of New York City's jails, *NYR Daily*, referenced on Oct. 4, 2019 at www.nybooks.com/daily/2019/10/04/closing-rikers-competing-visions-for-the-future-of-new-york-citys-jails/
- ⁴⁸ Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea*, pp. 198-227.
- ⁴⁹ Anna M. Phillips, Feds finalize plan to open Alaska's arctic national wildlife refuge to oil drilling, *Los Angeles Times*, September 12, 2019, found at, www.latimes.com/environment/story/2019-09-12/interior-finalizes-plan-to-open-alaskas-arctic-national-wildlife-refuge-to-oil-drilling
- ⁵⁰ Jasmine Aguilera, Author Ta-Nehisi Coates criticized Mitch McConnell for saying slavery's effects were in the past, *Time*, June 19, 2019, found at, <https://time.com/5610151/ta-nehisi-coates-criticized-mcconnell-reparations/>
- ⁵¹ Robert D. Bullard, Race and Environmental Justice in the United States, 18 *Yale J. Int'l L.* (1993), found at, <file:///C:/Users/Owner/AppData/Local/Temp/Race%20and%20Environmental%20Justice%20in%20the%20United%20States.pdf>. See also, Rachel Dovey, This is What Happens When Cities Trash Equity, *Next City*, Feb. 5, 2015, found at, <https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/controversial-new-york-bill-attempts-waste-equity>
- ⁵² Jessica Goldstein, Thousands take to the streets to protest Philando Castile shooting verdict, *Thinkprogress*, June 17, 2017, found at, <https://thinkprogress.org/protests-philando-castile-verdict-ffd18c59fdd3/>; Rhiannon Walker, What we know about the Alton Sterling shooting, *The Undefeated*, July 6, 2016, found at, <https://theundefeated.com/features/what-we-know-about-the-alton-sterling-shooting/>; Kelley Czajka, The NYPD officer accused of choking Eric Garner will not be charged with civil rights violations, *Pacific Standard*, July 16, 2019, found at, <https://psmag.com/news/the-nypd-officer-accused-of-choking-eric-garner-will-not-be-charged-with-civil-rights-violations>
- ⁵³ Florida school shooting ranks among America's deadliest, *CBSNews*, Jan. 2, 2019, found at, www.cbsnews.com/news/florida-school-shooting-ranks-among-americas-deadliest/

-
- ⁵⁴ Lucy Steigerwald, Why did a black man get gunned down in a Walmart for carrying an unloaded air rifle, *Vice*, September 29, 2014, found at, www.vice.com/en_us/article/bn5p9w/why-did-a-black-man-get-gunned-down-in-walmart-for-carrying-an-unloaded-air-rifle-929
- ⁵⁵ Molly Sullivan, Sam Stanton, Tony Bizjak and Benjy Egel, Sacramento police clear cops who killed Stephon Clark minutes after feds close civil rights case, *The Sacramento Bee*, September, 29, 2019, found at, www.sacbee.com/news/local/article235516267.html . See also Marina Trahan Martinez, Sarah Mervosh and John Eligon, Amber Guyger is sentenced to 10 years for murder of Botham Jean, *NYTimes*, Oct. 2, 2019, found at, www.nytimes.com/2019/10/02/us/amber-guyger-sentencing.html
- ⁵⁶ Emily Kassie, Detained: How the US built the world's largest immigration detention system, *The Guardian*, Sept. 24, 2019, found at, www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/sep/24/detained-us-largest-immigrant-detention-trump
- ⁵⁷ Victor Luckerson, Black Wall Street: The African American haven that burned and then rose from the ashes, *The Ringer*, Jun. 28, 2018, found at, www.theringer.com/2018/6/28/17511818/black-wall-street-oklahoma-greenwood-destruction-tulsa
- ⁵⁸ Heather Gilligan, A white mob wiped this all-black Florida town off the map. 60 years later their story was finally told. *Timeline*, April 4, 2018, found at, timeline.com/all-black-town-rosewood-wiped-off-the-map-by-white-mob-73ca6630802b
- ⁵⁹ Cheryl Harris, Whiteness as Property, *Harvard L. Rev.*, Vol. 106, No. 8 (Jun. 1993), pp. 1707-1791; Roediger, D.R., *The Wages of Whiteness*.
- ⁶⁰ Mills, C.M. (1997). *The Racial Contract*. New York: Cornell University.
- ⁶¹ Rebecca Onion, Who were the Pinkertons? *Slate.com*, Feb. 1, 2019, found at, <https://slate.com/human-interest/2019/02/pinkerton-red-dead-redemption-2-lawsuit-history.html>
- ⁶² Michael Gold, How Jon Stewart became a fierce advocate for 9/11 responders, *NYTimes*, June 12, 2019, found at, www.nytimes.com/2019/06/12/nyregion/jon-stewart-9-11-congress.html
- ⁶³ Michel Martin, Slave marriages, families were often shattered by auction block, *NPR*, Feb. 11, 2010, found at, www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=123608207
- ⁶⁴ Denise Oliver Velez, Don't forget to celebrate black workers this labor day, *Daily Kos*, September 1, 2019, found at, www.dailykos.com/stories/2019/9/1/1881406/-Don-t-forget-to-celebrate-black-workers-this-Labor-Day
- ⁶⁵ Claudia Zaher, When a women's marital status defined her legal status: a research guide on the common law doctrine of coverture, *Law Library Journal*, Vol. 94, Issue 3, (Summer 2002), pp. 459-486, found at, <http://people.virginia.edu/~jdk3t/ZaherWMS.pdf>
- ⁶⁶ See U.S. History, 57c, The Equal Rights Amendment, found at, www.ushistory.org/us/57c.asp
- ⁶⁷ Linda Napikoski, Phyllis Schlafly's Stop ERA campaign against women's equality, *Thoughtco.com*, March 12, 2019, found at, www.thoughtco.com/stop-equal-rights-amendment-3528861
- ⁶⁸ Lonnae O'Neal, The 53 percent issue, *The Undeclared*, Dec. 20, 2016, found at, <https://theundefeated.com/features/black-women-say-white-feminists-have-a-trump-problem/>
- ⁶⁹ Sharon Smith, Black feminism and intersectionality, *International Socialist Review*, Issue # 91, found at, <https://isreview.org/issue/91/black-feminism-and-intersectionality>
- ⁷⁰ Elizabeth Jerkanowski, Fall 2018 Journal: Voluntarily, for the Good of Society: Norplant, Coercive Policy, and Reproductive Justice, *Berkeley Public Policy Journal*, Aug. 23, 2018, found at, <https://bppj.berkeley.edu/2018/08/23/norplant-coercive-policy-and-reproductive-justice/>
- ⁷¹ P.R. Lockhart, What Serena Williams's scary childbirth story says about medical treatment of black women, *Vox*, Jan. 11, 2018, found at, www.vox.com/identities/2018/1/11/16879984/serena-williams-childbirth-scare-black-women
- ⁷² Fredrickson, G.R. *The Black Image in the White Mind*, pp 140-172.

⁷³ Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea*, pp. 198-227

⁷⁴ Richard Brody, The worst thing about “Birth of a Nation” is how good it is, *The New Yorker*, retrieved October 7, 2019 at, www.newyorker.com/culture/richard-brody/the-worst-thing-about-birth-of-a-nation-is-how-good-it-is

⁷⁵ Christopher Ingraham, There are more guns than people in the United States according to a new study of global firearm ownership, *The Washington Post*, June 19, 2019, found at, www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2018/06/19/there-are-more-guns-than-people-in-the-united-states-according-to-a-new-study-of-global-firearm-ownership/

⁷⁶ Texas shooter evaded background check by purchasing weapon in private sale, CBS News, September 3, 2019, found at, www.cbsnews.com/news/texas-shooter-purchased-assault-style-weapon-in-private-sale-evaded-background-check-2019-09-03/

⁷⁷ Haney-Lopez, I. *White by Law*.

⁷⁸ Anna Brown, The changing categories the U.S. has used to measure race, Pew Research Center, *Fact Tank*, June 12, 2015, found at, www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/06/12/the-changing-categories-the-u-s-has-used-to-measure-race/

⁷⁹ Ignatiev, N. (1995). *How the Irish Became White*. New York: Routledge.

⁸⁰ Haney-Lopez, I. *White by Law*.

⁸¹ Dean Obeidallah, Trump is trying to whip up fear about the browning of America, CNN, November 4, 2018, found at, www.cnn.com/2018/11/04/opinions/trump-whip-up-browning-of-america-obeidallah/index.html

⁸² Joseph A. Mc Cartin, The strike that busted unions, *NYTimes*, Aug. 2, 2011, found at, www.nytimes.com/2011/08/03/opinion/reagan-vs-patco-the-strike-that-busted-unions.html

⁸³ Conversation with Dr. Harriet Fraad, host of Capitalism Hits Home, September 29, 2019.

⁸⁴ Lauren Le Vine, Why we need Murphy Brown in the Trump era, *Refinery29.com*, Jan. 26, 2018, found at, www.refinery29.com/en-us/2018/01/188990/murphy-brown-reboot-feminism-trump

⁸⁵ For a discussion of Daniel Patrick Moynihan and his controversial 1965 report, “The Negro Family: the Case for National Action,” see Sam Klug, The Moynihan Report resurrected, *Dissent*, Winter 2016, found at, www.dissentmagazine.org/article/moynihan-report-resurrected-daniel-geary-black-power

⁸⁶ Michael H. Fuchs, Donald Trump is on an Orwellian mission to redefine human rights, *The Guardian*, July 18, 2019, found at, www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jul/18/trump-pompeo-human-rights-un-orwellian-mission-redefine

⁸⁷ Wronka, J.H. (2008). *Human Rights and Social Justice: social action and service for the helping and health professions*. Sage Publications, Inc., p. 5.

⁸⁸ Human rights are a corollary to the question “why are we here?” If we are here to learn and grow, how can we as a society best support it? If growth is a human process, then it should be supported for everyone and not just those in privileged positions or professional occupations. At the same time, we have a responsibility to engage in collaborative, sustainable growth. Greta Thunberg and the Global Climate Summit are especially relevant to the values we embrace, the institutions we dismantle and build, and the collective sharing of our resources and the earth. See Kayla Epstein and Julie Eilperin, Greta Thunberg had one question at the U.N. climate summit: ‘How dare you?’ *The Washington Post*, September 23, 2019, found at, www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2019/09/23/greta-thunberg-vows-that-if-un-doesnt-tackle-climate-change-we-will-never-forgive-you/

Here are a few possibilities for rights in keeping with our emerging values:

-
1. **The Right to Belong** – physically, socially – across all spaces, including those incarcerated or removed or obscured from view. It recognizes the right to live within and be part of a community and that persons in prison and outside form one community.
 2. **The Right to be Heard** where all voices and opinions have a place to be publicly expressed (not dominated by corporate consolidated media).
 3. **The Right to Be Left Alone** – an explicit right of privacy that is more fully developed in the U.K. and the European Union, one that allows us to move beyond our worst actions and not to have them crystallized in the public sphere. See Jon L. Mills, Privacy revisited: A global perspective on the right to be left alone, *Tulane Law Rev.*, Vol. 53, Issue 2 (Winter 2018), found at, <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/be7f/5677f74487e539ef67bb2d2789f5a6b08f70.pdf>
 4. **The Right to Personal Growth Across the Life Course** within a society that provides resources to advance the growth of all persons regardless of their income, age or development, in a sustainable manner.
 5. **The Right Not to Be Exploited** or compelled to engage in extractive activities that deplete or extinguish one's life force or cripple one's body or the earth)

⁸⁹ Kelly Mena, to arm homeowners against deed theft, lawmakers to host town hall, *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, July 30, 2019, found at, <https://brooklyneagle.com/articles/2019/07/30/deed-theft-town-hall/>

⁹⁰ Abigail Savitch-Lew, The NYC Community Land Trust movement wants to go big, *CityLimits.org*, Jan. 8, 2018, found at, <https://citylimits.org/2018/01/08/the-nyc-community-land-trust-movement-wants-to-go-big/>

⁹¹ Voices of Community Activists and Leaders (VOCAL-NY), found at, www.vocal-ny.org/; Jews for Racial and Economic Justice (JFREJ), found at, <https://jfrej.org/>

⁹² J.J. Prescott and Sonja B. Starr, The case for expunging criminal records, *NYTimes*, March 20, 2019, found at, www.nytimes.com/2019/03/20/opinion/expunge-criminal-records.html; The Community Service Society and the Legal Action Center are leading the Clean Slate-NY Campaign to bring an expansive criminal conviction expungement law to New York State.

⁹³ Westcott, K.D. (2015). Race, criminalization and historical trauma in the United States: Making the case for a new justice framework. *Traumatology*, Vol. 21, No. 4, 273-284.

⁹⁴ The Los Angeles community recognized that the majority of persons coming into jails were suffering from mental illness or drug addiction; advocates lobbied against plan to build a \$2.2 B new jail and instead, the LA County Supervisors voted to build a mental health and substance abuse center. Maya Lau, In landmark move, L.A. County will replace men's central jail with mental health hospital for inmates, *Los Angeles Times*, Feb. 13, 2019, found at, www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-jail-construction-20190212-story.html