HOW COMPASSIONATE EDUCATION CAN ASSIST IN REPAIRING INJUSTICE:
A STUDY INTO THE ENDURING INJUSTICES OF BLACK PEOPLE

By

Krista Rose Videchak

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Abstract

The focus of this project is to think more deeply, and also differently, about the injustices experienced by Black people. One initial problem is that of reparations: why have reparations never been given to Black people despite their enslavement, continued dehumanization, imposed poverty, and colonization? Given that Black people comprise a group that has endured racially based injustices for centuries, and continue to face grave injustices, it must be the case that something is being misunderstood. This misunderstanding is an epistemological problem, one that perpetuates epistemic injustice for Black people. Some deny that these injustices still exist, but even those who acknowledge their existence do little to address it.

There are some practical, more visible ways to expose people to the injustices experienced by Black people, such as presenting facts and figures, but these methods often fail on their own. Instead, what is needed is a deeper understanding of reality. Reality reveals that although all people suffer, some people suffer because of their perceived race. This can affect Black people in many different areas of their life, as it penetrates into all of our social institutions. This ranges from politics, to language, to education. Although these injustices are normally framed politically and economically, it is important to move these discussions into other institutions like education.

If we are to think clearly about the injustices experienced by Black people, we must feel clearly about the injustices experienced by Black people. It is necessary that people lose preconceived notions of themselves and of others because if we remain attached to these notions, then we will be clouded by illusions about ourselves and the world. We can find meditative practices within Buddhism that can help with this process. These practices can illuminate methods for progression and stir up movement in institutions like education. Given the
epistemological issues relevant here, this can perhaps motivate conversations about the injustices experienced by Black people, including the problem of reparations.
Dedication

For those who do not recognize their privilege, for those who deny it, and for those who both recognize and accept it, but cannot move forward.

For those who have suffered by the hands of so many over such vast expanses of time. For those who continue to have truths stolen from their minds, words from their mouths, and spirits from their lives. For those who have acted, restrained, suffered, triumphed, fought, surrendered, shouted, whispered, thought, rested, lived, died, failed, and succeeded in attempting to gain the recognition and compassion that has been owed for centuries.
Acknowledgments

To those whose work I have borrowed from; thank you for teaching me. Thank you for your intelligence, wisdom, bravery, strength, patience, and resiliency. Thank you for being an example to live by.

To my supervisors, Professor Jon Miller and Professor Susan Babbitt; thank you for your guidance, support, conversation, and patience. Jon, thank you for believing in the importance of this kind of philosophy, and for letting me be creative with my thinking. Thank you for your help with structuring, organizing, and managing this project. Susan, thank you for sharing your wisdom, and for helping me to find a way through ideas invisible to many. Thank you for inspiring me to both live and write about what I believe, even when it is difficult to do so.

To my fellow graduate students at Queen’s University; thank you for your attentive listening, constructive feedback, fun, and friendship.

To the Philosophy Department at Queen’s University, thank you for the opportunity to allow me to research and write about what our educational institution stands for, in hopes of dissolving some of the ignorance that still surrounds us.

To the loves of my life, my friends and family; thank you so, so much. Thank you for supporting not only this work, but the personal challenges that accompanied its author along the way. To lifelong friends, new friends, old and budding relationships; thank you for your support, patience, time, kind actions, and love. To my maternal and paternal grandparents; thank you for your hard work and brave choices. Your strength and sacrifice is admired more than I could express. To my sister and her family; you bring me more joy than you know, and you help to shape what I think and express with love and kindness.

And to my parents, Anna and Tony Videchak; you have been the greatest teachers I have
ever known. You show love, kindness, hard work, resiliency, and compassion every day. So much of this was only possible because of you. You gave it life.

There is no way these words can portray the love and gratitude I have for all of you and your hard work and dedication. We have done this work together, and I hope you like it.
“Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing, there is a field. I will meet you there.”

- Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi

“Today I believe in the possibility of love; that is why I endeavor to trace its imperfections, its perversions.”

- Frantz Fanon
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Introduction

The inspiration for this project began with personal life experiences, which led to philosophical questions about equity, justice, and the range of human experiences, and more applied thoughts about reparation and education. The motivation arose from a feeling; an embodied, visceral reaction to racial injustice. Why do we feel pain when others are mistreated? If Western philosophy could not provide an answer to this, there must be thinkers excluded from our traditional educational curriculum who can.

Following this feeling, the initial inquiry began with questions about why Black people have never been paid reparations for slavery. From here, an investigation into the nature of the injustices experienced by Black people took place, which involved considering its enduring and epistemological components, two aspects not commonly discussed when considering the injustices experienced by Black people. Next, some reflection about how to deal with injustices of this size and complexity led to meditating on the experiences of all people, our shared suffering and our unshared suffering, and how it may be possible to find connections between us through losing preconceived notions of ourselves and of each other. After having gained a better understanding about suffering, and the suffering particular to Black people, some ideas formed about movement in educational institutions, including educators themselves and school curricula.

Before moving into the specifics of each chapter, it is important to talk about the group focused on here and the use of ‘Black people’ in reference to them. To begin, the choice to discuss the injustices experienced by Black people is not because they are viewed as more important, relevant, or urgent than the injustices experienced other groups, like Indigenous people for example. There are a number of groups who experience enduring and epistemic
injustices, and more work is required in order to properly understand their experiences. The choice to focus on Black people is not to shade the injustices experienced by other groups. It is because different groups require different discussions, and other projects can be done in the future. Here, the focus is on Black people, even though some of what is said can certainly be applied to other racialized groups as well.

Next, there are a number of different ways that people of different racial classifications are referred. Here, people of African descent will be referred to as Black people. Some prefer terms like ‘blacks’, ‘African-American’, ‘African-Canadian’, ‘African-Caribbean’, or ‘people of colour’. It may also be argued that a person of African descent who lives in the Caribbean should not be classified the same way as a person of African descent who lives in Canada. The choice to use Black people is for both practical and purposeful reasons. Regarding the former, the term is used for the immediate understanding readers will have that the people being referred to are of dark complexion, and have at least some African ancestry. Black people refers to anyone who is seen first by their dark complexion, and who inevitably experiences oppression because of it. Regarding the latter, it is important for purposes of this project that we remember that we are speaking about people, so using ‘Black people’ can act as that reminder. There is an attempt to use language that reinforces the humanity of the issues at hand, and to allow readers to connect as much as possible to the people so negatively affected by what is discussed here.

The four main topics that each chapter centres on – i.e. reparations, injustice, compassion, and education – are all very large and complex, having been studied and discussed by people from different backgrounds and fields. As such, it is important to make note of the limited parameters of this project.

Firstly, the aim of Chapter 1 is not to introduce the problem of reparations in order to eventually solve it. Rather, it is to bring attention to the fact that reparations have not been paid,
even though overwhelming evidence that shows that Black people do in fact continue to face massive injustices due to their enduring battle with racial inequality. Secondly, the aim of Chapter 2 is not to provide the entire story of the injustices experienced by Black people and how they manifest, but to simply shed light on the enduring and epistemological nature of their injustices, which are generally left out of the conversation. Thirdly, the aim of Chapter 3 is not to provide a Buddhist analysis, nor argue that educators ought to become Buddhists. Instead, the aim is to introduce one Buddhist practice, i.e. meditation, as a means for educators to better understand how they may be contributing to the injustices experienced by Black students. Most importantly, Chapters 2 and 3 focus on gaining a better understanding of injustice, not providing a moral assessment or response. Lastly, the aim of Chapter 4 is not to provide a new theory about education or to solve the problem of reparations, but to instead provide some ways that educators and the curriculum they teach can change when approaching education with a different understanding.

It is important to expand on an issue that can arise when considering all of the surrounding implications of this project, an issue easily recognizable when combining such large topics. What is being referred to here is the problem of racial classification. Not all people can be classified as either Black, white, Indigenous, or Latin American, to name a few. There are many who find themselves among intersections of these classifications, for example both Black and white. This is an important issue that requires further development because we most avoid thinking that those who do not classify themselves as Black are, by default, white.

In order to satisfy the problem of classification, a project that separates intersections of people is needed in order to avoid a Black and white binary. The complexities of a project such as this – i.e. thinking about the many ways different groups of people conceive of themselves and
of others and how this plays into their understanding and experience of injustice – requires separate conversations for each group (and, perhaps eventually, a project that discusses individual experiences of those who comprise the group). As a reminder, the project at hand here is to shed light on an epistemological problem faced by Black people that requires attention in Western philosophy, and how we may begin to understand it through gaining a compassionate mindset.

There are, however, many groups of people who experience enduring injustices, such as Indigenous people, people who have been discriminated against because of their perceived gender and sexuality, and people who live with disability, to name a few. Since the issues that these groups and the individuals within these groups are so different, attention must be paid to these projects in their own right. The focus in this project is on Black people, and though there are similarities that can be drawn between different groups of people who experience injustice, focus must be given to each group on their own to avoid homogenizing the experiences, desires, and needs of all groups who experience systemic, enduring injustice.
Chapter One

An Obstacle: Traditional Forms of Reparation

Reparation is a term usually contemplated within a purely historical context. Traditional considerations for reparations for Black people generally take the following form: descendants of Black slaves ought to receive compensation for the injustices experienced by their ancestors. An initial logistical problem with the standard view is that it may not even be possible, legally, to compensate for injustices that occurred so many years ago. This is one of many other complex issues with paying reparations to slave descendants that make the task appear too difficult to carry out. These difficulties do not mean that descendants of slaves do not deserve reparations; there are varying comprehensive arguments which prove that although our system does not easily allow for reparation to descendants of slaves, they are still deserved. More than this, perhaps the conceptual framework attached to the term ‘reparation’ requires attention.

The first aim of this chapter is to review common forms of reparations. The second aim is offer a critical analysis of common forms of reparations. The third aim is to provide a discussion about why reparations for Black people in particular are still necessary, and why reinventing our conception of ‘reparation’ is vital for this group.
1.0 TRADITIONAL REPARATIONS

In his handbook on reparations, Pablo De Greiff presents case studies, thematic studies, and documents and legislation on compensatory efforts from around the globe. He organizes a taxonomy of reparative efforts in order to provide a categorical presentation of their form, execution, and challenges. Because the handbook does not also include motions for reparations, there is no mention of reparation for injustices experienced by Black people. Nonetheless, the handbook serves as an excellent guide to studying tangible attempts at reparations, and the usual trends and guides used. It also reminds us that although Black people comprise a group who have experienced grave injustice, little effort has been given to repair any of these harms, alluding to the thought that not all cases of injustice will fit into our usual methods.

Found in the handbook are forms of reparations used in South America, Africa, the U.S., and Germany. Despite variations in global location and the nature of the injustice, consistencies are found within the kinds of redress. All of these examples include changes to legislation, monetary payment, and/or governmental implementations. See:

Table 1 – Redress by Country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Injustice</th>
<th>Redress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Human rights (military)</td>
<td>Monetary payment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>Human rights (military)</td>
<td>Monetary payment, social services, educational benefits, public recognition, health assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Political violence</td>
<td>Legal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>Human rights</td>
<td>Monetary payment, moral reparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>Human rights</td>
<td>Monetary payment, services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Injustice</th>
<th>Redress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Racial segregation</td>
<td>Legal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>Rights abuse</td>
<td>Court awards, governmental programs, civil service grants, monetary payments, National Rights Tribunal (NCT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese American</td>
<td>Racial incarceration</td>
<td>Legal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The U.S.</td>
<td>September 11th victims</td>
<td>Monetary payment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>Unlawful invasion (Iraq)</td>
<td>Monetary payment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Holocaust victims</td>
<td>Monetary payment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As evidenced in Table 1, there is an overwhelming focus on legal and financial proceedings, although, importantly, some psycho-socio work as well. Besides presenting factual information about existing reparative efforts, De Greiff provides an important discussion about conceptual clarification, normative considerations, and structural considerations, which lay important groundwork before any analytical work is done. His clarifications provide a thoughtful and informative account of reparations, vital to any subsequent discussion about the ups and downs of empirical stories of reparation.

1.1 Conceptual Analysis

To establish a proper conception of reparation, De Greiff separates reparations into two contexts: 1) a juridical context, which is primarily international and broadly dispersed, and 2) a programs context, wherein benefits are relayed directly to victims. Forms of reparation in the juridical context include restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, and satisfaction and

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guarantees of non-occurrence. Programs are divided materially (e.g. cash payments, service packages) and symbolically (e.g. apologies, rehabilitation, established days of commemoration).³ De Greiff recognizes that there are advantages and disadvantages to the first, broad conception, and the second, narrow conception. Despite the ability to cohere with other measures of justice, one serious problem De Greiff notices with the broad conception is that it is too difficult to include all measures of reparations recognized by international law. As such, he favours the narrow use of the term ‘reparations’, since it adheres to providing benefits to victims directly.⁴

1.2 Normative Considerations

De Greiff establishes a political approach to reparations, rather than one with juridical foundations. Although there are some justifications for reparations as a legislative project, he argues that the aim of reparations ought to be restoring justice for individual victims.⁵ Once the location of reparation is determined, De Greiff moves to defining three aims for reparative programs. First, a conception of justice must be established. When defining justice, De Greiff says that various human rights systems agree that ‘fair and adequate’ compensation means full restitution, or the restoration of the status quo ante. When this is impossible – i.e. when the person has died – then material and moral damages are sought.⁶ There are three aims of the reparations project that work simultaneously as necessary conditions for justice, namely recognition, civic trust, and solidarity.

Since a person’s status as an individual citizen is compromised as a result of unjust

³ Ibid., p. 452-3.
⁴ Ibid., p. 453.
⁵ Ibid., p. 454-55.
⁶ Ibid.
treatment, their position must be reestablished. De Greiff importantly says the following:

…there is a form of injustice that consists, not in illegitimately preventing her from exercising her agency through, say, the deprivation of liberty, but in depriving her the sort of consideration which is owed to whoever is negatively and severely affected by the account of others.7

What De Greiff means is that we must recognize people as the recipients of the actions of others. De Greiff describes an injustice as one individual demonstrating superiority over another, and that relationship must return to its original natural equality.8 This reestablishment restores the notion that each individual is as valuable as her fellow citizens. One vital aspect of recognition is recognition in the right way and for the right reasons: recognition – or mindfulness of an individual’s equal status – must be accompanied by action, and action must be accompanied by recognition. For instance, if an individual is physically harmed by another, the perpetrator must both understand that it is unjust to physically harm another person, and also follow up with an appropriate action. This could be providing the survivor with the proper care needed to recover, as well as entering oneself into a rehabilitation program to learn how to avoid the urge for physical confrontation. As such, recognition can only compliment the reparative project when it is achieved in this particular way. De Greiff argues that we run into issues when recognition does not involve this duality. First, verbal recognition with no accompanying action renders recognition as empty gestures, offering no method of deterrence. Second, active recognition lacking verbal acknowledgment turns reparation into blood money, pejoratively speaking, as a function of utility.9

Next, because of the fallacious nature of injustice, it is near certain that one consequence

7 Ibid., p. 460.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., p. 461.
of unjust acts is a severe mistrust on the part of victims. When we refer to trust in a communal context, De Greiff proposes that it involves some sort of expectation for a shared normative commitment. This, despite possible implications, does not require normative symmetry. In other words, maintaining or rebuilding civic trust can be achieved even in hierarchical institutions, as long as there exists a mutual commitment to civic norms. An established civic trust holds together our social interactions, over and above legislative protections. As such, De Greiff describes reparations as partly responsible for achieving a just state.

Although reparations cannot bring solidarity to a community where there are no preexisting traces of it, De Greiff adds solidarity as a third aim of reparative programs. He argues that strengthening certain attitudes and generating new ones helps restore just conditions. Including the interests of all affected by the law is precisely the essence of social solidarity, as something like historical clarification can rouse empathy for victims. Rather than establishing solidarity, reparations programs can be catalytic. Having explained the role of these three goals of reparations programs, De Greiff describes their necessity via the following: the goals of reparation should only include a contribution to improve the lives of survivors, but never appraising the lives of victims, which can be achieved by a forward-looking perspective.

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10 Ibid., p. 462.
11 Ibid., p. 463-4.
12 Part of what makes notions of solidarity problematic, however, are that the notions themselves are corrupt. If solidarity is understood through only one perspective, i.e. that of the dominant groups, what is actually required for achieving more just conditions cannot be achieved. Those who are denied a voice will not be heard, resulting in empty rhetoric rather than real change.
13 Ibid., p. 464-5.
14 Ibid., p. 466.
1.3 Structural Considerations

After having described the goals of reparations programs, it is important to discuss their characteristics. De Greiff argues that they must have integrity or coherence, both externally and internally. Regarding the former, a relationship with other mechanisms like criminal justice, and the latter, mutual coherence despite complexity.\footnote{Ibid., p. 467.} See:

Table 2 – Descriptions of Redress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kind</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Symbolic Measures</td>
<td>Apology, truth commission reports, respectful burial, etc.</td>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>- Impression that measures are sufficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Individual)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low cost</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolic Measures</td>
<td>Public atonement, commemoration days, dedicate museums/street names, etc.</td>
<td>Develops collective memory, social</td>
<td>Social alienation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Collective)</td>
<td></td>
<td>solidarity, knowledgeable stance of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>institutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Packages</td>
<td>Medical, educational, housing assistance, etc.</td>
<td>Addresses real needs</td>
<td>Does not increase personal autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Equal treatment</td>
<td>Paternalistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cost-effective (use of pre-</td>
<td>Quality dependent on institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>existing institutions)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Stimulate development of social</td>
<td>May become normative for all citizens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>institutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Grants</td>
<td>Monetary</td>
<td>Personal autonomy</td>
<td>Inadequate perception of harm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Satisfies needs</td>
<td>May not change quality if insufficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>Presupposes its institutional requirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Quality of life improved</td>
<td>Silencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Accessible administrative methods</td>
<td>Political difficulty (competing programs)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15 Ibid., p. 467.
Table 2 summarizes De Greiff’s provided characteristics of different types of reparations, including their advantages and disadvantages. Present are the usual programs, such as monetary compensation, apology, and social programs. The usual way of conceiving of reparations is primarily backwards thinking; the project is to restore conditions to their original state. Victims receive money or medical, educational, and/or housing assistance for being unable to work, enduring property damage, etc., since the goal is to restore them to their position before injustice occurred. Even when reparation includes social or educational programs, reparations are properly considered backward thinking, given that the intention to repair the past is generally maintained.

One major characteristic of reparations is that the injustice is a thing of the past; victims have been liberated from their injustice, and healing is in store. Healing includes social recognition, both in truth and action, in whichever restorative method(s) most appropriate. An important question that arises in conversation about reparations is what to do in very complex cases, like that of Indigenous people, women, and Black people. In these situations, injustice endures, an idea explored in Chapter 2. Therefore, the injustice is not just an event in the past, but a long-term, current issue significantly connected to the past. Given that normal methods of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kind</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development and Social</td>
<td>Social programs</td>
<td>Causal depth</td>
<td>Too broad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment</td>
<td></td>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td>Does not promote respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reach goals of justice</td>
<td>Uncertain success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Politically attractive</td>
<td>Social alienation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16 Because of this outlook, we tend to look to the law: the rights of Black people had been violated, and therefore, legally speaking, they are owed compensation for this. For a more legal analysis on reparations for Black people, see Boris I. Bittker, *The Case for Black Reparations*. (Beacon Press, 1973).

reparation are backward thinking, these sorts of groups are excluded from recognition, methodically, both in word and action. This exclusion is a further injustice, a moral and epistemological offence.

2.0 PROBLEMS WITH TRADITIONAL REPARATIONS

2.1 The Problem of Exclusion

Given that the goal of reparations is to recognize victims, it is a wonder that some victims are excluded from the project. But their exclusion is because reparations programs fail to recognize victims who have experienced injustice in the past, and continue to experience injustice in the present as a direct result of the past. One group who experiences enduring injustice is Black people. As many are aware, and as De Greiff’s handbook confirms, Black people have never received reparation for any injustices endured as a group. It is common to question the appropriateness of including groups like Black people as ones deserving reparation. One may argue that including groups who experience enduring injustice in conversations about reparations is a category mistake. To elaborate, it can be argued that there are other ways for addressing issues for groups who experience enduring injustice, and it does not make sense to say that addressing current injustice falls under paying reparations. An example of paying reparations is when the U.S. generated almost 8 million dollars to distribute amongst Holocaust survivors.18 Working on current injustice is not the same as examples like the previous one, and moreover, it would be a mistake to incorporate cases of enduring injustice into our usual

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conceptions of reparations. Since enduring injustice is different from the kinds of injustice we usually consider appropriate for receiving reparation, it does not seem to be in the appropriate category for dealing with the injustices that Black people experience.

The caution here stems from the same thinking that excludes cases of enduring injustice from receiving reparation in the first place: it recognizes that enduring injustice is different from normal cases of injustice (where an act was committed in the past, and no longer withstands) and consequently disregards that it has any place in reparations programs. Black people have never received reparation for any of the injustices they have experienced both in the past and currently. The uniqueness of this case does not preclude it from deserving reparation, yet excluding the enduring injustices experienced by Black people from reparations programs sends that exact message. It says that this is not important enough, or significant enough, to really think deeply about how reparations can be paid and what that may look like.

As such, the exclusion from receiving reparations not only ignores past injustices and perpetuates occurring injustices, but can be said to create a new injustice. The new injustice is a full failure of recognition, both in truth-telling and action. Given all of this, it is both appropriate and necessary to expand the way we conceive of reparations so as to include all kinds of injustice into the reparations debate for at least two central reasons: firstly, to avoid creating further injustice, and secondly, to open the possibility for paying reparations to all groups who have and continue to experience injustice.

2.2 Resistance to Reparation

While many recognize that there are profound injustices experienced by Black people, some
people do not believe that Black people actually continue to experience systemic injustice.\textsuperscript{19} The task, then, is to provide information and reason to those who are not aware that serious injustices still occur for Black people, ones which require social effort to repair. For some, every day experiences make it clear that Black people experience injustices in profound ways. The experiences are gathered from different sources, including social experiences\textsuperscript{20} to academic research.\textsuperscript{21} This is something that is even admitted on a broader, governmental level in some cases.\textsuperscript{22}

The underlying cause of dissension, as it appears, stems from ignorance. And, not surprisingly, what one is ignorant of corresponds to the way in which one denies that Black people continue to experience injustices. So although there are those who are familiar with the vast literature on injustice towards Black people, or have experienced it in their own lives, there are many who continue to refuse to accept the reality that Black people endure massive injustices.\textsuperscript{23} As such, relaying information and providing reason for accepting reality is a vital first step.

Another reason why it is necessary to show that Black people continue to experience

\textsuperscript{19} For an interesting article about educators in particular, see: Sabina E. Vaught and Angelina E. Castagno. “‘I Don’t Think I’m a Racist’: Critical Race Theory, Teacher Attitudes, and Structural Racism.” \textit{Race Ethnicity and Education} 11.2, 2008. Although the discussion is particular to educators and students, it reveals how structural racism plays into the way we describe our own thoughts about race and injustice, and how many do not believe racism is still occurring.


\textsuperscript{23} A modern day example of this is the response to the “Black Lives Matter” campaign being “All Lives Matter.” This is discussed on many social media and news outlets, including the following interview with Judith Butler; Judith Butler and George Yancy. “What’s Wrong With ‘All Lives Matter?’” \texti{NY Times Opinionator}. Web. 9 Feb. 2017.
injustice is because we must become clearer on what is considered unjust. There appear to be two main branches of injustice for Black people. The first are the tangibles. Included here are economic injustice, high incarceration rates, poor education, housing disparity, etc. The second are the intangibles, such as prejudiced social imagination and a white solipsistic attitude.\textsuperscript{24} It is much simpler to display the tangible injustices experienced by Black people by sharing statistical evidence quoting statistics about economic inequality, poverty, and incarceration rates. These kinds of injustices can be tracked and audited, providing information that is readily discernible for sufficiently accurate analysis.\textsuperscript{25} The challenge for the latter is how to provide evidential information to support the existence of more elusive injustices, which requires more work than simply interpreting statistical evidence. Nonetheless, both realms must be explored to provide a comprehensive account of injustice for Black people, and ultimately, add more to the reparations debate.

3.0 WHY REPARATIONS ARE STILL OWED

3.1 Statistical Evidence

There are statistics available from a variety of sources that reflect racial inequality.\textsuperscript{26} It is important to be aware of the disparities that exist in every sector of life, including education,

\textsuperscript{24} For an example of this, see Adrienne Rich, \textit{Disloyal to Civilization: Feminism, Racism, Gynephobia}. (WW Norton, 1979).
\textsuperscript{25} The usual complications with statistical evidence are no exception here, so the claim is not that these statistics do not carry inherent flaws common in statistical compilation. For a thorough explanation of possible statistical errors, see: Phillip I. Good and James W. Hardin. \textit{Common Errors in Statistics (and How to Avoid Them)}. (John Wiley & Sons, 2012).
\textsuperscript{26} Here, the statistics are ones based in Canada and the U.S., but similar trends can be found in many other parts of the world, given that racism against Black people is not only present in North America. Many argue that racism is a global issue, which, intuitively, makes sense. First, it cannot be denied that the ideas, behaviours, and attitudes of
justice systems, job markets, public health, and housing, to name a few.\textsuperscript{27} If these facts are denied, one carries a skewed set of beliefs regarding current social circumstances, and this flawed knowledge base leads to false beliefs about the particular people and issues involved.

**Canada**

A prominent source for viewing public statistics about Canada is Statistics Canada. Although in-depth analysis about racial disparity is not easily found on the website \(i.e\). comparative charts between races in regard to topics significant here, such as housing, income, health, and education), some useful information can be gathered. Moreover, some have used the publicly available statistics to compile comparative analyses.

According to some analysis about the labour market, despite their slightly higher levels of participation in the labour market, racialized Canadians\textsuperscript{28} do not enjoy the benefits.\textsuperscript{29} This conclusion is made for a few reasons. One, even in good economic times, racialized individuals earn 81.4 cents for every dollar paid to non-racialized individuals, which results from secure, good paying jobs.\textsuperscript{30} Specific to Black Canadians, they earn 75.6 cents for every dollar paid to non-racialized Canadians.\textsuperscript{31} There are higher levels of unemployment amongst racialized people around the world affect and are affected by each other, even at a very basic level. And second, given that African slavery was present in many parts of the world, it is not a reach to believe that the legacy remains in memory and the structures are knit with injustice as they are in Canada and the U.S. For a more comprehensive history of the slave-trade, including the parts of the world directly involved, see: Hugh Thomas. *The Slave Trade: The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade: 1440-1870*. (Simon & Schuster, 1997).

\textsuperscript{27} More than this, there are many more statistics about racial disparity particular to Black people that can be provided not offered here. The inclusion of samples of statistics is to show that they are available from a variety of sources.

\textsuperscript{28} There are overall, grouped conclusions found about racialized Canadians in general, but also specific claims about Black people which, too, will be commented on.


\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., p. 3.

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., p. 13.
individuals, and the jobs are more likely to be temporary. For example, racialized Canadians are overrepresented at service jobs like call centres and janitorial work. Racialized people are not unwilling to work these jobs, given that they represent 67.7% of the labor workforce. During 2000-2006 prior to the recession, the average income of racialized Canadians actually declined.

Because of the income disparity, 19.8% of racialized Canadian families found themselves living in poverty, compared to 6.4% of non-racialized Canadian families. There are also links between income inequality and health outcomes; therefore the more money an individual earns, the better the health and the longer the life expectancy in Canada. In regards to education, there is evidence to support that overall, racialized Canadians earn higher degrees compared to non-racialized Canadians, but that Black Canadians in particular do not. Black Canadians are also more likely than other groups to grow up in single-parent households, and

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32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid., p. 4
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid., p. 5

In a recent interview, Dr. Onye Nnorom from the University of Toronto echoed this concern. To read her comments, see: Peter Goffin, “Effects of Racism on Physical Health Should be Better Tracked, says U of T Doctor.” The Star, Web. 11 Apr. 2017.
40 Ibid., p. 15.
less likely to achieve a higher level of education$^{41}$ than their fathers.$^{42}$

**U.S.**

Compared to Canada, much more information about racial disparity in the U.S. is available. As a result, more in-depth analysis is also available. Some of the more prominent sources for statistics include the U.S. Census Bureau, Bureau of Justice Statistics, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics. There are also a number of other institutions that take on gathering and analyzing statistics, like the Civil Rights Data Collection. Similar to the statistics discussed about Black Canadians, important areas to consider are housing, income, health, and education.

Regarding education, Black children are three times as likely as white children to be reported for behavioural issues in school.$^{43}$ Specifically, Black girls are more likely to be suspended than boys from any race.$^{44}$ Compared to Asian people and non-Hispanic white people, Black people (and Hispanic people) are less likely to hold a bachelor’s degree.$^{45}$ There is a massive disparity in regards to the number of incarcerated Black men compared to other races,$^{46}$ and some argue that being incarcerated seems to be a stage in the life of a typical young Black male.$^{47}$

The health care statistics in the U.S. also show massive disparity between races.

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$^{41}$ Ibid. 
$^{42}$ It is noted that although the education of both parents affects the higher education completion of the child, the father’s education shows a higher effect. See p. 17. 
Premature deaths are increasing for Black Americans in comparison to white Americans. Some argue that this is because of socioeconomic status. In regards to income, Black people in the U.S. make less than non-Hispanic white people, white people, and Asian people in 2014.

3.2 Personal Testimony

Statistics can help one to become aware that there are massive injustices between Black people and people of other races, but does nothing to help us to discern why those injustices have surfaced into tangible problems to begin with. As such, it can only take us so far. Here, it is useful to consider the testimony of those who have suffered through these injustices. Given that the type of injustice experienced by Black people is enduring, we must begin with testimonies from the past, continuing into the present.

Slave Narratives: Frederick Douglass

There is a substantial literature available that chronicles the journeys of slaves, importantly providing a perspective that is different from the usual relay of history. One of the most famous slave narratives is written by Frederick Douglass, wherein he describes his experiences as a born

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51 For considerable work done on how capitalism continues to affect Black Americans, see: Manning Marable, How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America: Problems in Race, Political Economy, and Society. (Haymarket Books, 2015).
slave and his eventual escape to freedom. Douglass provides us with a fascinating narrative, delving into the descriptions and effects of slavery from a personal, eloquently undisguised landscape. From the first words of his story, Douglass shares that unlike the white children, he never knew his birthdate, given that slaves know as much about age as horses do. The simplicity of age awareness, as minor as it appears, helps to inform a person of a part of his identity and importance. As Douglass implies, lacking knowledge of these simple facts is a method of dehumanization, making the details about a slave undeserved and unnecessary.

Douglass’s father was white and his mother Black. Although aware of his mixed race, he did not know who his father was. He was acquainted with his mother, but shares that he only saw her a handful of times before her premature death when he was still a young child. Douglass describes the sexual interactions between Black female slaves and white male slave-owners almost as a savvy business deal, with a pleasurable benefit. Since children born to female slaves follow suit with their mothers, the slave-owner, from his perspective, receives not only sexual gratification, but another body to use for free labor or to be sold for profit. People born in these circumstances are often burdened with further hardship, since deep tension resides between them and the mistress of the house. Often times, the master will sell his mulatto children, which Douglass regards as a humanitarian deed since the master rids himself of the responsibility of working and whipping his own flesh. The small act of selling a mulatto child so that the slave-owner/father was not the one working and abusing the child was enough for Douglass to consider him empathetic, and perhaps even good.

54 Ibid., p. 341.
55 Ibid., p. 342.
Douglass describes the experiences with his different masters, accrediting one of them as “…the best master I ever had, *till I became my own master.*”\(^{56}\) Interestingly, the only reason Douglass grants honour is because this particular master never beat him. The physical torment and the mental abuse that Douglass and his fellow slaves endured is chronicled as a daily event, each damaging in their own particular ways. Slavery had a deep effect on the identity of slaves, almost removing personal identity completely, dehumanizing victims for years later. Whatever sort of humanity is left is generally tied to the slaveholder, wherein the slave sometimes feels an obligation to him, a part of a larger family structure.\(^{57}\) Douglass’s account describes a Stockholm syndrome type of relationship between slave and slaveholder, the slave defending and supporting her master, sometimes to the point of quarrel with other slaves. This sort of mental manipulation turns slaves against each other, minimizing group collectivity and the possibility of revolt.

One of the most moving parts of Douglass’s narrative is his recount of the last days of his grandmother’s life. He writes of the loss of her children and grandchildren, and that in her last hours, when she was deserving of care and love, his grandmother was alone and suffering.\(^{58}\) A basic necessity like care and love, a service many family members would be willing to provide for the matriarch of their family, had no place for slaves. Douglass’s grandmother was afforded none of the love and care that she provided for her children and grandchildren because she had buried them years earlier. This is another example Douglass gives of the denial of basic human needs to slaves, adding to the process of dehumanization. He eventually escaped slavery, noting that he finally reached a point of his life which he planned.\(^{59}\) But Douglass’s slave narrative and the

\(^{56}\) Ibid., p. 402.  
\(^{57}\) Ibid., p. 353.  
\(^{58}\) Ibid., p. 376.  
\(^{59}\) Ibid., p. 416.
narratives of so many other former slaves does not end after emancipation of slavery, as the years following the emancipation of Black slaves is rapt with even more abuse.

Civil War and Rights Movement: Black Body, Strange Fruit

Many were aware that the surrender of the Confederates in Civil War and the subsequent ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment could only go as far as to prevent legal enslavement of Black people. But this limitation does not mean that we ought to ignore the many lives lost and the tremendous effort taken on the part of many people in the Civil War; instead, we ought to remember that many people were affected by the war, and it was an extremely challenging time to live in. The limitation is mentioned to shed light on the following problem: even though slavery was abolished, the social attitude amongst white people of the time (and, as will be argued in more detail later, the social attitude that currently endures) certainly did not reflect the legal changes to the rights and treatment of Black people. There are countless examples which help to chronicle the aftermath of the Civil War and the seemingly endless struggle for justice for Black people.

During the 20th century, instances of injustice against Black people mirrored a racist and segregated social attitude. From legal enactments like Jim Crow laws to the continued assault of the Ku Klux Klan, the abhorrent treatment of Black people was rampant. These instances provoked the inception of the Civil Rights Movement. With political leaders like Martin Luther King Jr., and civil rights activists like Diane Nash, there was a constant battle being fought for political and social equality. Many of the leaders and participants of the movement were murdered, as well as others not directly involved with the movement, namely Emmett Louis Till.

Till was fourteen when we was brutally murdered by the husband and brother-in-law of a
white female store clerk, after claims that Till displayed flirtatious behaviour. Because of the brutality of the crime and the condition in which Till’s body was recovered – paired with the profound bravery and strength of his mother, who, despite her grief, insisted on an open casket funeral to make her son’s vicious death public – Till’s murder became a representation of the abuse and exploitation of the Black body. Till’s death displayed that even in 1955, the Black body was still considered object to be used, mutilated, and tossed aside. The thought that a person was connected here, a mind, a thinking, feeling being with dreams, plans, and ideas, never enters the mind of the perpetrators. Abel Meeropol’s poem “Bitter Fruit” (1937), more commonly recognized as “Strange Fruit” performed by singer Billie Holiday, continues to resonate decades later:

Southern trees bear strange a fruit,
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root,
Black body swinging in the Southern breeze,
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees.

Pastoral scene of the gallant South,
The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth,
Scent of magnolia sweet and fresh,
And the sudden smell of burning flesh!

Here is a fruit for the crows to pluck,
For the rain to father, for the wind to suck,
For the sun to rot, for a tree to drop,
Here is a strange and bitter crop.61

Instances of injustice similar to the Till case are not difficult to find even after the Civil Rights Movement, ranging from physical assault to social neglect and exclusion. Over time injustice for Black people conforms to what is acceptable based off of the social attitude among

white people at the time, but never ceases. The systemic and social makeup remains one that caters to the dominant group (white people), where Black people remain unwanted outsiders in a hostile and ignorant climate.

**Current Injustice: Police Brutality**

Although injustices against Black people have been consistent for centuries, instances of injustice in recent years have been particularly impactful. The strong impact is likely due to the simplicity of recording incidences on cell phones and other devices, and the ease of sharing these recordings with so many others on social media outlets. Advances in technology allow the public to become much more aware of the massive injustices that plague our communities. Witnesses are also more likely to come forward when they have irrefutable evidence such as video or audio recorded content. The most striking currently involve shooting deaths of young Black men by law enforcement agents.

The Rodney King case is known for not only the viciousness of the attack on King, but also the massive effects and violent aftermath. In March 1991, King was beaten by police officers after leading them on a high-speed car chase on a Los Angeles freeway. Over twenty officers were present while King was viciously beaten with batons, tasered, and kicked repeatedly. Brian Martin discusses King’s case, noting the importance of interpretation. Different spectators have different interpretations of the attack on King and whether or not their use of

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62 What this means is that during the 17th and 18th centuries, it was socially acceptable to enslave Black people and colonize their land. During the 19th and 20th centuries, it was socially acceptable to enact separate but equal laws. Now in the 21st century, it is socially acceptable to incarcerate Black people on a massive scale.
64 A recent and interesting interpretive performance is given by Roger Guenveur Smith in Spike Lee’s *Rodney King*, Netflix, 2017.
physical force is justifiable.\textsuperscript{65} Dissent amongst different interpretive accounts continue today regarding similar, more recent cases of police brutality and Black men.

The more recent outrage expressed regarding modern cases of brutality against young Black men by authorities was ignited by the death\textsuperscript{66} Trayvon Martin\textsuperscript{67} in February 2012.\textsuperscript{68} Subsequent cases include the death of Eric Garner,\textsuperscript{69} Michael Brown,\textsuperscript{70} Tamir Rice,\textsuperscript{71} and Jamar Clark.\textsuperscript{72} Given the trend, it would not be unreasonable to believe that more cases like this will come up in the near future.

The facts above demonstrate that there is a correlation between public authority and the unjust treatment of young Black men, which has endured for decades. These recent incidences in the U.S. have compelled people from around the globe to reexamine their thoughts on racial injustice towards Black people. The deaths of Black males at the hands of police officers have occasioned feelings of tribulation and outrage in communities all over the U.S., instigating actions ranging from peaceful protests to riots. Some have speculated on America’s slack gun laws as reasons for the disproportionate deaths of young Black men. Others claim that these deaths are exclusively the result of impartial police work, diverging only upon considerations of

\textsuperscript{65} According to reporter Annette Haddad, two police experts maintained that even after extensive viewing of the King attack, police officers were justified in their actions. See: “Two Experts Say King Beating was Justified.” \textit{UPI}, Web. 24 Apr. 2013. Many others, however, argue that this is a case of police brutality and demand change. See: Jerome H. Skolnick and James J. Fyfe, \textit{Above the Law: Police and the Excessive Use of Force}. (New York: Free Press, 1993).

\textsuperscript{66} Martin’s case differed from others since he was shot and killed by neighbourhood watch captain, George Zimmerman, instead of police officers.


appropriate use of force. Many, however, believe that these deaths are the abhorrent consequences of established racism against Black people in America.

If disproportionate numbers of Black men are being treated unjustly and murdered by police, it becomes clear that racist attitudes are very much alive amongst those who ought to be impartial; the crux of law enforcement is to protect people rather than intimidate and harm. The resurgence of police brutality against Black men, or, rather, the public’s awareness of it due to advancements in social media, is a vicious reminder that the social imagination and the institutions constructed from it have not changed as we would expect over such an expanse of time. The King case occurred over twenty years prior to cases like Brown and Garner, yet share an eerie similarity; in all three cases, these men either committed a crime or were perceived to have done so and authorities took extreme measures upon their arrest which resulted in serious emotional and physical injury or death. Whether a crime was indeed committed, and whether the police officers involved felt threatened can never explain away the extreme use of force and repugnant treatment of these men. Either way, they were treated unjustly, and the excessive use of force points to a greater social issue and a prejudiced public consciousness.

To elaborate on cases of police brutality and how it intersects with racism, consider the Eleanor Bumpurs case. Bumpurs was an elderly Black woman who was shot and killed in her apartment in the Bronx after resisting eviction. She had a history of mental illness, and also suffered from arthritis. After uttering threats to police officers, she was shot twice and killed.73 Police officers were so afraid of a woman who could barely grasp an object in her hands because of her arthritis, and, moreover, suffered from mental illness and could not easily control

emotional outbursts, that they shot and killed her. A question arises here about how an elderly, mentally ill, arthritic woman could pose such a threat to two armed, able-bodied police officers to justify her murder. There appears to be something much deeper occurring that caused the police officer’s fear of this woman to illicit the act of killing her.

In regards to the Bumpurs case, Patricia Williams argues that during the trial, law enforcement relied heavily on the rules of law, making statements like ‘but the law says so.’ The problem, Williams notes, is that “the law thus becomes a shield behind which to avoid responsibility for the human repercussions of both governmental and publicly harmful private activity.” The police were hiding behind the law to justify a murder, arguing, for example, that they did not immediately use lethal force. While it is true that laws reflect the surrounding cultural ideals – in this case, that it is better to begin with non-lethal action – it is not enough to justify Bumpurs’s murder. Arguing that they were merely applying the law does not quash accusations that racism could have played a part in the actions of law enforcement.

4.0 MODERN REPARATIONS

The progression of injustice towards Black people briefly outlined above – its inception and endurance to its current state – is presented here to show the persistent nature of injustice towards Black people and the nature of its perseverance. The hope is to clarify why reparations are still owed to Black people, given that some are unaware that the current injustices Black people experience both endures and is deeply woven both in historical and contemporary

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74 Ibid., p. 134.
75 Ibid.
76 Ibid., p. 133.
77 Ibid., p. 134.
contexts. That is, we cannot speak about ending injustices towards Black people if we do not follow the trend of injustice since its origins. Moreover, we cannot speak about current injustices without referencing the past, either.

Given this, it is a mistake to interpret the current injustices faced by Black people as isolated incidences, since there is a history of injustice that is linked to current examples of injustice. The way that Black people experience injustice, first exampled by slavery and colonization, next exampled by Jim Crow laws, and now exampled by police brutality, has shifted and changed over time. What has not shifted is that Black people experience grave injustice. Because of this, we cannot evaluate an injustice experienced by a Black person in the same way that we evaluate an injustice experienced by a white person.

Consider the following examples about wrongful conviction: A Black person walks into a store, and the store clerk accuses her of stealing. She is convicted and serves a partial sentence, being pardoned after authorities subsequently find a surveillance tape which shows no crime had been committed. Conceive of the exact example, but rather than a Black person being the accused, it is a white person. In both situations, a person is wrongly accused of a crime because of faulty allegations and negligent police work, and thus suffers an injustice. On the surface, it appears that both the Black and white person experience equal injustices. But considering the injustices equal because they appear equal is a very simplistic observation. We must consider the motivations of the clerk which encourage the injustice.

Since Black people and white people do not share a common racial history (Black people having experiences of injustice that white people simply never do), current instances of injustices are not in fact equal. In this situation, both the white person and the Black person suffered an injustice, but since Black people suffer from systemic injustice, there is an expectation for suffering. The suffering of a Black person therefore becomes normalized and accepted. Suffering
is inevitable for all people, but there is a significant and distinct difference between suffering because of one’s perceived race, and suffering because it is impossible to live a life perfectly unharmed.

4.1 The Importance of ‘Reparations’

As was previously discussed, when we say that an individual or group is owed reparations, we are generally led to believe that an injustice has occurred in the past and that our responsibility is to restore conditions as they were pre-injustice. But since in some instances, this sort of backward-looking understanding of reparations is too narrow since it fails to be fully inclusive, it is necessary to expand our understanding of it, redefining the term to something more expansive. If we do not, Black people are fully excluded from receiving anything for the injustices they experience because their injustices are ongoing. More than this, they are excluded from receiving reparations for the suffering of their ancestors for more trivial, logistical reasons like the Statute of Limitations and because others evade responsibility for current unjust situations. But reparative efforts need not necessarily be defined traditionally. When we talk about compensating injustices committed against Black people, we must do so in a way that encompasses a history of enslavement and racism, rather than singular instances of injustice as specific moments, unrelated or unaffected by history.

If we are to properly consider the details that surround particular instances of injustice experienced by Black people, we must conceive of injustice as a derivative part of a historical whole. There is an indelible link from the past to present, given that injustice endures for Black people. The history of injustice for Black people is documented from its antiquity through slave narratives, historical anthologies, philosophical work, and fictional novels. Adopting an approach
to understanding and repairing current injustice where our history informs our present does not mean that we must fall into a pejoratively anecdotal account, where much of what is explained is fictionalized or exaggerated. Worries about the fictionalization of events leading to false perceptions about the situation for Black people are no different from the worries of fictionalization regarding any other social history; that is, the resources that make descriptive claims about past injustices for Black people do not have additive inadequacies or concerns that any other documented history would have. There are truths that are consistent across all accounts, and fictionalizations found in small pieces along the way do not discredit those truths.78

If we think about injustice for Black people as one that has historical roots and endures currently, then using the term ‘reparation’ to describe the compensation that Black people are entitled to is very appropriate, even in the traditional sense. There is a direct link to injustice from the past, which means that there is a backwards-looking component to the injustices experienced by Black people.

In addition to the historical component that is attached to the enduring injustice experienced by Black people, there are honourable reasons for the use of ‘reparations’ over other similar terms. Including honour as a reason for using ‘reparations’ relates back to the idea that Black people are fundamentally dismissed from discussions of reparations, which is due to the

78 Consider what Michel Foucault says about subjugated knowledges. He recognizes that parts of history have been buried and disguised. Because of this, there are whole sets of knowledge that have been disqualified because they are considered naïve knowledges, low on the hierarchical chain. See: Michel Foucault. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. (Pantheon, 1980). p. 81-82. The worry that historical accounts – communicated in a variety of ways and from different perspectives – can contain fictionalizations or exaggerations seems to stem from the desire to keep certain parts of history and certain perspectives out of the ‘accepted’ knowledge base that is currently accepted by those who hold power. In a way, a concern like this points out the exact problem that those from oppressed groups who have experienced massive, enduring injustices have been trying to make for a long time: sharing only one perspective can present a skewed perception of historical events. This can then also cause problems on another level, in that it shapes, in a very deep and disguised way, the way we view ourselves and others.
exclusive nature of our current definitions of reparations. If we choose another term because ‘reparations’ does not seem fitting, or to avoid complication, then we are, first, admitting to or relinquishing the idea that certain groups do not and should not be included in reparations debates and second, dishonouring an entire group of people by avoiding confrontation about terminology. This then alludes to the thought that they are undeserving or unworthy of being included in reparative conversation in the first place. Therefore, the use of ‘reparation’ has profound meaning in our discussion, with significant moral implications.

Moreover, we can go as far as labeling it a necessary term since the goal is to gain equal footing for all people and groups. If we want to achieve equity amongst people, we must make sure that we are being responsible with the terminology that we use, both in selection and interpretation. Since the concepts that we use reflect deeper psychological structures and preferences, it is vital to check in with personal beliefs so that the terms we used are not being used mindlessly. If only particular individuals or groups who have experienced injustice are deemed worthy of receiving reparation, we must reflect deeply on what the true reasons are for excluding other individuals or groups. When we do not, we are in fact introducing a new harm, i.e. denying people deserving of reparations because their experience of injustice does not fit the existing concepts.

4.2 Going Forward

In order to move forward with considerations about reparations for Black people, it is imperative that we gain a better understanding about the injustices that they experience, both past and present. It has been mentioned that the kind of injustice that Black people experience is enduring. Enduring injustice is an idea is likely fairly evident to some (perhaps primarily those
who experience it), but is also one that is philosophically underdeveloped. Jeff Spinner-Halev takes the idea of enduring injustice and importantly develops it into a philosophical account. His broad design makes it useful to apply to different groups experiencing enduring injustice, including Black people.

It has also been mentioned that when discussing the injustices experienced by Black people, we often forget to talk about the epistemic injustices that occur. What this means is that most discussions focus on political and economic structures, such as civic rights and low income. But there are other injustices present, such as the way Black people are conceived of and how they conceive of themselves. This affects how Black people are viewed, treated, trusted, etc. by others, but also how they view, treat, and trust themselves. This can be viewed as an epistemic injustice, an area that has developed substantially in analytical Western philosophy in recent years, and is undoubtedly applicable to the injustices experience by Black people. Both of the endurance and the epistemological features of injustice are vital to understanding the nature of injustice for Black people, and will be discovered further in Chapter 2.

79 What analytical Western philosophy refers to is the way that philosophers from the West (mainly Europe and North America) conceive of philosophy.
Chapter Two

An Expansion: Enduring and Epistemological Features of Injustice

When trying to discover more effective ways for making reparation, we must become clearer on the nature of the particular injustice we are trying to amend. Different kinds of injustice demand different forms of redress, which is a difficult undertaking given that injustice is often blanketed by its category. For example, consider different groups of people have experienced slavery throughout history. Although each case has different features, those who have been enslaved are grouped under the umbrella of slavery, generally speaking. As such, even though other specifying factors are vital to understanding injustice – and, consequently, any cogent remedies – injustice is often conceived of in very broad terms. Traditional methods of reparation follow from this kind of conception.

In certain cases, it is not enough to consider the immediate identifiable features that surround a particular injustice. Such a broad conception of injustice assumes that injustice can be regarded as episodic, i.e. unattached, singular, and solely related to the immediate situation. But this conception is not necessarily true for Black people, as injustice has been endured for many years. Another feature that is often left out of discussions about the injustices Black people experience is epistemological, that is, having to do with knowledge. This includes, for instance, how Black people are perceived by others and how they perceive themselves.

The first aim of this chapter is to present the traditional ideas about the injustice experienced by Black people. This includes common political and economic conceptions, accusations of internal conflict, and misconceptions about racism. A second aim is to explain Jeff
Spinner-Halev’s conception of enduring injustice. He states that enduring injustice is historically rooted and currently maintained, is spatially expansive, and is very difficult to repair. A third aim is to discuss the epistemological nature of the injustice experienced by Black people through various authors. This includes thoughts by philosophers, who argue that the thoughts and concepts of members of oppressed groups are denied. A fourth aim is to explain how institutions help to perpetuate the injustices particular to Black people. Some institutions discussed here are political, legal, familial, and educational. The last aim is to argue that the enduring and epistemic aspects of the injustices experienced by Black people require more attention, particularly in educational institutions.
1.0 TRADITIONAL CONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE INJUSTICE OF BLACK PEOPLE

The notion of enduring injustice as defined by Spinner-Halev, and the various arguments about epistemic injustice – a popularizing topic in Western philosophy, mainly in the U.S. – are seemingly unfamiliar, unimportant, or undiscovered to those who contemplate issues of injustice for Black people. As such, this may help to explain why injustices are still occurring. There are different accounts forwarded to explain the nature of injustice of Black people, generally politically and economically focused, with some thoughts about internal conflict, familial dysfunction, and traditional conceptions of overt racism. These accounts will be briefly mentioned in order to pay tribute to the work done, but to also reveal the gaps in our conception about the nature of injustice for Black people by mentioning the inconsistencies, missing information, and/or serious misconceptions within these accounts.

1.1 Political/Economic Accounts

One of the more common routes taken by people of different backgrounds – albeit educational, economical, racial, religious, etc. – is to explain the injustices that Black people experience by framing it politically⁸⁰ and economically.⁸¹ For some, the thought is that if Black people were treated equally, i.e. if their civil rights were actualized, the result would bring about more stable economic statuses for Black people. They could then live in better neighbourhoods,⁸² afford

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⁸⁰ See political philosophy work, such as Charles W. Mills, The Racial Contract. (Cornell University Press, 1997).
⁸² See community development work, such as Micere Keels et al., “Fifteen Years Later: Can Residential Mobility Programs Provide a Long-Term Escape from Neighborhood Segregation, Crime, and Poverty.” (Demography 42.1, 2005).
proper healthcare,83 reduce incarceration rates,84 and have better access to more prestigious schools and better jobs.85 In the West, these are generally approached through a liberal lens.

Broadly speaking, there are a variety of criticisms of liberalism, including those presented by socialists, for example.86 But the enduring injustice of Black people is simply not reducible to the issues that accompany liberalism. Even if we were to address each potential issue within liberalism and lived in an ideal liberal state, the enduring injustice that Black people face would not simply dissipate. Consider some of the most notable features of liberalism. One is individual liberty, or autonomy. Each person ought to have freedom of thought, expression, culture, organization, religion, right to fair trial, and a career based off talent, among others.87 It can be argued that Black people who live in liberal communities are therefore subject to gaining all of the aforementioned rights. They are free to apply to any job they are qualified for, can maintain their own culture, and are free to form their own thoughts and express them. But access to these rights does not guarantee that they will be taken seriously.

For instance, the fact that a Black man has access to a fair trial does not mean that he will in fact receive a fair trial. This is because there are factors that come in to play that prevent it from happening. He may not be able to afford strong legal representation, of course, but this is

84 See legal work, such as Lisa Stolzenberg, David Eitle, and Stewart J. D’Alessio, “Race, Economic Inequality, and Violent Crime.” (Journal of Criminal Justice 34.3, 2006).
an economic issue. The further point that can be resurrected from this example is that a Black man also faces the social stigmas that accompany being a Black man convicted of a crime. There are prejudiced attitudes in the minds of jurors, judges, and even his own legal representation that can seriously affect the outcomes of the trial.88 These attitudes, or biases, can include strongly favoring the testimony of witnesses and accusers, or over-exaggerating and misinterpreting the ‘evidence’ presented.

What is more, the idea that we all have deep-seated desires and values that we ought to follow so that we can live autonomously, as argued by Will Kymlicka,89 is problematic in another way. The way that we conceive of ourselves and others is very much influenced by those around us, making it difficult to become anything other than a culmination of this information. For some, what informs them is that they are not only different, but lesser. This maintains inequality and perpetuates injustice. Even further, it may not be desirable for all people to look within to find their own desires and values, given that these desires and values are often simply inherited, and not necessarily good for themselves or others.

Another feature of liberalism is multiculturalism. This means that the state ought to enact policies that enable a degree of social cohesion.90 This is viewed as positive, since it seems to encourage social diversity and the acceptance and tolerance of different kinds of individuals. Liberalism claims to recognize the importance of all members, and a socially diverse community is considered good. With that said, one problem is that if we are to be truly socially diverse, that includes rejecting the way social diversity is considered by liberalism. Or, perhaps more strongly,

88 For instance, see: Jeffrey J. Rachlinski et al. “Does Unconscious Racial Bias Affect Trial Judges.” (Notre Dame L. Rev. 84, 2008).
rejecting many of the more prominent liberal social ideals, like Rawlsian conceptions of self-respect and personal autonomy.91

To exemplify this, consider the fact that some do not believe in the idea of the self in the way that many liberals do, and therefore deny the prominent focus of liberalism on the development of the self. Buddhists, for example, have a very different idea of the self92 that conflicts with notions of autonomy, and making it impossible to achieve social cohesion. Further, some believe more in concepts of community building over individual autonomy. Social cohesion can only be achieved if individuals comply with the main features of liberalism, both in concept and interpretation. But not all features are accepted and interpreted the same by everyone who lives in a liberal community, causing some liberal features to contradict for some members. As such, social cohesion is not attained in any real way, and the argument can be made that multiculturalism is not a true feature of liberalism, even when there are policies that aim to ensure it.

This short consideration of two liberal features commonly used in regards to repairing injustice for Black people sheds some light on the failures of blaming political systems in regards to assessing and remedying the enduring injustice of Black people. Even if ideal liberal characteristics were put in place, there are deeper problems that politics alone cannot tackle.93

92 For an example of this, see: Serge-Christophe Kolm. “The Buddhist Theory of ‘No-Self.”’ *The Multiple Self,* 1985. Here, Kolm points out a thought in Buddhism that notions of the self are actually the root of all suffering (p. 257).
1.2 Internal Conflict

Some people maintain that if Black people still experience injustices, these injustices cannot be considered institutional since laws and policies have changed, rendering them inclusive and therefore less oppressive. It is a natural tendency to equate institutional injustice to legal and political institutions as the most significant institutions when it comes to sustaining injustice. It is of course true that progress has been made since Jim Crow, but abolishing legal racial segregation certainly does not mean that institutional injustices have consequently disappeared.

Since Black people were finally considered individuals and not property, there have been a series of strategic and systematic attempts to keep them enslaved. In other words, schemes have been created to make it appear as though the suffering of Black people is internal, and therefore those involved in lives of ‘crime’ ought to be severely punished since they are solely responsible for it.⁹⁴ One of such strategies was introducing illegal narcotics into communities richly populated with Black people. Following this, harsher punishments for narcotic related charges were passed.⁹⁵ It is no surprise that introducing illegal drugs into communities already rife with poverty and the subsequent events that often accompany such unfair and extreme conditions (i.e. negative events that result from being exposed to poor physical, mental, and emotional environments for long periods of time such as theft, emotional and physical abuse, etc.) could result in people using the drugs to ease their suffering.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ This point is sets the tone in Ava DuVernay’s *13th*, a documentary commenting on racial injustice and mass incarceration. More specifically, the scholars featured in the film describe how prison systems came to be institutions for modern day slavery for Black and Hispanic people.
⁹⁶ Interestingly, a recent study in the U.S. shows that drug-use disorders are most common among non-Hispanic white people, followed by Hispanic people and then Black people. This may point to drug use either declining for Black people, or rising for white people, or that the drug-related incidents which include white people have been quieted. This may explain why there are more Black people imprisoned for drug-related charges. See: Leah J. Welty et al. “Health Disparities in Drug-and Alcohol-use Disorders: A 12-year Longitudinal Study of Youths After Detention.” *American Journal of Public Health* 106.5, 2016.
It is also not surprising that drugs became a means for perpetuating suffering and deterioration within Black communities. First, drugs are a way to make money, which is nearly impossible to turn one’s back on when other options are not available for reasons outside of one’s control. Second, the addictive nature of drugs can get one hooked quickly, and without the financial means necessary to seek treatment, it is nearly impossible to stop. The nature of drugs perpetuates the cycle of drug abuse, and magnifies problems within a group that did not originate within that group.97

Since extreme punitive measures were developed specifically in relation to narcotics, those involved in drug rings were often sent to prison on life sentences. Long-term imprisonment was even common for minor infringements such as selling marijuana, a drug that is not considered illegal in some countries, and in Canada in the near future.98 There were and currently are more men than women involved in the business of narcotics,99 which may reflect the social attitudes of the time – i.e. women working within the home as caretakers and homemakers – perpetuating a cycle that currently maintains.

The results of inserting narcotics into neighbourhoods with high populations of Black people and introducing harsher punishments for narcotic-related infractions are a grossly

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97 The following paper discusses how crack cocaine has affected Black families, and how external reasons like social inequity play a much larger role than we usually give credit. See: Eloise Dunlap, Andrew Golub, and Bruce D. Johnson. “The Severely-Distressed African American Family in the Crack Era: Empowerment is Not Enough.” *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* 33.1, 2006.


disproportionate amount of Black men in prisons (often serving life sentences), and Black women and children left to attend to themselves with little or no support or income. Because of a lack of income and support, Black women are unable to afford legal assistance to their loved ones, whose imprisonment can only be depicted as a form of modern day slavery. There are further implications that can be linked to the history of narcotics in Black neighbourhoods, such as gangs and the traumas and tragedies that accompany those internal and external to them.

The previous discussion on narcotics is meant to illuminate a common fallible belief about Black people and their relationship with drugs. Further examining the history of drugs within Black communities helps us to gain clarity, and conclude that it is simply not the case that the tragedies that Black people endure can be attributed to their own shortcomings.

The variety of problems that Black people have been forced to endure began from their enslavement, and the various consequential strategies to keep them imprisoned, like penal institutions. The example above is meant to exemplify how it does not make sense to say that Black people have caused their own suffering; it cannot be the case that Black people are unaffected by others simply because they do not share the same race. In fact, in this case, Black people are very much affected by external forces. The internal conflict argument comes from a place of ignorance, of not understanding the ways in which people affect each other. More

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101 This is just one example of how internal conflict and problems within the “Black community” are used to in order to put blame and responsibility on Black people for the injustices that they experience currently. Even though many remain ignorant about the war on drugs in the U.S., there are other kinds of problematic views held motivating the method used in recent studies on police to civilian shootings. Although there are statistics that plainly state that Black people are more likely to be shot and killed by police officers than white people, studies are still conducted to disprove plain fact. See James W Buehler, “Racial/Ethnic Disparities in the Use of Lethal Force by US Police, 2010–2014.” (American Journal of Public Health 0, 2017); Roland G. Fryer, Jr, “An Empirical Analysis of Racial Differences in Police Use of Force.” (National Bureau of Economic Research, 2016); and Lois James, Stephen M. James, and Bryan J. Vila. “The Reverse Racism Effect.” (Criminology & Public Policy, 2016).
specifically, how a dominant group can affect an oppressed group.

1.3 Misconceptions about Racism

There are some people who do not believe that racism is still a problem. In particular, those living in predominantly white communities (which could be entire countries, provinces, states, cities, towns, etc.), will not witness overt expressions of racism since they will not be common. What follows is that those living in these locations are less likely to think that racism is a still a problem because it is not part of their daily life. There are also some people believe that because they do not participate in certain kinds of racist acts, such as physically and/or verbally assaulting Black people, they are not contributing to the injustices that Black people experience. So without blatant and direct physical and/or verbal assault, some do not believe that they contribute to racism. There are two issues with these beliefs.

First, consider those who do not believe that racism is occurring because they do not experience it. A similar kind of illogic is an individual believing that poverty is not an issue because that individual lives in an affluent suburb and does not witness it. Or that environmental issues are not much of a problem because the individual lives in neighbourhoods where trash is collected regularly and vegetation is rich and well taken care of. On much more basic level, the

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104 Consider Donald Trump, for example, and the multitude of racist remarks he has made and actions he has taken. For a summary, see: Lydia O’Connor and Daniel Marans. “Here are 13 Examples of Trump Being Racist.” *Huffington Post*. Web. Accessed 19 Jan. 2017. Even though many are aware of Trumps words and actions, a recent survey found that only seven percent of Trump supporters consider him to be racist. See: Philip Bump, “7 Percent of Donald Trump Supporters Think He’s Racist.” *The Washington Post*. Web. Accessed 16 Nov. 2016.
previous illogic is similar to believing that our bodies are not comprised of atoms, because we do not see them. When considered in a more scientific way, the ignorance of this mindset is very obvious. It is an internal opinion about a state of affairs that first, does not negatively affect the individual, and second, is not even witnessed by the individual. Having only internal dialogue about social phenomenon shows massive ignorance about how to relate to those outside of the self, and displays the kind of egoism\textsuperscript{105} that helps racism along a much more silent and destructive path.\textsuperscript{106}

Second, consider those who do not believe that they are racist because they do not participate in events that are traditionally conceived of as racist. In other words, they do not yell racial slurs at passersby, lynch Black people, own Black people, refuse to serve Black customers, etc. But there are other ways of participating in racism that do not take such extreme forms. For example, one could have implicit bias against Black people and not be aware that it governs the decisions that they make that could affect Black people. Social psychologists Anthony G. Greenwald and Mahzarin R. Banaji say that “the theorized ordinariness of implicit stereotyping is consistent with recent findings of discrimination by people who explicitly disavow prejudice.”\textsuperscript{107}

\textsuperscript{105} It is useful to consider Fanon’s thoughts here. He describes how white people do not see him as the same kind, merely because his skin colour is different. Instead, he is automatically, unconsciously, but assuredly placed into another category of being, i.e. a Black man. Fanon says, “I move slowly in the world… I progress by crawling. And already I am being dissected under white eyes, the only real eyes. I am fixed… I am laid bare. I feel, I see in those white faces that it is not a new man who has come in but a new kind of man, a new genus. Why, it’s a Negro!” (1967, p. 116).

\textsuperscript{106} Professor Sharrona Pearl discusses how important it is to discuss race in the classroom, honestly and explicitly. She describes how her students are among the most educated and elite, and how external conversation about race is important for all people. See: Sharrona Pearl, “The Importance of Talking Explicitly About Race.” Chronical Vitae, Web. Accessed 7 Mar. 2017.

For example, a white storeowner may not hire a young Black man over a young white man simply because of the prejudice she holds very deeply internal to the beliefs that govern her decision-making process. Or, a white judge who serves a harsher punishment to a Black person believing she does so because she is aware that there are many issues within Black communities and does not want to grant the Black person the chance to reoffend. These are two examples of events that occur consistently and frequently, yet are not always recognized as racist events, even though they are transactions that are severely detrimental to the wellbeing of the individuals who are affected.\(^{108}\)

Furthermore, there are still overt instances of injustice that occur all over the world, but those who live in communities that are not rich with Black people are more often than not oblivious to what happens. The ignorance results from variety of reasons, many of which focus on the control of information and quieting of events that happen to members of particular groups. Additionally, even when others become aware of these issues, they are unlikely to want to participate in remedying in them for fear of the affects that it may have on their own life and the lives of their loved ones.

There is a further point that can be made here. Consider a phenomenon called passing. Passing occurs when someone adopts social roles or identities that are not strictly applied to them.\(^{109}\) Often times, Black people will adopt the roles and identities of white people in order to be socially accepted, often times concealing their “Black blood.”\(^ {110}\) Some Black people make

\(^{108}\) This example is unfortunately easy to prove statistically. For a discussion on this matter, see: Sonja B. Starr and M. Marit Rehavi. “Mandatory Sentencing and Racial Disparity: Assessing the Role of Prosecutors and the Effects of Booker.” (Yale LJ 123, 2013).


\(^{110}\) Ibid., p. 1145.
decisions to associate or disassociate with their Black lineage at a young age, but some, since they are light-skinned for example, do not learn about their Black lineage and the affects this has on them until later in life.\textsuperscript{111} This indicates that even Black people will play into the quieted social norms that they may benefit from, sometimes without even realizing. As such, some Black people do not think racism is still occurring, too, or that it does not affect them since they are able to pass.

2.0 ENDURING INJUSTICE

After reviewing some of the views that are held regarding the injustices experienced by Black people, yet recognizing that injustices are still occurring, one must ask why this is the case. With so much research, ideas, and effort put into understanding and working on repairing the injustices Black people continue to face, it is natural to assume that there must be aspects of the nature of this particular kind of injustice that are not being discussed. There seem to be at least two aspects of the nature of injustice of Black people that are not sufficiently explained, or left out altogether. First, its enduring nature, which will be discussed here, and second, its epistemological nature, which will be discussed in the following section. To begin, consider Spinner-Halev’s account of the nature of enduring injustice.

2.1 Spinner-Halev’s Account

In an attempt to broaden our conception of injustice, Spinner-Halev urges us to switch our focus from only considering historical injustice to begin including current injustices. Spinner-Halev’s project is to reframe some injustices as ones that are enduring, since an account that centres on

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., p. 1145-1146.
injustice that occurred only in the past or only in the present is insufficient. He states that “enduring injustice has roots in the past, and continues into the present day; an enduring injustice endures over time and often over space as well. What makes an enduring injustice particularly perplexing is how difficult it is to repair.”112 He asserts that instead of using history to assign blame and responsibility, we should use it to learn why injustice persists.113 We can start with a present injustice and trace it back to its roots, since the endurance makes it impossible to separate the two; enduring injustice has a historical component and a contemporary counterpart.

Of course, one might get lost in the thought that all groups have experienced injustice over expanses of time, and then make the assertion that there is no real distinction. But the crux of the distinction is that an injustice has persisted throughout time, and current situations reflect an unjust past to a point where one is led to believe that injustice will prevail in the future. Spinner-Halev notes that although causal accounts114 may be problematic, they do provide some useful information. We can recognize and learn about a group’s collective history or narrative through story-telling, allowing us to gain an understanding of the collective social imagination.115 Even though memories from previous generations are not obtainable, i.e. an individual cannot claim them as their own, they can allow people to form their social identity.116 Sometimes, these

113 Ibid., 57.
114 The causal account is discussed on p. 31-41. In brief, the causal account is that current injustices are caused by past injustices, and therefore past injustices need to be recognized and dealt with before current injustices can be repaired.
115 Jose Medina says that “imagination is not a luxury or privilege, but a necessity. Individuals as well as groups cannot have any sort of identity and agency without the capacity to imagine themselves, their worlds, and those who inhabit them” (268). Moreover, “once internalized, the social imagination permeates the cognitive and affective dimensions of our experience without being reducible to a mere list of specific cognitive commitments and affective reactions.” (269). Jose Medina, The Epistemology of Resistance: Gender and Racial oppression, Epistemic Injustice, and the Social Imagination (Oxford University Press, 2012).
116 Ibid., 60-1.
collective narratives include a history of enduring injustice, wherein individuals belonging to a particular group may identify with and experience injustice similar to that of their ancestors. In addition to Spinner-Halev’s description, it is likely that such people also recognize that due to the complex nature of their situation, injustice is unlikely to cease for proximate future generations, particularly for their own children and grandchildren.

According to Spinner-Halev, the downside to an account that links historical injustice to present injustice is that individuals sometimes include historical injustice into their current experience when it is not in fact a contemporary problem.117 The idea is that historical accounts can also be misleading, on both the part of the perpetrators and the victims.118 Some accounts include varying degrees of fictionalization, an inevitable characteristic of a narrative.

Through discussions in Chapter 3, it should become clearer that these kinds of arguments are not strong enough to deter one from using a causal account to articulate descriptions of enduring injustice. Spinner-Halev also reaches a similar conclusion, stating that whether or not every story about a group’s historical injustice rings true is not as important as whether or not current injustice exists.119

An expansion of Spinner-Halev’s original definition of enduring injustice is useful here. Let us begin with Spinner-Halev’s first criterion.120 The obvious beginning of injustice towards Black people commences with white domination and colonization, and the capture and enslavement of Africans. This is not usually contested as being anything other than unjust by

117 This type of worry was first mentioned at the end of Chapter 1 when discussing the importance of using the word ‘reparations’ in this discussion. Some argue that since chattel slavery is no longer occurring, there is no place for it in current discussions about the injustices experience by Black people. The argument here is that this is untrue.
118 Ibid., p. 61-2.
119 Ibid., p. 62.
120 Ibid., p. 56.
most people today. After slavery was abolished, the injustices experienced by Black people continued with segregation. Even although many did not agree with slavery, racism found its way through unjust practices like Jim Crow laws and other issues resulting from a “separate but equal” attitude. Now, injustice remains a problem in many different social institutions because not all of the underlying causes of injustice have been identified, cared about, or worked on.

Therefore, the endurance of injustice for Black people is rooted in slavery, has endured through practices like segregation, and continues currently in ways like sustained institutional inequality.

The second criterion Spinner-Halev provides is that enduring injustice endures not only over time, but over space as well. For Black people, spatial-location does not act as a deterrent because the legacy of slavery is attached to Black people globally. Since the enslavement of Black people occurred around the world, its endurance also occurs around the world. Even if Black people in the Carribean, for example, do not experience injustice in the same way that, say, Black people in North America do, there is a suggestive power behind history which is reflected internationally. What this means is that when a racial injustice occurs in a particular area, it is not necessarily the case that the injustice remains in that particular area. It is likely that racist attitudes and practices seep into neighbouring communities – consider the impact of

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121 For example, current forms of racist attitudes and behaviours generally do not endorse the idea that Black people ought to be enslaved, or that slavery is morally acceptable.
122 For a discussion on the history of Jim Crow laws and racial segregation, see: Michael J. Klarman, From Jim Crow to Civil Rights: The Supreme Court and the Struggle for Racial Equality. (Oxford University Press, 2004).
124 For example, see: Angela Y. Davis, Women, Race, & Class. (Vintage, 2011): p. 3-29.
125 It is important to note that this statement does not intend to rank injustice between Black people from different parts of the world. Instead, it is meant to acknowledge that there may be different kinds of examples of injustice that Black people from, for example, the U.S. experience that are different from the kinds of examples of injustice that Black people from Italy might experience. Consider the different ways injustice is experienced by Black people in Canada and Black people in the U.S.; because of factors like personality differences, gun laws, political binaries, etc. how a Black person experiences injustice even within North America can vary drastically.
powerful countries over less powerful – with an opportunity for an eventual extension to opposing global poles. When injustices are as extreme as sustained racial enslavement, the sorts of persuasions that may result can be devastating for anyone who is of that particular race, often regardless of spatio-temporal location.

The third criterion Spinner-Halev provides is that enduring injustice is very difficult to repair.\textsuperscript{126} Injustice that is enduring is difficult to repair for vast and varied reasons, which consequently perpetuates the cycle of injustice. There appears to be three characteristics to enduring injustice that contribute to how difficult it is to repair. First, sustained belief, second, the resulting passive acceptance of sustained belief, and third, institutional fusion. Regarding the first and second characteristics, once an unjust belief or function exists over generations, the injustice becomes part of our normative scheme, and is then accepted without question. Therefore, injustice endures not only for its original complex reasons, but also because the longer an injustice is sustained, the stronger the belief that it is justified becomes. It gains strength in numbers, but also because it is rarely questioned. In relation to the third characteristic, when an injustice expands over generations, it becomes deeply ingrained at an institutional level, and is therefore almost undetectable. Black people of newer generations can even have a narrowed perspective that centres on their own situation, finding comfort in the familiar because current circumstances are good enough, even though they could be better. Or, perhaps they are quite aware of the injustices that plague them, but are offered no genuine choice to the alternative.\textsuperscript{127}

So the complexity of intergenerationally sustained injustice is likely caused by, in part, its

\textsuperscript{127} For a thoughtful and dynamic read about this, see: John Elgion and Robert Gebeloff, “Affluent and Black, Still Trapped by Segregation.” (\textit{The New York Times US}, 20 Aug 2016). Even when Black people overcome economic barriers, injustices are still very much present in other aspects of life.
intricate weave into our institutions which make it so difficult to recognize and, further than this, contemplate and analyze. The third characteristic in Spinner-Halev’s definition of enduring injustice is really important for the work on reparations. It is indisputable that Black people were unjustly enslaved, and some accept that Black people still experience injustices at least to some degree. It is also commonplace that the injustices experienced by Black people occur worldwide. What seems to be at odds is if reparations are owed, how they are owed, and why past reparative efforts have not been successful. To expand, what is at odds are the actions to accompany the words.

2.2 Enduring Injustice and Black People

It seems simplest to distinguish enduring injustice from non-enduring injustice by investigating the progressions made from the past to present. The most salient distinction between enduring injustice and non-enduring injustice is its link from past to present; the other characteristics that Spinner-Halev presents are more properly interpreted as necessary features resulting from prolonged injustice. As such it will be expanded on a bit here. Provided are (at least) two necessary methods to determine whether an injustice is enduring: empirical study and social reflection. To begin with the former, empirical investigation must involve some study of facts, figures, and statistics. There are advantages and disadvantages to an empirical approach. One advantage is that there are facts available on governmental websites that show disparity between races.128 So there is at least some public access to statistics that show measurable differences between people of different races in categories like education, health care,

\[\text{128} \text{ As mentioned in Chapter 1, primary sources of statistical evidence can be found at www.statscan.gc.ca for Canada, and www.census.gov for the U.S.}\]
imprisonment, and wealth. Facts also show concrete evidence that there are disparities in many areas that are categorized by race. But despite the advantages of an empirical approach, they are counter-balanced by many disadvantages.

One such disadvantage is that facts are open to interpretation; one person may read the facts and conclude that because more Black people are imprisoned, they are more violent and unstable. Another person may read the facts and conclude that there is something seriously wrong with society broadly speaking, if so many Black people are less educated, more likely to be incarcerated, and earn less than white people, as examples. As such, there needs to be more to explain why concrete problems like income discrepancy exist, and why it is considered an injustice.

Therefore, beyond facts – and regarding the second investigation – a further study required to determine whether an injustice is enduring is to discern the social attitude and imagination of communities. Comprehension of a social attitude comes from experiential understanding and reflection about one’s place and participation in a community. Being a part of a community and acquainting oneself with the values and beliefs of that community and then reflecting upon those values and beliefs will lead to more detailed notions of the social imagination and belief sets that are fed between communal individuals.

Certainly, one may worry about the effectiveness and accuracy of a socially reflective method for determining enduring injustice. Jose Medina goes as far as arguing that “the influence of any particular social imagination is deeper and more insidious than it appears to those who partake in it and, therefore, it is extremely hard to change…”129 Because of the imbedded nature of sustained attitudes and beliefs within a community, it can be difficult for

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both oppressed and non-oppressed groups to detect the injustices laden within. However, even if we concede that determining a social attitude is more challenging than becoming acquainted with facts, social imagination does undoubtedly impact groups and significantly contribute to enduring injustices. In Chapter 3, it will be suggested that approaching injustice with a compassionate mindset, properly understood, is an effective tool for navigating through the depth and complexity of a community’s social imagination.

Let us put these two methods for determining whether an injustice is enduring into practice. Firstly, it is useful to recap some empirical evidence. In Canada, Black people earn less than white people,\(^{130}\) are disproportionately represented in prisons,\(^ {131}\) and are more likely to live in lone-parent families.\(^ {132}\) In the U.S., Black people continue to top the charts for poverty, superseding Asian people and Hispanic people both episodically and chronically, and almost tripling that of white people.\(^ {133}\) Black people also rate among the lowest for home ownership.\(^ {134}\) Since they are residentially segregated, inequality in education also factors here. Black people again have the highest unemployment rate,\(^ {135}\) and the highest incarceration rate.\(^ {136}\)

Secondly, let us reflect on the facts above, and how they may explain and perpetuate the injustices that Black people continue to face. There is an overwhelming amount of ignorance and a serious lack of compassion surrounding the injustices experienced by Black people. For one, many are not taught about the history of Black racism and are also not aware of the current

\(^{133}\) Carmen DeNavas-Wait et. al., (2009).
statistics regarding income, education, etc. Additionally, many are not taught to critically reflect on the reasons for why Black people remain in the state they are in. As such, the kinds of attitudes that are perpetuated are, unfortunately, something like the following: given high incarceration rates, Black people are to be feared; given low income rates, Black people are not ambitious nor motivated; given the low education rates, Black people are not as studious; given the high unemployment rates, Black people are not hardworking. These beliefs are formed not because a lack of evidence; rather, they are formed through ignorance perpetrated by those who hold power. This idea will be discussed further in Section 4 on institutions.

These kinds of attitudes are reflective of communities comprised of people who are sometimes lacking in both knowledge and understanding.\textsuperscript{137} All three of Spinner-Halev’s criteria are met here: Black people were treated unjustly when kidnapped and enslaved, the legacy remains intact because of sustained social attitudes, and the ignorance about the history and maintenance of injustice against Black people perpetuated in communities makes it difficult to repair. With this said, because injustices are still occurring on such a massive scale and in such important ways, trying to better understand these injustices is vital to making movement in the reparations debate.

2.3 Challenges of Enduring Injustice and Reparation

Given that reparative frameworks are essentially backwards looking – i.e., aiming to restore conditions to their previous stance before any injustice occurred – those experiencing enduring injustice are not considered. It does not make sense to think of reparation in terms of restoring

\textsuperscript{137} It is not always the case that someone who does not care about enduring injustice is also unaware of it. There are many people who know, in some sense, that Black people experience injustice, but lack the proper compassion to do anything about it.
conditions to their previous state for Black people because the injustices are still occurring. Before trying to amend the way in which we think about reparations, however, let us consider some of the traditional methods of reparations in relation to Black people.

Firstly, it is impossible to restore conditions to a previous state for Black people. The injustices they have experienced first began with their capture and enslavement. Injustice has consistently followed them for centuries since then, adapting to societal and cultural changes. For many decades now, Black people who have settled in North America, for example, have adapted to their surroundings and consider themselves as American just like their fellow white citizens. If we were to follow the normal course of action regarding paying reparation for injustice, the goal is to restore conditions to their original state. Since the original state for people of African origin is to live freely in African countries, this could possibly mean that Black people would return to their original place of origin, among other forms of assistance to rebuild their lives.

Given that so much time has passed and Black people outside of Africa generally do not consider themselves to be African\(^{138}\) (perhaps only by origin), returning to Africa would not be an effective method for reparation. This kind of argument does not work even for those who were Indigenous to the land. That is because returning somewhere does not reflect the deeper problem of dehumanization. Therefore, we are required to expand our ideas about what counts as an effective reparative method in order to make any sort of strides towards equity.

Second, consider repayment methods offered by traditional forms of reparation. There are often financial offerings made to those who have suffered injustice. However, monetary compensation for the injustice of Black people is problematic for two main reasons that result

from its contemporary-historical nature. First, Black people who experienced direct injustice from slavery are no longer living. Many argue that slave descendants are therefore owed reparations for the injustice experienced by their ancestors, a sentiment echoed here. For example, Bernard Boxill argues that slave descendants are owed the debt that was owed to their ancestors. Just like financial assets are inherited, debt owed is also inherited.139

One major issue with paying reparations to slave descendants is because of race complexity; all Black people experience injustice because of the legacy of slavery, but not all are slave descendants. Moreover, because of an often ignored second feature of the injustice experience by Black people discussed next, i.e. how certain people are conceived of and how they conceive of themselves, it seems like the method for reparation would need to encompass something more than financial compensation. Of course, one could argue that monetary compensation is more than money, but represents a shift in social attitudes. Yet the fact that monetary compensation has not even been offered reflects the opposite, and therefore work needs to be done to shift social attitudes regarding the enduring injustices experienced by Black people first.

All of these points are used as arguments against paying reparations. Many of these issues receive harsh criticism from those who understand the nature of injustice that Black people experience and work for change. But instead of offering this as a deterrent for paying reparations, and rather than ignoring that these are real problems, we may perhaps instead start to conceive of the injustices experienced by Black people as a having complex, enduring nature.

3.0 EPISTEMIC INJUSTICE

It was mentioned at the beginning of the chapter that there are two aspects about the nature of injustice for Black people that are not usually contemplated: its enduring nature, discussed earlier, and its effects on how we understand ourselves and others, which will be discussed here. Because of how our societies are organized – i.e. white straight able-bodied male dominated getting priority – those who are outside of such groups do not exist publicly. Those belonging to oppressed groups are not able to find themselves in the social imagination, given that its structures exclude them.

Since our social experience help to form ideas about “who” we are, to ourselves and to others, those outside of the dominant group are ignored and ultimately dehumanized. Both ideas and formations about who a person can become are very different between those who are shunned and oppressed and those who are recognized and praised. The ideas of the self then become tangible realities which are based off of unfair and unjust conceptions of selves. In this case, the oppressed are those whose self-conceptions are based off of their perceived race. What is worse, because certain individuals exist outside of this particular reality, they are usually not believed when they try to shed light on this very problem.

\[140\] This sort of conversation about subject and other dates back to, in the North Atlantic at least, Simone De Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, 1949.
3.1 *Miranda Fricker’s Account*

One of the more prominent Western analytical writers on epistemic injustice is Miranda Fricker.\(^{141}\) The two main sections of her book discuss what she calls testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice.\(^{142}\) Fricker describes testimonial injustice as either a credibility deficit or credibility excess, which will vary depending on how the person giving the testimony is perceived. In summary, when two people communicate, the listener will determine, based on preconceived notions of the speaker, how much truth credibility to assign the speakers contentions.\(^{143}\) Because we have so many prejudices attached to our beliefs, this can cause serious injustice.\(^{144}\)

Fricker provides an example to illustrate how this interaction might take place. She refers to Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*, wherein Tom Robinson, a Black man, is accused of raping a white woman, Mayella Ewell. The jury convicts Tom, even though there is mounting evidence to support his innocence. He is ultimately shot and killed in an attempt to escape prison.\(^{145}\) In this situation, Tom would have been assigned a credibility deficit, and this is because of prejudiced beliefs about him because he is a Black man. According to Fricker, Robinson is an example of someone who is assigned an identity-prejudicial credibility deficit, since he his credibility was deflated because of a negative identity prejudice that white people have against Black people.\(^{146}\)

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\(^{141}\) Fricker is one of the more notable thinkers in the West regarding epistemic injustice, but Black scholars like Franz Fanon, feminist scholars like Simone de Beauvoir, and Latin American scholars like José Martí have been writing about the same phenomenon for many years. In fact, there is work done in Latin American philosophy on epistemic injustice that cannot be included here, as little English translation exists. This illustrates the lack of importance given to the ideas in these texts.


\(^{143}\) Ibid., p. 17.

\(^{144}\) Ibid., p. 35.


Comprising a shorter discussion in her book, Fricker’s ideas about hermeneutical injustice are significant. Fricker says that “...hermeneutical injustice occurs…when a gap in collective interpretive resources puts someone at an unfair disadvantage when it comes to making sense of their social experience.”\textsuperscript{147} Although what is considered unjust can change over time and it may take time for us to become consciously aware of it, injustice has always remained. And, even if all social members are not cognitively aware of a particular phenomenon, not all members will suffer from it.\textsuperscript{148} Consider the following example.

Fricker talks about postpartum depression to illuminate what a hermeneutical injustice consists in. She explains that before postpartum depression was given recognition and afterwards labeled, women were treated unjustly. Women were enduring adverse postpartum experiences, encounters that were not previously identified because these women lived in a white male dominated society. Since postpartum depression is generally only experienced by women – whose voices were even less heard years ago than presently – they suffered in silence.\textsuperscript{149} This suffrage is epistemological in that women experiencing postpartum depression were unable to fully understand their own situations. As such, not only were they experiencing postpartum depression, but also the effects of being ignored, silenced, or labeled with harmful terms like “crazy” or “silly”. This type of ignorance is not simply insensitivity or oblivion, but can create a serious injustice.

Fricker has appropriately used women as an example to explicate hermeneutical injustice, and her idea is highly relevant to Black people as well. There are many Black writers, philosophers, and feminists who argue that the experiences of Black people are quite separable
from the experiences of white people in these ways. Perhaps part of the problem here is that
societies lack the words, concepts, and ideas that pertain to the experience of Black individuals. It
is assumed that Black people are able to adequately use whatever is generated by and beneficial
to the dominant Eurocentric groups. The problem with this is the assumption that Black people
share the same experiences in their daily lives as non-Black people do. This ignorance on the part
of non-Black people causes serious injustices for Black people.

One example of this sort of injustice is apparent in regard to Black women, which is noted
by Elizabeth Spelman. Spelman says that often when we speak about racism or sexism, we do so
in ways that fundamentally exclude Black women by presuming that their experience is the same
as white women.  

For example, Spelman argues that philosophers like Mary Daly erase Black women from the equation by presuming that when we talk about racism and sexism, we can do so in universal terms; that is, we can apply racism and sexism to Black men, Black women, and white women all the same.

The problem, therefore, is that when we talk about racism, we almost always refer to
white men mistreating Black men, and when we talk about sexism, we almost always refer to
white men mistreating white women. Spelman says that an additive account of sexism and racism
involving Black women “…distorts Black women’s experiences of oppression by failing to note
important differences between the contexts in which Black women and white women experience
sexism.” What Spelman shows us is that the way in which we conceive of the world and

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152 Ibid., p. 125.
153 For more discussions about the intersection of race and gender, see Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color.” (Stanford Law Review, 1991); and Kathryn
people’s experiences reflects only the experience of society’s dominant group. To further Spelman’s point, this exclusion is not just a minor slip-up; rather, the ways we think and speak about ourselves and others were originally intended, sometimes remain intended, and sometimes result from the ignorance that follows from the original intention.\textsuperscript{154}

It should be reinforced that because of the Eurocentric organization of the world and its unjust effects on Black people are a problem created by white people, white people will have an inevitable role in any remedy. In general, white people continue to be ignorant of their sustained dominance of standard epistemic understanding by assuming that all others share the same perspectives that they do, exclusive of maybe a few differences in social status among other seemingly nimble distinctions. Even those who have knowledge about the injustices experienced by Black people do not generally act in ways that show they care about it. Thus, many white people continue to blindly sustain a social attitude that breeds injustice towards Black people. Given all of this, we are left with a problem that must first be fixed in social imagination of white people before the injustice can be addressed for Black people.

Recall Fricker’s examples about Tom Robinson and postpartum depression. Regarding the former, even though Tom had evidence to prove that he did not rape Mayella, it was impossible for the jury to believe his statements since it would go against all of their preexisting beliefs and expectations. The jurors’ beliefs, implicit and explicit, inform them that this Black man is untrustworthy, harmful, corrupt, and immoral. Any testimony coming from him would be

\textsuperscript{154} To clarify this point, some people remain ignorant about the injustices experienced by oppressed people (like Black people) because they do not make the connection between racism that occurred in the past to racism that occurs currently. As such, the original intent to oppress Black people informs the ignorance that occurs currently in that a real understanding about the injustices experienced by Black people is difficult for some to access due to its socially embedded nature.
ignored or denied unless it aligned with the knowledge and beliefs already present within the jurors’ minds.

Regarding the latter, since men generally did not experience postpartum depression, yet contributed more to the overall hermeneutical resource base, postpartum depression was severely misunderstood. The fact that women were not allowed to participate in adding to the hermeneutical resource base meant that they were at a serious cognitive disadvantage. This can be true of other groups as well, including Black people. Given that they are also a marginalized group and are discouraged from adding to a broader social understanding, their thoughts, ideas, and experiences do not exist publicly in the way that the thoughts, ideas, and experiences of white people do.

3.2 Challenges of Epistemic Injustice and Reparations

The main challenge of epistemic injustice and redress is the very nature of this sort of injustice. It is embedded, difficult to detect, and difficult to remove. Regarding its embedded nature, epistemic injustice is found within all kinds of institutions. It is not only found within the legal system, for example, but within the family system and educational system as well. In relation to its detection and the challenges for reparation, it is in the very complexion of ignorance that there is an element of the unknown and thusly a challenge for repairing what is unknown. Moreover, what is unknown is unknown to so many. To give redress for injustices that are not present in the minds of those who perpetuate them is a clear issue. Those who participate in perpetuating injustice must become aware of the issues and the role they play in it. Bringing awareness and then making change is a massive undertaking when one considers the measures that are necessary to take if we are to make any progress in remedying them. This will likely become clearer from the next discussion about the way in which injustice is embedded in all of
our social institutions.

Simply reflecting on the vastness of injustice against Black people – its length and breadth – informs us that entire systems and institutions rely on a knowledge set and social management that reflects racist attitudes.\textsuperscript{155} Some exploration into how institutions maintain injustice will help to illuminate the types of conversations that are missing when considering the injustices experienced by Black people.

4.0 HOW INSTITUTIONS HELP INJUSTICE TO ENDURE THROUGH IGNORANCE

It is important to become clear on how the aforementioned injustices are structured and perpetuated institutionally. Institutions are generally mistakenly considered the reasons for enduring injustice rather than the vessels for it. In other words, many want to assign blame to institutions as the causes of the injustices experienced by Black people, when in actuality, they are more properly considered receptacles for it. But it is nonetheless important to better understand the ways in which injustice plagues institutions, particularly lesser discussed ones (in this regard) like education. Since education is almost always seen as positive, educational institutions are rarely questioned.

4.1 What are Institutions?

John Searle describes institutions as human-developed organizations, or structures that are born from the needs of people.\textsuperscript{156} As examples, when we refer to institutions, we refer to political,

\textsuperscript{155} Other unjust attitudes are reflected in our institutions, i.e. sexist, classist, ageist, and ableist to name some.
\textsuperscript{156} John Searle. \textit{The Construction of Social Reality}. (Simon and Schuster, 1995).
economical, legal, familial, and educational structures. When we refer to institutional injustice, we may be referring to injustices that occur in any of these institutions. Because institutions are generated by the contingent needs of the dominant groups, they can, implicitly or explicitly, promote injustice in many ways.\textsuperscript{157} Regarding the implicit ways that institutions maintain injustice, Searle says that sometimes people participate in institutions but are not aware that they are doing so. Instead, they participate for evolutionary reasons, or to feel “at home.” In this way, people simply learn the rules and unintentionally participate.\textsuperscript{158} Using Searle’s observation, it may be that for some, because institutions work in their favour, there is less of a need to really understand them. For others, there may be an awareness that institutions do not work in their favour, but must be participated in so that they are accepted in the society in which they live. This gives raise to expectations about rights, obligations, responsibilities, etc.\textsuperscript{159}

Institutions pertain to any structures built by people in the attempt to fabricate and organize different aspects of our lives as social beings. This includes a broad range of establishments, but it is not necessary here to review each one as it is associated with enduring injustice for Black people. The institutions that are normally discussed are usually political, economic, and social, and will be referred to here only briefly. In this project, the focus will be instead on educational institutions, and the ways in which what we know and how we are taught can perpetuate injustice for particular groups, including Black people. This is directly relevant to the problem of epistemic injustice.

The way institutions are organized intends to serve some members of the community and refuse others. Because the organization of institutions is based on the same principles, and built

\textsuperscript{157} This is discussed by Seumas Miller in “Social Institutions.” (\textit{Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy}, 2011).
\textsuperscript{159} Ibid., p. 47, 59, 68.
within the same epistemological framework, no institution can escape being subject to the same basic injustice. It can strike some as surprising that every social institution that we currently engage in rests upon and perpetuates injustice for groups like Black people, who experience enduring injustice. But as previously mentioned, this is something that people in other parts of the world have been arguing for decades. To situate the conversations about how injustice is perpetuated in some institutions, consider the following introductions to these more commonly discussed institutions within philosophy.

4.2 Political/Economic Institutions

Political institutions certainly play a large part in the endurance of injustice for Black people. There are many who argue along these lines, from politicians to philosophers. To make explicit one particular claim, Charles Mills reveals, strikingly, that the social contract that constructs our communities is in fact a racial contract. There is a real contract made between white people (or persons) about all others (i.e. non-white people, or subpersons) wherein persons are afforded moral and juridical privileges and rights and nonpersons are afforded second class access to them. Other scholars, politicians, and activists like Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr., Angela Davis, and James Baldwin have made a vast contribution to shedding light on the rights and privileges accessible between races, and how government operates to perpetuate them.

160 See, for example, Charles Mills’ *The Racial Contract*
161 Mills wants to make it clear that this is not something that Black people have simply made up. Historical fact reveals that a social contract based on privileging the white race and hindering the Black race was actually made and continues currently.
162 Ibid., p. 11.
The accessibility to rights and privileges relates to Searle’s notion about how institutions breed rights, responsibilities, obligations, roles, etc. that create expectations. For example, Black people are technically afforded the same rights as white people, but given that many institutions where rights are exercised are bound by racist structures, there is less of a benefit for Black people. Therefore, injustice is disguised since a common understanding is that all free people share the same rights.

Another institution more notably referred to during discussions about injustice are economic ones, and the accessibilities and opportunities that some members of the community are privy to. Financial restriction is often the most noted reason to explain the enduring injustice that Black people experience, followed by a series of consequences. In other words, low economic status means restricted access to healthcare, education, job opportunities, and other similar aspects. These are basic areas of life that make it possible for all individuals to flourish and live fruitful lives, and given the capitalistic attitudes and behaviours that comprise many societies, poor economic standing is seen as the leading problem that gives rise to unjust situations. King began discussing this in the 1960s,164 followed by many economists since then who talk about limited economic resources and the affect this has on one’s life, particularly those who are racialized.165

Again, a connection to Searle’s ideas about institutions can be made here. It can be argued that good healthcare, education, and jobs are open to Black people since everyone has access to these institutions. Therefore, if Black people suffer from illness, poor education, and have low-paying jobs, it is not a reflection of any institutional barriers, but a true reflection of the

way things are. Black people are therefore generally not expected to receive the best healthcare, education, or high salary jobs, and continue to fulfill that role.

4.3 Legal/Penal Institutions

The enslavement of others is likely the least disputable and clearest form of injustice imposed by people through the cooperation and compliance of social institutions. Slaves are forced into subjugation with no political and legal rights, support, or protection. As characteristic of their title, slaves reap no benefit of the economic gain of their societies. They have no access to cultural freedoms, and are altogether extinguished as social members. In retrospect, white people have begun to understand that the enslavement of Africans was unequivocally wrong and repugnant. At the time, however, many did not consider enslavement unjust. Black people were not considered persons, far from equal, in every respect, in relation to their white superiors. Given this, they were blatantly rejected from having any institutional power, be it social, legal, political, or familial.\footnote{For extensive historical accounts of African chattel slavery, see John Hope Franklin and Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, \textit{From Slavery to Freedom.} (New York: Vintage Books, 1969); and Ira Berlin, \textit{Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America.} (Harvard University Press, 2009).} The only institution that Black people were allowed to participate in, by force, was slavery. Slaves were expected to fulfill this role, and had obligations to carry out the duties demanded of them.

After the abolishment of slavery, Black people, albeit very slowly, started to become included in social, political, and legal activity. As examples, Black people could vote, hold office, and visit any establishment they choose. But even though Black people were eventually permitted to engage in these activities, Jim Crow laws were formalized.\footnote{See: Comer Vann Woodward, \textit{The Strange Career of Jim Crow.} (Oxford University Press, USA, 1955). This work discusses Jim Crow laws in detail, from their informal inception to their formal establishment.} After Jim Crow laws began to
fade, socially constructed barriers were often in the way. This means that reasons would be found to excuse Black people from casting a vote, or being hired into a position of political power. Moreover, social attitudes towards Black people have still not balanced, even in current times.\textsuperscript{168}

What this means is that there are chronic after-effects of slavery and Jim Crow, and Black people still carry the legacy of slavery with them. One may argue that slavery is an old institution and no longer exists. But others say that it has merely been rearranged and molded into another form, i.e. prisons.\textsuperscript{169} Even though penal institutions are seen as a means for punishing criminals for serious wrongdoings, they also act as a way to control particular groups, including Black people. For example, as mentioned in Chapter 1, there are disproportionate amounts of Black men comprising U.S. and Canadian prisons. There are numerous studies done which prove the adverse effects of incarceration, which includes psychological disruption that can extend post-imprisonment.\textsuperscript{170} What this means is that more Black men are being accused of crimes and subsequently imprisoned, and are suffering the acute effects of it.

Penal institutions also create roles for Black men in particular. As mentioned in Chapter 1, it has been argued by many that being incarcerated is starting to become a normal part of life for an average Black man in the U.S.\textsuperscript{171} There is an expectation that young Black men are criminals who will eventually get caught and serve time, so it is no surprise that this continues to happen. After all, we are all affected by the attitudes, beliefs, and expectations that surround us.

\textsuperscript{168} As evidenced earlier, Black people continue to experience injustices in all institutions. Given that legal barriers no longer exist explicitly, implicit social factors like attitudes and behaviours continue to shape institutions and negatively affect Black people.


\textsuperscript{171} For instance, Bruce Western and Becky Pettit argue this exact point; for young Black men born since the 1970s, serving time has become a normal life event. See: “Incarceration & Social Inequality.” (\textit{Daedalus} 139.3, 2010); p. 8.
4.4 Familial Institutions

Referring to the statistics discussed in the first chapter, there are a number of inequalities between Black people and other races (more evidently, white people) that can cause severe disruption within the family, which then inevitably affects every other part of their lives. It will be useful to take time here to expand on what this includes. As previously evidenced, Black men comprise a disproportionate number of prisoners in the U.S. These men are brothers, partners, uncles, fathers, husbands, and friends. With such a profound number of Black men in prison, we must reflect on the damage that long-term incarceration causes to the family structure. It would be a mistake to only consider the effects that imprisonment has on inmates; imprisonment is not only experienced by the prisoner, but also everyone in relation to him. Because so many Black men are imprisoned, children lose male adult figures who they rely on for support and guidance, including learning within the home.\(^{172}\) The high rate of incarcerated Black men also puts immense pressure on women to compensate for this loss.\(^ {173}\) Likely, the pressure includes longer working hours, and being the sole provider for children. Longer working hours, among other things, in turn results in less time to spend with children, and less time for learning, growing, and loving within the home.


\(^ {173}\) A study from the U.S. finds that there is a substantial financial burden on Black women and children when a husband or father is incarcerated. See: Lori B. Girshick, *Soledad Women: Wives of Prisoners Speak Out*. (Greenwood Publishing Group, 1996).
Second, statistics also report that Black people tend to work in job settings where shifts are external to standard working hours – i.e. outside of a Monday to Friday nine to five schedule, and also earn less than white people. This includes working evening and overnight hours, weekends, and holidays. Youth are normally in school during standard working hours, and caregivers who work a standard schedule are generally available to their children on evenings and weekends. Time during evening and weekends allows for youth to learn from their caregivers in many different ways. The standard working system for adults and education system for youth is set up for this purpose, so that families can spend time together away from work and school obligations. However, those who are outside of standard working hours miss out on the opportunity to spend time with their children when they are not in school, which is important to a child’s development in a variety of ways.

If people do not receive adequate support within the home, it is unlikely that they will fully benefit from even the most idyllic world outside of their family unit. If there are familial issues, resulting from a variety of reasons including unfavourable work hours and incarceration, the entire family suffers. Disturbances outside of the home, however, do not just affect the members of an immediate family, but have a direct relationship with both current and future generations. If one’s parents or other elders in the family suffered from mass injustices that disrupted the peace, stability, and flourishing of their family, it poses a direct problem for the youth in the family and also the youth to come, until the cycle ceases.


175 This does not mean that Black families and Black people are weak. If fact, many argue that Black families are adaptive and diverse, shaping themselves alongside other social members in their communities. Therefore, the point
4.5 *Educational Institutions*

Another institution that perpetuates injustice against Black people is education.\(^{176}\) This means different things for different people in different ways. For Black people, educational injustice could be the consequence of many circumstances, including poor quality of education, inaccessible education, and being misrepresented or under/non-represented as both educators and students.\(^{177}\) Arguably the most obvious are the unfit educational programs for youth in areas with a dense Black population. This can be the result of a lack of well-trained educators, a lack of funding for necessary resources, and youth who are exposed to too many tragedies and traumas in their lives to be able to focus in the classroom.

In addition to this, good education can be inaccessible to youth for two main reasons: practical and psychological. Practically, Black youth may not have access to good schools because of their physical location. Often times, better quality schools are located in areas that are dense with white people, and those who are not within that school zone are not welcome to attend.\(^{178}\) Relevant to psychological inaccessibility, for reasons referred to heavy in number and example, Black youth may be experiencing too much within their personal lives to actually benefit from education. In this way, there are psychological barriers that can prevent young Black people from learning which is not present for their fellow white students.

Next, if Black youth surpass the aforementioned barriers regarding genuine access to

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education, there are still issues within education itself, such as misinformed educators and inadequate learning experiences. Educators can perpetuate racist ideas, ways of thinking, and habits. This is projected not only on the Black students, but white students as well. The curriculum also carries issues, focusing on the work from both historical figures and current figures who perpetuate one kind of thinking and being. Students of all races are then forced to find themselves somewhere in what they learn, and many often find that they cannot.\footnote{These points are supported by a two-year long study conducted by John Ogbu, presented in \textit{The Next Generation: An Ethnography of Education in an Urban Neighborhood}. (Dissertation, New York Academic Press, 1974). His study sought to answer why Black youth continue to acquire lesser education than their white counterparts. Moreover, a more recent handbook has been offered by H. Richard Milner IV and Kofi Lomotey. The handbook acts as a guide, offering information from topics about vulnerable youth and family influence/involvement, to teacher training and policy making (among many other significant discussions on this topic). See: \textit{Handbook of Urban Education}. (Routledge, 2013).}

The aforementioned problems in educational institutions have negative effects on all people. It relays to white people that they are smarter and more deserving of proper education, and relays to Black people that they are not. This provides a false identity to all people because some are given too much credibility and entitlement and others are given too little.

5.0 HISTORICAL, EPISTEMOLOGICAL, AND EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Now that the nature of injustice for Black people is better situated and the relevant information about the mechanisms that perpetuate it has been shared, it is now possible to fill in some gaps. It has been stated throughout that there are particular approaches to injustice for Black people that gain attention over others. These are the more obvious cases of racism and the more obvious reasons found in political and economic institutions. Although there are important truths in these kinds of accounts, other kinds of accounts are underrepresented and underappreciated, making the broader picture of the enduring injustice experienced by Black people both confused and
incomplete. The project at this point was to draw attention to other features of the injustice experienced by Black people; it is the kind of injustice that is tightly knit to its history, has severe epistemic implications, and is consequently negatively reinforced practically by institutions like education.

To reiterate, the injustices experienced by Black people have endured for centuries. The beliefs that people have of themselves and of others are informed by long-standing institutions that are systemically oppressively prejudiced, making them false and unjust. One of the institutions that is perhaps one of the most salient when considering epistemic injustice, yet less often discussed, is education. If we are not taught how to think and feel about injustice, educational institutions will continue to perpetuate the injustices Black people experience.

5.1 Features of this Account

The account being developed here strays from other accounts centred on the injustices experienced by Black people. The historical, epistemological, and educational focus has intentions to fill in the gaps that are left open when we focus on mostly practical reasons and solutions to remedy injustice.\(^{180}\) The focus is on educational institutions and how they perpetuate ignorance on these matters. Once ignorance no longer plagues us, we are able to better understand how Black people suffer from racism and other forms of related injustice and can devise clearer and more useful methods to help relieve the injustices they experience.

With focus off of the traditional political issues that result from low economic status, space is made to consider other aspects of the injustices experienced by Black people. From this emerges

\(^{180}\) Reforming education can be considered a practical solution, but the reasons for repairing education and methods for doing so can be considered ontological, epistemological, and metaethical.
a different framework that considers the enduring injustice of Black people, having to do with resources for self-understanding, identifying aspirations, understanding other people and structures, etc. This account does not consider, for example, the financial barriers that lead to injustice, but, perhaps, some reasons for why the financial barriers exist in the first place. Of course, something like financial barriers that restrict access to necessities like adequate healthcare and education are hugely concerning. Thus, the reasons for shifting the focus from the usual discussions are not to undermine the massive effects this has on one’s life. Rather the motivation lays in an attempt to understand why injustices are still rife given how much work and research – both grassroots and academic – has gone into this area. This suggests that there is more to the story than the adverse effects of poverty and the high incarceration rates of Black people.

5.2 Going Forward

Now that the enduring and epistemological features of the injustices experienced by Black people is better understood, looking for better approaches in dealing with them is more feasible; that is, a better understanding of injustice opens up avenues for justice that were not previously available. There are many approaches for battling the injustices experienced by any group, including Black people. These approaches will be discussed in Chapter 3, where a compassionate approach is adopted. This is not an appeal to emotions; rather, being compassionate refers to an orientation, a state of mind that allows for a clearer interpretation of the injustices experienced by Black people. Specific to educational institutions, the idea is that educators and those who devise educational curricula can begin to dissolve some of the racial injustices found there when approaching the subject with the kind of compassionate state described next.

Certainly, when discussing the injustices experienced by Black people, it becomes easy to resort to presenting facts and figures to meet the demands of those who want to deny that these
injustices exist (i.e. those who have a “prove it” attitude and accept nothing less than cold hard facts, even though they are generally still unconvinced by them). Moreover, because this is what is demanded, it is likely that nothing will be heard until the demand is satisfied. But as previously mentioned, facts and comparative charts do not always fully resonate with people, as there are many who know that Black people face racial injustice but do not make any changes or take responsibility for their part in it. As such, a change of mind is needed, and a compassionate approach is a fitting alternative to consider.
Chapter Three

An Idea: Compassion as the Space Between Analytical Thought and Emotion

Once we come to accept that Black people still experience racial injustices, there are many different approaches available about how to tackle these injustices. Some approaches have been more successful depending on the audience affected and are often rooted politically. Moreover, many political approaches rely heavily on either invoking emotion about injustice or thinking analytically about injustice. Regarding the former, the results are as fleeting as the feelings themselves. Whether more assertive emotions are appealed to, such as anger, frustration, and excitement, or more passive emotions, such as sadness, guilt, or shame, the instability of outcomes reflects the instability of the emotions. Regarding the latter, the results are generally lacking in sensitivity. Cold analytical reflection removes compassion from injustice, and a lack of compassion is arguably one reason why injustices still occur. If injustice is to be understood properly, neither temporary emotional provocation nor pure analytical argumentation are enough for understanding what has been described in Chapter 2. Instead, something more stable, but sensitive, is required. Compassion as will be described fits the middle ground between critical thought and emotion, which is vital when we are considering the ideas we have of ourselves and of others that contribute to injustice.

The first aim of this chapter is to consider and critique traditional ways of combatting injustice for Black people, including approaches that are too analytical or too emotional. The
second aim is to use Buddhist ideals to assist us in better understanding and being compassionate to the enduring injustice of Black people. The third aim is to offer compassion as a more effective and appropriate state of mind to tackle injustices of this nature. Ultimately, reframing the mind can be a method used for thinking more clearly about the injustices of Black people and, eventually, how reparations can be reconsidered to include them. The aims of this chapter will lay groundwork for Chapter 4, where compassion will be applied to educators and educational institutions.
1.0 THE FAILURES OF TRADITIONAL APPROACHES TO TACKLE INJUSTICE

Those who have an understanding about the injustices that Black people experience will often situate their solutions politically and/or economically. These solutions are generally very emotional provocative or detached and analytical. This work is seen through not only politicians, but philosophers, artists, writers, and many others. Even though the medium for expression varies, there seems to be a highly politicized agenda. The sort of approach that is most in tune with the approach being offered here is one taken by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.\textsuperscript{181} King’s approach was politically motivated, which, as discussed in Chapter 2, is not the area being focused on here. It has been argued that many have already approached racial injustice through a political lens, and moreover, making political change alone is not enough to deal with the kind of injustices that Black people experience. King’s compassionate mentality, however, is in line with the argument being made here.

It is very important to note that there is no discrediting of the approaches mentioned above. There are important, useful, relevant, illuminating messages and strategies that can be pulled from them which will be later noted. Instead, the idea is that approaches which are situated politically and rely heavily on emotion or heavily on analytics are simply not enough on their own when trying to tackle highly ingrained racist mindsets.

\textsuperscript{181} Although King’s approach changed towards the end of his life, he is most noted for his compassionate, nonviolent discourse.
1.1 *Emotional Approaches*

It has been discussed in the previous chapters, most explicitly in Chapter 2, that political/economical approaches for eradicating the injustice of Black people are not enough to deal with an injustice of this nature. Moreover, what is being argued here is that the method used in these approaches also often relies on invoking emotion, which is unstable and ineffective for long-term solution.

There are many who argue against the angry Black person stereotype, including recent work by Myisha Cherry. She urges us to accept that the anger felt by Black people is moral anger, and that anger can be effective for tackling injustice. There is importance in an approach like this in different ways, but one in particular will be discussed here.

When an injustice is experienced by an individual or a group, whether it occurred in an instance or over a period of time, anger is a common emotion to experience by the survivor(s). Denying an individual or group the natural emotional response to a traumatic experience or series of experiences causes serious implications for them, as they are forced to suppress a warranted reaction. Therefore, when a person experiences an injustice, it is not only appropriate to react with something like anger or sadness, but sometimes necessary for practical

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183 This is argued by Cherry in “Moral Anger, Motivation, and Productivity.” (Presented at New Jersey Regional Philosophical Association Conference, Bergen Community College, November 2012). Here, Cherry argues that the anger felt from being morally wronged ought to maintain so that it can motivate change (3).


reasons. These responses are naturally present because they provoke a response that furthers into something like preventing the injustice to occur again. In other words, the survivor recognizes a threat, the response is to react to a feeling, which then causes the individual to reflect on and then take action to prevent further injustice.

For Black people, angry reactions have been discouraged and completely ignored – sometimes by those who feel them, and certainly by those external to them. They are seen as inappropriate and misplaced, which then invites further judgement on those who do feel and express those feelings. Acknowledging these emotions and encouraging their expression is extremely powerful. It creates a space for acknowledgement, acceptance, and emotional release. As such, there is a place for an approach of this sort. Currently, invoking and releasing emotion is seen in the more obvious, overt fights for equality. Examples of this are the protests that occurred after the death of Michael Brown. With that said, when moral anger is not effectively understood, there are some negative effects that can occur, especially when the emotions are not shared for all people.

Problems with Emotional Approaches

Often, when we discuss topics that are rooted in racism, a mix of emotions is present. As Joanne Tompkins notes, there is a risk in this work, but also white educators. Anger and other

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186 Elizabeth Spelman argues that anger is an emotion that is not regarded as appropriate for subjugated persons to feel or express, because this then means accepting that they are correct in their assessment that they are being treated unjustly. See: Elizabeth V. Spelman, “Anger and Insubordination.” (Ann Garry and Marilyn Peatsall. Boston: Unwin Hyman 72, 1989): p. 267.


188 It is being taken for granted here that working on racism is always risky for Black educators as well.
challenging emotions are likely to arise, and part of the work of the white educator is to accept this inevitability.  

One might suggest that white people need to join in the moral anger felt by Black people. If white people could feel what Black people feel, perhaps that would help in understanding the injustices Black people experience and the part that white people play in its eradication. But for those who do not directly experience racism in their everyday lives, anger, like any emotion, fades away with time, until more tragedy occurs to reignite the flame. Anger is rapid and can easily fizzle out without constant ignition.

For white people to engage in the moral anger felt by Black people means invoking emotion in them that is only there when they reflect upon it; for many white people, the anger is felt on behalf of another, not due to their own experience. Anger due to the racist structure of our world is experienced and therefore often felt by many Black people—a morally justifiable reaction to the inequalities that exist between themselves and people of other races. But anger about racism is not commonly felt by white people because they do not experience racial injustice and because they have not gone through the process of separation from their own social position in order to understand the situation of others. Yet even if they do, being in an emotional state does not necessarily offer stability. Moreover, trying to invoke anger in another can become coercive and ultimately ineffective; the natural reaction to coercion is to recoil and become

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190 Cherry (2012).

191 Harry Frankfurt says that when we perceive a threat, we react in ways to avoid the consequences of that threat. This includes diverging from our rational desires. See: Harry G. Frankfurt, *The Importance of What We Care About: Philosophical Essays*. (Cambridge University Press, 1988). Usually, threat is perceived in a physical sphere, but threat can also be present in an intellectual sphere. Therefore, in this sense, when someone is presented with information, ideas, etc. that threaten their preexisting knowledge set, they may also react this way.
defensive. Therefore, the suggestion is that this kind of approach, alone, will not be successful for change that can be projected in the long term.

To discuss further, consider another emotion that is often used to persuade people, i.e. guilt. Using guilt also generally fails because it is another instance of inducing artificial emotion into someone. If a person is made to feel bad about something, then they are more likely to side with an argument due to feelings of shame and guilt. But that feeling cannot be genuinely felt for those who are not highly empathetic and compassionate. In this instance, a white person who is not extremely empathetic to the injustices experienced by Black people will not feel truly guilty about these occurrences, so the emotion will quickly fade.

Suppose, however, that some white people are able to feel the moral anger that Black people feel. Suppose that some white people are highly empathetic and have been able to understand the injustices experienced by Black people enough to want to make change. Even still, it can be argued that being stuck in a highly emotional mindset can negatively affect clear thought, since a severely guilty or angry state of mind can be un conducive to finding solutions for long-term change. As mentioned earlier, the argument here is not that Black people should not feel or express emotions tied to their injustices. Rather, that it has proven difficult for white people to understand the moral anger of Black people, to feel that anger themselves, or to know what to do about it if they have felt it. This suggests that learning about the injustices experienced

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194 Consider certain commercials used to provoke emotion in the audience. There is a strategy to get viewers to connect emotionally to what is being sold in the commercial, or to the message being sent.
by Black people and knowing what to do about it may require feeling – i.e. being able to empathize with another’s life experiences – but only to an extent. One way that white people can understand the racial injustice is to understand the nature of suffering, and understand all kinds of suffering as such. Therefore, one does not need to experience racial injustice to know what suffering feelings like, and a connection can be made there. This understanding can make room for compassion, as will be discussed shortly.

1.2 Analytical Approaches

There are other approaches to tackling injustice that take the other extreme, and devoid of all emotion, make purely or mostly analytical claims. These range from more Kantian style approaches to more contemporary discussions like that offered by Charles Mills.

Charles Mills

Following the footsteps of many others who write on Social Contract Theory, most notably, Carole Pateman, Charles Mills spends time framing injustice experienced by Black people as a political problem. This is very clear from the first line in his introduction, which reads: “white supremacy is the unnamed political system that has made the modern world what it is today.” Mills attributes the mass enduring injustices of Black people as being supported by a political structure, an oppressive social contract consented by those who it serves (i.e. white people). Ultimately, he argues that most people are ignorant of the social arrangement of Black people as a political one, a contract between white people about all others, divisively favourable to white

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198 Ibid., p. 1.
199 Ibid., p. 11-12.
Mills’ project seems to be similar to that of civil rights activists and politicians, but it is one that is not often discussed in contemporary academic literature and conversations. He brings light to the infrastructural issues in politics and the racism that supports contemporary politics, on a local and global scale. This is an idea not foreign to those before and during the civil unrest in the U.S. in the 50s and 60s. After the civil rights movements, an illusion of equality seems to have clouded the significance of racial projects, a hallucination that still causes people to believe that racial injustice is no longer prevalent. Intellectual focus and resources are fading away in these areas, so this type of work is invaluable when it is produced by those with the strength and will to continue with it.

Even though Mills does make reference to an epistemological and moral contract, *The Racial Contract* is primarily a political work. His approach is logical and factual, as he presents an account that is based in historical reality. His work does often invoke emotion despite his very direct presentation style, because it becomes an illumination into how real and prevalent racial injustice continues to be. But factual claims about racism, when framed as only or primarily political problems, are not enough to fully understand injustice. Mills, as the others before him, centre more heavily on one area, one structure where racial injustice against Black people is found. But because injustice for Black people is rampant in every structure – which of course includes politics – it is not enough to only think about this analytically and within a political framework.

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200 Ibid., p. 7.
201 What this means is that there is a lot of support and funding filtered into STEM fields in the recent years. For a discussion on this, see: Heidi Tworek, “The Real Reason the Humanities are ‘in Crisis’.” *The Atlantic*. Web. Accessed 2 May 2017.
Problems with Analytical Approaches

There are common reasons alluded to above for why analytical approaches which aim to tackle the enduring injustice of Black people are insufficient. The most prevalent of these reasons is that framing the enduring injustice of Black people as highly analytical issue makes it appear as only a practical issue, usually relating to politics and economics, when it is not. It is a problem that began from the degradation and dehumanization of a group through slavery, but has since then been showcased through politics as though it is primarily an issue of governance. But this is a complex problem, involving many different aspects, not just how people are governed, as argued in Chapter 2. It is about what we know, restrictions about a person’s identity and opportunities, not simply how we are to be politically organized.

Given this, it is beyond the scope of Western analytical politics, or philosophy for that matter, to deal with this kind of issue. Highly intellectualized approaches do not have the appropriate faculties to deal with matters so intimately connected to ideas about ourselves and others, and therefore political leaders and political philosophers ought to be weary when using highly analytical methodology. The enduring injustice of Black people is a very complex issue that simply cannot be reduced to logic; there are many factors at play regarding the injustice experienced by Black people, including equity and identity. This is not effectively dealt with by just thinking or intellectualizing about it. It may be that work in injustice is better suited to begin with educational and spiritual leadership, since political leaders are not always fit for this kind of
interaction with their followers.  

It is not that political leaders ought not discuss injustices of this kind, but it is important that injustice be eradicated from all unjust institutions. Often when injustice is framed as a primarily political issue about just governance, we have confused the actual issues. Because of this, we have let other institutions off the hook. The injustices experienced by Black people are not generally accepted as ones that penetrate into other institutions, such as education, religion, and family. We do not recognize injustice in these areas when we focus so much on political intellectualization. Given the recent presidential election results in the U.S. wherein Donald Trump was voted president, this is clearer than ever. Even though many would like to admit to having moved forward, someone who holds racist, sexist, and xenophobic beliefs was elected as the president of the United States. 

Approaches that reflect primarily on logically analyzing injustice sometimes lead us to forget that we are talking about human beings. Sometimes, having an analytical approach can narrow in on one very particular issue, forgetting that when dealing with people, there are scores of complexities that need to be included. For example, without contextualizing the injustices experienced by Black people by making note of the psychological effects that accompany injustice, the project becomes disconnected, cold, and difficult to relate to. It can be challenging to understand that we are referring to people if there is little work done to illustrate how a Black

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202 What is generally being alluded to here is trust in politics. Citizens have longstanding mistrust for politicians and their platforms, generally due to political scandals and a lack of promise-keeping. For some work on this, see: Shaun Bowler and Jeffrey A. Karp, “Politicians, Scandals, and Trust in Government.” (Political Behavior 26.3, 2004).

individual’s life is truly affected by enduring injustice.204

The suggestion here is that we reframe the enduring injustice of Black people as one that penetrates all institutions, and therefore must be tackled in all of those areas. What blankets the operations in all institutions, informing us about what those institutions look like and how they function, depends upon the beliefs and skills of those who have the power to run them. As discussed in Chapter 2, these belief systems perpetuate the enduring injustices experienced by Black people because we are focused on political analysis. It is important that we do not omit other institutions, like educational institutions, as needing repair.

1.3 Compassionate Approaches

Two different approaches in tackling the injustices experienced by Black people, i.e. emotional approaches and analytical approaches – both usually contextualized politically and economically – have been previously discussed and critiqued.205 There are alternate approaches that fall somewhere in the middle of these approaches, i.e. compassionate approaches. This sort of approach balances somewhere in the middle between logic and emotion.206 Here, Dr. King’s compassionate approach will be introduced to show that compassionate accounts are very useful, even though his political framework restricts it mostly to issues of governance.

204 The argument here does not support relying heavily on emotion, however, as this contradicts the previous section. What it is meant to explicate is that no mention of emotion and the psychological effects of injustice is also problematic, as it presents an incomplete picture of what the injustices experienced by Black people is really like.
205 There is more to be said about the merits and demerits of these approaches. The hope is that there is enough here to spur interested in looking towards an alternative approach.
206 Although compassion is being represented as a sort of middle ground between logic and emotion, that does not make it easy to achieve. Meditative practices that allow for compassion to arise will be discussed later, and it will become clear that meditation is mental work, not simple relaxation.
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

King approached politics compassionately. His speeches and sermons are rooted in ideas about peace, love, kindness, and care. His well-known “I Have A Dream” speech includes visions of Black and white children, living in a reality where they can play together without their race being an impediment to their friendship. King worked within the parameters of love to navigate through injustices blatant in every institution of his time. He was nonviolent leader, fighting injustice through reeducation, peaceful resistance, and pleas for solidarity. His approach called for justice through compassion, or at the very least, some kind of basic understanding of the needs of all people, including Black people.

Learning how to be compassionate from a Buddhist perspective will be discussed in more depth later. But it will be argued that a compassionate framework helps in gaining the kind of understanding that paves the way for long-lasting change towards more just conditions. That is because being compassionate allows us to understand more deeply and gain true knowledge. The Buddha, for example, holds views that are highly epistemological, secondarily ethical, and offers a lot to areas of injustice such as this. Buddha believes heavily in experiential understanding, quite different from many Western philosophers, and is often misunderstood because of this. Here, compassion is simply being introduced as a way of coming to know that Black people experience systemic discrimination as described in Chapter 2. Ultimately, a more complete understanding of the nature of injustice for Black people – the varied emotions, thoughts,

207 See an excerpt of King’s “I Have a Dream” speech at: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., “I Have a Dream.” The King Center. Web. Accessed 27 July 2015.
209 Of course, it is important to note that King was a student of other peaceful leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi. As an example, King refers to Gandhi in an interview with Robert Penn Warren on March 18, 1964. To listen to the interview, see: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Interview with Robert Penn Warren (1964). University of Kentucky Libraries. Web. Accessed 16 Mar. 2017.
conditions, circumstances, etc. that surround such a complex issue – needs to be gained and studied. Coming from a place of compassion as discussed here makes this process not only more accessible, but effective. More than this, being compassionate is accompanied by attaining shared goals in a manner that does not cause further suffering to the group working towards justice, as well as those who are not.

As earlier referenced, it may not only be acceptable, but appropriate, that Black people express extreme emotions including anger and sadness. But King seems to have, at least publicly, contained the negative feelings associated with the injustices that he experienced in a different way. King appears as someone who entered into a more peaceful space, and began to tackle injustice from there. To avoid causing further suffering is admirable, and the extreme difficulty in being in control of intense and justified emotions that accompany such extreme injustice seems almost astonishing. It means having an understanding about the world outside of oneself, which for a person who has experienced extreme injustice, takes massive amounts of strength and persistence. As such, the suggestion here is not that all Black people ought to follow King’s approach. Rather, that white people can learn something from him. King acts as an example of a person who was able to fight through systemic injustice and strive for justice using only non-violent procedures, and can act as a guide for white people confused about an excess or deficit of emotion in regard to the injustices experienced by Black people.  

Again, King was a political leader and the aim is to bring attention to other institutions outside of politics and how injustice perpetuates within them. However, King’s approach is

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210 Whether those against King’s cause acted violently in response does not reflect his own values. For some of his own works in this regard, see: Martin Luther King Jr., “Letter From Birmingham Jail.” (Liberating Faith: Religious Voices for Justice, Peace, and Ecological Wisdom, 2012).
similar of what is being argued for here, so it is useful to include his approach. Moreover, it is valuable to see how this looks regarding Black people in particular.

**Appeal to Emotion**

Including emotion into a philosophical account could be problematic if it is used as a way to sway people to accept an account simply for the sake of accepting it. There is a manipulation of emotion in someone to accept a statement as true. As earlier mentioned, charity organizations with seemingly good and virtuous causes will use this tactic.\(^{211}\) The manipulation here is more difficult to detect, since it seems that the work being done is considered honourable. But again, there is the attempt to invoke a feeling, one that is not genuine, in order to gain support in some way.

The account presented here is not vulnerable to this kind of criticism because it does not follow the same pattern. It is not advocating for particular moral causes, which can promote ego and ultimately diminish compassion in the way it is being argued here. What is important and will be discussed in detail below is that a person has undergone a process of understanding herself in the world. As a result of this process of understanding, she can understand how she is connected to others, sharing in human fragility, vulnerability, and suffering. If that has occurred, she can learn to genuinely act from love and compassion, and there is no threat that she is helping to perpetuate injustice, nor gaining the trust and affections from others by manipulating emotion in them.

The argument being forwarded here is that upon self-reflection, one would be naturally

\(^{211}\) For more evidence that appealing to emotion in commercials can illicit emotional reactions in the audience, and influences their actions, see: Deborah A. Small and Nicole M. Verrochi, “The Face of Need: Facial Emotion Expression on Charity Advertisements.” *Journal of Marketing Research* 46.6, 2009.
compelled to make internal change that will reflect externally at some point in time. If one can 
separate – to some extent at least – from her social location and see the world differently, she will 
become aware of the freedoms and limitations of those around her. This refers to the loss of ego 
that is central to Buddhism. In order to stop suffering and act compassionately, one must lose all 
attachments, including attachments to a self.212

For white people, racial freedoms outweigh limitations, and for Black people, racial 
limitations outweigh freedoms. This explains why it is so difficult for white people to be able to 
first, accept a place in this problem, and second, know what to do once they are aware. That is, 
of course, unless they are able to properly reflect and consequently lose parts of themselves they 
have been long attached to that are problematic. But the injustices experienced by Black people 
are a problem for all people, and thusly, the solutions require participation of all people.

Because the enduring injustice of Black people is integrated into so many areas, including 
justice, moral theory, and epistemology, all of these things will need to be taken into account for 
all people as well. The very nature of this – i.e. the oppression of persons based on their 
perceived race – is a human issue, and therefore includes both rational aspects and emotional 
ones. The argument is that studying about our underlying thoughts and emotions, and then 
applying clear reason, is the most effective way to do this. This is how love and compassion is 
understood here; it is a state of living and being, a series of choices, thoughts, and assessments.213

It is a perspective of the world and its inhabitants, and an acting in accordance with principles of

213 There has been a switch within philosophy, psychology, and psychiatry in just this way. See: Enrique Burunat, 
“Love Is Not an Emotion.” (Psychology 7.14, 2016). In this article, love is described as something that can be grouped 
with physiological reactions and motivations. The idea that love is like a syndrome is echoed in the following: Arina 
love and compassion. Since it is not an emotion, an appeal to emotion is not applicable here.\textsuperscript{214}

Cultivating compassion as will be described below is not an emotional nor rationalistic process. Instead, it relies upon experiential understanding of the world as it is (true knowledge), and not as we expect it to be (what we are improperly taught).\textsuperscript{215}

2.0 AN ALTERNATIVE: COMPASSION AND BUDDHISM

For Buddhists, establishing a state of mind that allows one to become compassionate and then acting in loving kindness is integral. In the current Western philosophical tradition, love and compassion are not given as much attention as philosophy of mind, political thought, or even the Ancients. Consequently, love and compassion are terms that are neither embraced nor easily understood. Because they rest on less analytical legs, including love and compassion into Western philosophy is still regarded as taboo, or simply bad philosophy.\textsuperscript{216}

But love has been discussed throughout philosophical history, from the Ancients to more


\textsuperscript{215} Perhaps this point is more difficult to prove and might be classified as anecdotal. But to view the curricula at some of the leading schools in philosophy, see the following sites: Oxford: Philosophy Department. \textit{University of Oxford}. Web. Accessed 11 Apr. 2017; NYU: Philosophy Department, \textit{New York University}. Web. Accessed 11 Apr. 2017; Rutgers: Philosophy Department. \textit{Rutgers University}. Web. Accessed 11 Apr. 2017. These curricula focus on the traditional sort of model, and the philosophers who some have decided fit the bill. For example, the curriculum includes Ancient (Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus), Early Modern (Descartes, Locke, Hume, Spinoza), Metaphysics (Kant, Nietzsche, Quine, Russell, Berkeley, Kripke, and Sartre), Ethics (Kant, Mill, Rawls, Moore) and Epistemology (Hume, Quine, Nozick, Goldman, Lewis). The lack of diversity and recognition of parts of the world outside of the West sends the message that thinkers and theories outside of the West first, had no part in influencing Western philosophy, and second, do not hold value. This includes approaches to thinking that include compassionate frames of mind and philosophical theories that result from love.
modern-day discussions. Even within Western philosophy, Plato and Aristotle have famously spoken about love in detail, in a variety of different contexts.\footnote{The following passages are most relevant to the discussion here: Plato, \textit{Symposium} (206e-207a); Aristotle, \textit{Nichomachean Ethics} (IV.6).} Bell hooks has recently devoted a book to this topic, where she develops an understanding about love that incorporates a variety of perspectives, from feminism to psychology.\footnote{See bell hooks, \textit{All About Love: New Visions}. (William Morrow, 2000).} In this way, love is present in Western philosophical tradition from the Greeks to modern day feminists. Compassion is also something discussed from the Ancient philosophers to politicians like Martin Luther King Jr., and spiritual leaders like the Buddha. So even though Western philosophy tends to leave love and compassion out of most thinking and theory, it maintains over time. That is, it is not challenging to find supporters of compassion, even though there is a mistrust in a compassionate base, a worry that it will lead to a softer philosophy straying from traditional Western roots.

Most interestingly, even though we find these topics in different philosophical traditions, love and compassion do not have the same force or respect as many other topics discussed in philosophy. There is a disregard for love and compassion as having a significant or defining place in basic philosophical pursuit, and they are often avoided because they cannot align with philosophical goals. It is important to first understand what love and compassion actually are, and then establish how they can foster a relationship to deal with issues that are challenging at the human level. As alluded to earlier, this means making a distinction between being compassionate from being emotional.

2.1 \textit{Compassion vs. Emotion}

In order to understand why developing a compassionate mindset in order to act out of love is not
the same as being emotional, an understanding of how these terms are being used here must be established. First and most importantly, love and compassion are not emotions. There is a difference between loving feelings\textsuperscript{219} and love.\textsuperscript{220} There is also a difference between compassionate feelings and compassion. Love and compassion are being used as something beyond descriptions of feelings. These are complex terms that are not simply expressions through words, but expressions through actions. One can be loving, and one can be compassionate, which is separate from the joy or excitement individuals can produce in us, or the sadness or anger we feel about their plights. It is a specific state of mind that allows one to become loving and compassionate. When dealing with injustice, people from all backgrounds must develop these states of mind in order for compassion to germinate.

Separating feelings from a compassionate state of mind, however, is not a simple task. Of course, anger is often felt by many people in regard to injustice. Black people feel angry because they have endured repugnant treatment for centuries, and are many reasons to understand anger as a reasonable reaction to injustice. Again, Cherry argues that it is even necessary.\textsuperscript{221} And according to Tompkins, anger is felt by white people when they are involved in work that centres on racial inequality, too.\textsuperscript{222} However, when it comes to racial disparity for Black people, the anger felt by white people is not usually reflective of a state of compassion. Sometimes, the anger

\textsuperscript{219} Loving feelings refers to physiological reactions that occur when people connect. For research on this, see: C. Sue Carter and Stephen W. Porges. “The Biochemistry of Love: An Oxytocin Hypothesis.” \textit{(EMBO Reports} 14.1, 2013). Many past studies about love are in relation to romantic love, and the processes the brain goes through when people are involved physically. But the following study provides insight for the operation of the brain in different kinds of loving relationships. See: Stephanie Oriigue et al. “Neuroimaging of Love: fMRI Meta-Analysis Evidence Toward New Perspectives in Sexual Medicine.” \textit{(The Journal of Sexual Medicine} 7.11, 2010).

\textsuperscript{220} True love, as described by Thich Nhat Hanh is more of an intellectual pursuit, and is not focused on the physical reactions that accompany human connection. He writes about loving as an intellectual action, and cultivating a mindset that allows for self-reflection and external understanding. For instance, see: \textit{True Love: A Practice for Awakening the Heart.} (Shambhala Publications, 2006).

\textsuperscript{221} Myisha Cherry, “Moral Anger, Motivation, and Productivity.”

\textsuperscript{222} Tompkins (2002), p. 414.
results as a defensive reaction to some sort of threat to their identity. When Black people express anger about the injustices they experience, white people who have not yet undergone a process of knowing and accepting their social location – an idea discussed later – and what the situation actually consists in usually project that anger back. This clash is likely to occur as long as racial injustice endures for Black people, and white people do not make the effort to understand their role in it. In other words, they have not yet learned to be truly compassionate.

There may be some kind of exception to this rule, of course. Some white people are highly sympathetic, and therefore find it easy to grasp the nature of the enduring injustice for Black people, perhaps even imagining in detail what it could be like from a Black person’s perspective. Further, some white people grew up in similar conditions, and have gone through similar experiences. In these instances, anger may be felt on behalf of Black people by certain white people because they have had experiences of oppression and suffering or can naturally connect to the suffering of others. So perhaps the role for these particular white people will be a little different, and it may be that anger is a sympathetic response, and not a defensive response.

As established earlier, emotions are linked to internal reactions and should not

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223 Why this is so is not always obvious. One idea is that once a person gains more knowledge about these issues, they are more sympathetic to them. But knowledge alone does not seem to be enough to propel sympathy. It may be a requirement that in addition to learning about the injustices of Black people, a white person must be in tune with, and perhaps sorted through, some of their own suffering enough to imagine another’s.

224 Scientists and social scientists have been making this point about emotions for some time. See: Klaus R. Scherer, “Emotion as a Process: Function, Origin and Regulation.” (Social Science Information/Sur les Sciences Sociales, 1982).

225 Lisa Feldman Barrett argues that emotions are not in fact universal reactions, and the physical manifestations can be different from person to person. Lisa Feldman Barrett, How Emotions are Made (Macmillan, 2017). p. 15. Whether all or most people share similar physical manifestations to our emotional reactions does not have a particular importance here necessarily; what is important is that we have emotions that are present to alert us about how to navigate through a particular circumstance. Whether the external reactions to the emotion are learned and vary from culture to culture, as Barrett suggests (2017, p. 13), is less relevant for these purposes.
extend for long periods of time.\footnote{Since emotions are a reaction to one’s environment, it does not necessarily follow that the reactions are actually valuable. In other words, as one grows and matures, the emotional reactions ought to as well. We find out what is actually hurtful and what is not depending on our matured perspective and life experience, and what we are able to manage with age. As such, an emotion that a child felt in regard to a particular situation is not guaranteed to be useful in a similar future situation. Reactions must be measured and evaluated so that they can be determined as valuable or not. Perhaps the action that is taken from a reaction is a response, once one has time to rationalize through the feeling. Eventually, the response would become a valuable reaction.} Even though navigating through the emotions that accompany racial injustice is complicated and challenging, and will probably look different for Black people and white people, it is important to remember that staying in an emotional state is not as effective as staying in a compassionate state. Arguably, the best use of an emotional reaction is to alert the individual that something is positive, negative, neutral, etc. To reinforce, the reaction ought not linger. Being in any sort of emotional state for too long – positive or negative – can be extremely destructive, as it will eventually distort reality causing adverse mental and physical effects on the individual experiencing them. This is the kind of thinking one comes across in Stoicism,\footnote{For Stoics, emotions are destructive, irrational, and non-voluntary. See: Katja Vogt, “Seneca.” \textit{Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Stanford.} 3.3, 2015.} but the idea here is not quite as extreme. This thought will be returned to later when discussing how Buddhism in particular can be integrated into modern society.

For the purposes of this project, whether a person reaches a place of compassion from being sympathetic, from going through similar experiences, from separating herself from her social constructs, from meditation, or from something else, the goal is to seek a deeper understanding about the enduring injustice experienced by Black people. Once that is achieved, a collective effort to remedy the enduring injustice of Black people will be more effective because it will be grounded in reality. And it must be a collective effort, given that the injustice experienced by Black people began and endures because of all people.

With this said, the project here is more for the majority of white people who have more to
learn about cultivating the right kind of compassion towards the injustices endured by Black people. The goal is not to inject or manipulate a connection, but guide towards genuine compassion more adequately understood. Ultimately, the thought is that the genuinely compassionate person, in the sense argued for here, will recognize the injustices faced by Black people as real, urgent, and enduring. From this place, she can begin to work towards lasting change for balance, equality, and justice which can of course include clearer thoughts about the reparations debate.

2.2 Modern Buddhism

Because Buddhism is not commonly practiced in the Western world,228 there are misconceptions and generalizations made about what it consists in. After all, if we accept Fricker's point about split-second judgment making, our thoughts about Buddhism may be askew as well.229 Regarding Buddhists, there are likely misconceptions that they follow strict rules and religious codes, are out of touch with technological developments, all practice vegetarianism or veganism, are groundless and isolated people, etc. More than this, religion as a whole is often discredited in the West (even Christianity, a more commonly practiced religion) because people have made connections between religious groups and acts of terror or motivations for severe manipulation. Given all of these beliefs, it is not surprising that practicing Buddhist ideals properly has not gained much traction in the West, even though it is one of the world’s oldest religions.

Nonetheless, there is still a place for Buddhism in the modern world, specifically when...

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228 One can argue that Buddhism is trendy in current times; many practice yoga, read books on relaxation and meditation, etc. But the point being made here is that most people have strayed from what the Buddha traditionally taught. That does not mean that what people are now practicing is not valuable in any way, but that it is different in some ways that are critical to proper cultivation.

becoming more compassionate towards people experiencing enduring injustice. As Thomas Merton explains, there is a common misunderstanding that practicing Buddhism, or being Zen, results in total psychological and social alienation. Buddhists are not servile to an external being that is greater than themselves, and it is common practice to spend time alone in meditation. But this does not mean that a lack of authority and time in silence means complete and total isolation of the individual from herself or others.\textsuperscript{230} Instead, the aim of Buddhism is to cope with suffering, which is achieved through losing illusory ideas of the self and the world, helping us to understand and connect better with others.\textsuperscript{231} Sometimes, this requires time alone, but for the purpose of returning with a clearer mind better able to understand and connect with others.

The Buddha says that once we realize that all things are transient and empty, we can then be released from the bondage and ignorance that we attach to, ultimately allowing us to attain the highest form of happiness. True mindfulness, or wisdom, is the way in which one can attain this state. This is pure cognition; free from all discrimination that deludes us. This is a more objective way of looking at things, free from personal prejudices that can be harmful and oppressive. Buddha teaches that a wise understanding about the world within oneself can dispel ignorance.\textsuperscript{232} Following the Buddha, Merton explains that we are limited by the prejudiced beliefs of our ego-selves, and we misinterpret the world to fit into our preexisting beliefs.\textsuperscript{233}

Therefore the kinds of beliefs that many in the Western hold are actually more isolating, constrained, and disconnected than those found in Buddhism. Practicing Buddhism properly means we understand the world better since the ultimate ends of Buddhism are to free an

\textsuperscript{231} Ibid., p. 286.
individual from normatively prejudiced notions of the ego-self in order to contribute more externally in a healthier social context. Not thinking about ourselves as a collection of our beliefs, thoughts, feelings, ideas, relationships, connections, etc. allows us to be non-attached to – but not disconnected from – all of these things. And once we pierce these illusions that divide us from others, we can attain unity through openness and compassion.\(^{234}\) This kind of understanding opens space for a vast realm of creativity, productivity, health, and wellness.\(^{235}\)

Releasing a more traditional conception of the self might insinuate passivity; i.e. that we are individuals who simply float around groundlessly. But living this way ought not imply that we cannot form valuable, loving relationships, or come up with interesting and thoughtful ideas. Instead, not attaching oneself with such a firm grip to beliefs, thoughts, feelings, etc. can create the kind of space needed to receive back from the world without imposing harmful prejudices. Given this, it would be more likely that one is able to come up with helpful, interesting, and thoughtful ideas more fully and deeply with the kind of mental adjustment Buddhism – properly understood – offers.

As argued thus far, many Westerners share a deep misunderstanding about the racial prejudices they hold which cause suffering to racialized groups. This is because we have attached to ideas of who we are and who others are, which values some lives and disvalues others. As Thich Nhat Hanh says, when we are not aware of the roots of suffering, ease cannot occur.\(^{236}\) So if we are unaware of prejudiced beliefs that inform us about ourselves and others, injustices will continue to occur. From this, we see that Buddhism is applicable in any context where ignorance occurs, including the injustices experienced by Black people.

\(^{234}\) Ibid., p. 287.
\(^{235}\) Ibid., p. 284.
Although compassion is a common word, the mental practice that is necessary to become compassionate is not. We are more likely easily “compassionate” or sensitive to the things we suffer from ourselves, not the things others suffer from. Discussed next is a brief explanation of how one can practice meditation in order to clarify the mind and develop compassion for others.

2.3 What is Proper Meditation?

William Hart takes us through the meditation teachings of S.N. Goenka, first explaining how meditation (bhāvanā) is loosely and improperly understood as mental relaxation, day dreaming, free association, or self-hypnosis. What the Buddha really meant by meditation are specific mental exercises and techniques in order to focus and purify the mind. There are two trainings: concentration and wisdom. The former is to develop tranquility, and the latter, insight. This training allows one to become the master of her mind, controlling mental processes through right effort, right awareness, and right concentration.

Right effort begins with concentrating on one’s respiration. We all breathe from the time we are born until the time we die, and this universal accessibility makes it universally acceptable to practice. Once we take time to sit and focus on breath, we notice the thoughts, memories, emotions, plans, etc. that arise. The practice comes in controlling the focus back to the breath, time and time again as the mind begins to take control again. Changing the habit of a lifetime takes time, so patient persistence is needed. Eventually, we are able to focus on one thing – breath – and distractions are resisted.

Next, right awareness is the focus on the present time. Becoming aware of present actions will

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238 Ibid., p. 72.
239 Ibid.
240 Ibid., p. 72-4.
allow us to move away from continuing past mistakes and able to experience ultimate reality. We can use our breath to become aware of the present time; focusing on breathing can allow us to explore our unconscious mind, freeing ourselves from craving, aversion, and ignorance. And, since we cannot crave or renounce breath, it is a perfect object for our attention. Now focused on the present breath and present moment, the negative thoughts, ideas, memories, emotions, etc. that arise will eventually fade, and layers of conditioning are slowly eradicated. We begin to cleanse the mind and work towards liberation.

Lastly, right concentration is when right awareness, i.e. the awareness of the present moment, is maintained for as long as possible. Although it is likely that the mind will wander, it is important to patiently return to focusing on the breath. With repeated practice, periods of sustained awareness will become longer, and we will begin feeling happy, relaxed, and full of energy.

This is the space that is referred to in the previous section, and also earlier in reference to Dr. King; one that is calm and clear, achieved by focusing on the breath, given that it is essential to all people and because we do not lust for it nor withdraw from it. We find ourselves in this cleansed state of mind, free from all of the habits, thoughts, emotions, etc. that cloud proper thought. This allows us to be able to make better assessments about the world around us because we have gained a better understanding of it. This is what is meant by compassion in this discussion, and what will be forwarded as the most useful state to be in when dealing with the injustices experienced by Black people.

2.4 Locating Oneself in Relation to Others

241 Ibid., p. 74-6.
242 Ibid., p. 76-8.
If we can reach a compassionate mind frame, a space opens for clear, balanced thought. This allows for us to better contextualize ourselves in the external world, and become better acquainted with our role in it. It also allows for a person to act in loving ways towards all people, particularly those who experience suffering from injustices different from our own.

Let us now return to an idea examined by Tompkins, i.e. the importance of locating oneself in social contexts. Tompkins says that being aware of one’s ignorance is vital to teaching different people, which includes people of varying races. Tompkins approaches this from an educational perspective, so better understanding her view will be helpful here as it lays some groundwork for Chapter 4. She argues that for white educators, there is a need (or more perhaps strongly, a responsibility) to discover how one’s own experiences and societal position shape the way that she teaches, particularly people of colour. Tompkins considers her position as a white, heterosexual, middle class woman, who is multi-degreed and able-bodied, and the possible effects that her natures and attributes could have on her teaching, and distinctly her teaching of people of different races from her own.

Tompkins’s view is open to criticism from a Buddhist perspective because it can be interpreted as self-indulgent, ultimately feeding false ideas of the self. A Buddhist perspective urges to let go of attachments of the self, while Tompkins seems to encourage reflection and acceptance of the self. Although self-scrutiny can be okay, there is an important question to answer about how we come to know ourselves, as our conceptions are skewed by what we think we know and how we arrive there.

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243 Tompkins (2002).
244 We can certainly also argue that by extension, self-reflection is vital in not only teaching, but learning, too.
Yet if the aim is avoiding epistemic injustice and creating epistemic equity, an individual is obliged to engage in a personal project of self-scrutiny. This project is a virtuous one, which means that we are able to live better when we know ourselves better. In particular, this kind of self-recognition is essential if we want to avoid the risk of causing injustice to those with differing life experiences, particularly those outside of arbitrary social norms or values. When one is aware of her attributes and where this positions her socially, she is in a more useful space for determining appropriate interactions with others. She becomes more open-minded to the suffering experienced by those outside of her perceived self.

This point can generate dissent, mainly because it suggests that we are stuck in rigid social positions, and are therefore limited in our thoughts, actions, behaviours, etc.\textsuperscript{247} If this is true, then the account can become quite bounded and fatalistic. In other words, once we are born, we are place in an unescapable social position which then limits everything we think, do, and say.

It is undeniable that people are sorted by topics like race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and class, among others. Thomas Kuhn says that when we do not know what kind of thing something is, it is very confusing and frustrating.\textsuperscript{248} Because of this, there is a tendency to classify so that the things, people, places around us make sense.\textsuperscript{249} People sorting can allow us to understand who we may be interacting with, and Fricker says that we make split-second judgements about others in order to make sense of our interactions with them. The failure is when destructive forms of

\textsuperscript{247} This is discussed in a number of studies about social groups and the psychological effects on individuals in low-income groups. For instance, see: P. J. Henry, “Low-Status Compensation: A Theory for Understanding the Role of Status in Cultures of Honor.” \textit{Journal of Personality and Social Psychology} 97.3, 2009.


\textsuperscript{249} These thoughts on kinds and classification is also found in the following works: Willard Van Orman Quine. \textit{Ontological Relativity and Other Essays.} No. 1. (Columbia University Press, 1969); and Hilary Putnam. \textit{Philosophical Papers: Volume 2, Mind, Language and Reality.} Vol. 2. (Cambridge University Press, 1979).
prejudice creep in.\textsuperscript{250}

The worry about classification appears to be one of homogenizing those who belong to a particular group, and therefore insinuating that there is no freedom to be a distinct individual. For instance, recall Fanon’s issue with classification;\textsuperscript{251} he is sorted as a genus, a Black man, not simply a man.\textsuperscript{252} But the failure is not the desire for classification, or to understand,\textsuperscript{253} because organizing different people into groups is not necessarily morally offensive. The offense occurs when we attach negative judgments to certain classifications, which is deeply epistemologically problematic as it disallows us from being compassionate.

Therefore, this kind of systematization need not be pejorative; it is not necessarily pigeonholing people into anything beyond their membership to a group. In other words, sorting different kinds of people does not axiomatically entail that persons within that group all share the same, or even similar, beliefs, thoughts, feelings, reactions, etc. Awareness of a person’s race, for example, operates not on an individual level, but a group level. It may be evident, but locating oneself in social space can only extend as far as recognizing the groups that one organizes into and that other people mix into groups as well,\textsuperscript{254} but does not lend specific information about the individuals that comprise any group. In other words, we need not worry about synthesizing

\textsuperscript{250} Fricker discusses this in \textit{Epistemic Injustice}. This motivates her to develop more on the notion of critical openness. For more on this subject, see: Jack Kwong, “Epistemic Injustice and Open-Mindedness.” (\textit{Hypatia} 30.2, 2015).
\textsuperscript{252} Additionally, Craig Taylor also argues that we may reduce a person to one characteristic, and that is all we ever see them as. Specifically, he gives the example of Hester Prynne in Nathaniel Hawthorn’s \textit{A Scarlet Letter} being seen a ‘fallen woman’. Taylor considers it deeply morally offensive that a person can be reduced in this way. See: Craig Taylor. \textit{Moralism: A Study of a Vice}. (Routledge, 2015).
\textsuperscript{253} In fact, one can argue that wanting to really understand people is instead something very positive, if the desire really is to gain understanding. This means not simply maintaining a previous set of beliefs and trying to fit people into it, but broadening the beliefs to expand a previous knowledge set so that a true understanding is gained.
\textsuperscript{254} Group overlap (i.e. belonging to a similar group(s) as another) does not lend much insight to a person on any kind of intimate level. All that is revealed are very broad classifications.
unique persons simply because they belong to a particular group just because we are cognizant of
it. People within a group will share some particularities with one another in virtue of their
membership, but will be flavoured with varying intersections that attribute to their uniqueness.

Practicing critical open-mindedness can act as a safeguard to prevent unjust prejudices
based on group classification.\textsuperscript{255} What follows is that rather than inhibiting thoughts, actions,
behaviours, etc. recognizing one’s social position instead allows for advancement in these areas.
Awareness allows for understanding, opening the possibility for a deepening in these areas. This
separates those who are socially passive in contrast with those who are socially active; i.e. it
distinguishes those who reasonably question and reflect on their social blessings and adversities,
and those who fail to do so. Those who are successful in recognizing where they fit in social space
are less likely to commit injustices against others in differing social locations than someone who is
unsuccessful. Moreover, even those with worthy intentions can cause more harm because of their
ignorance.

Once one gains understanding, however, she is in a more fruitful environment to
recognize what her role is in regard to avoiding and repairing a variance of social issues. What
this implies is that particular thoughts, actions, behaviours, etc. can quite easily be unjust when
applied to, for example, a subordinate group versus a dominant group. Members of the
dominant group are required to be aware of this point, and others of similar context.\textsuperscript{256}

Ultimately, the project that Tompkins outlines is in effect similar to the Buddhist one. She

\textsuperscript{255} Kwong (2015).
\textsuperscript{256} Although this is an example, one may ask whether the example works conversely; in other words, do those in the
subordinate group need to be aware of their social position in order to prevent injustices towards the dominant
group? The answer to this is twofold: first, those in socially subordinate groups are generally aware of their social
position, given that it plays so profoundly in various aspects of their life. When one is not endowed with power and
privilege, their social classification becomes quite clear. Second, it is not likely that a subordinate group could cause
severe injustice towards the dominant group, precisely because they are subordinate to them.
suggests a kind of thinking that resembles what we learn from Merton or Thich; if we want to better understand our own suffering and the suffering of others, we must reach the roots. This means piercing through to a space beyond attachment to beliefs about feelings, religion, other people, material goods, etc. all of which add to suffering to our lives in their own ways. We must understand our reactions and judgments about different phenomena and whether or not they are first, appropriate or justifiable, and second, useful for reducing harm and undue suffering and/or increasing wellness and positive experiences. Done this way, we have developed compassion.

2.5 Including Compassion in Justice

The project at hand is not focused on what justice ought to be in the strict terms as we normally concede. Instead, the project is to develop our understanding of racial injustice experienced by Black people with the aim of opening up possibilities for reparation that were not previously feasible.

Using Buddhist ideals that focus on non-attachment to the ego-self can help to lead us in the direction of what we may call ‘true’ justice, that is justice which is not limited by the white imagination that has dominated many parts of the world for many years. In regards to the injustice of Black people, justice would not be limited to the false views about who Black people are and who white people are, given that those views are informed by a history where Black people were dehumanized and white people were idolized. These mindsets continue presently because our institutions, including the way we think because of what and how we are taught, continue to embrace and reflect this history. With the development of proper meditation, we can begin to unravel some of the illusions that surround how we think of ourselves and others, which results in compassion for others and the chipping away of enduring injustices.

Developing a better understanding of the nature of injustice of Black people not only
allows for the possibility to develop new ideas for effective reparation, but in fact demands it. If we change how we understand injustice, we must also change how we address it. Because the ideas regarding the nature of injustice towards Black people presented here deny normative conceptions of injustice, seemingly radical solutions may become pertinent in order to get closer to justice. Since it has been argued that the injustices experienced by Black people can be the result of an epistemological lack, the most glaring solution is education reform. The present discussion on compassion leads to this conclusion.

A complex and challenging topic, education reform often invokes resistance and protest. But reform in education need not be drastic and strident; change must be introduced slowly, as our epistemological understanding develops. This can be achieved through thinking critically about the way we teach and learn, which ought to reflect theoretical or de facto social progress. There is groundwork to be paved, however, before entering this discussion.

It is both implicit and explicit thus far that education is riddled with unjust attitudes, lessons, frameworks, perspectives, and teaching methods. As such, it becomes very clear that work must be done to repair educational institutions that reflect a racist history. This is not simply something that needs to be discussed; meaningful action is required. Action can begin on an individual level; first, through introspection and personal transformation, and second, through genuine establishment of new teaching practices and content in this new reality. Therefore, this

257 It must be reiterated that even though the present target is particular to the enduring injustice of Black people, there are other groups whose enduring injustices must also be reexamined. This discourse is limited to a very specific group, based upon a specific kind of injustice which demands a specific kind of redress. Other cases of enduring injustice will require different kinds of reparative efforts, even if, as in this case, they may require something outside of the norm.

258 Regarding social attitudes towards Black people (and other minorities), it can be argued that social change has occurred, even if minutely relative to the titanic extent of racial inequality and injustice. However, this social change is not reflected in classrooms, ranging from kindergarten to post-secondary. This point refers to adjusting teaching and learning in a way that is progressive, so that it corresponds to and perhaps even surpasses social growth so that we can achieve equity in a kind of social and educational evolution.
sort of idea about justice does not follow the traditional dichotomy between personal and group development, which was discussed previously. Instead, it requires both. The kind of justice here requires internal work by the individual, which is then perpetuated externally to the group.

2.6 Going Forward

Cultivating a compassionate mindset can open up space for thinking about how we can help to deal with injustice. In this case, it can allow for uncommon solutions by understanding reality through a non-normative lens, cultivating a different way of thinking about the injustices experienced by Black people. The suggestion from this point is to consider repairing education, and doing so with a compassionate frame of mind. This means recognizing that reality is in constant flux, and there is no self to hold on to. Because of this, we can lose attachments to ideas of ourselves and of others, ultimately beginning to chip away at harmful prejudices that help perpetuate long-standing injustice. Since educational institutions are long-standing, important, and dynamic, there is space to improve on both educators themselves and the curricula they teach. As such, Chapter 4 will discuss how educators can become more compassionate in the sense argued for in this chapter, and how curricula can reform to better include all people.
Chapter Four

An Application: Compassionate Education

Beginning with the problem of reparations, it has since been argued that the injustices experienced by Black people are not only related to politics and economics, as generally framed. There are enduring and epistemological aspects that are also involved in the nature of injustice for Black people. It has been further argued that adjusting our minds to a more compassionate state by adopting practices that we find in Buddhism, like meditation, can allow us to more effectively understand the nature of injustice experienced by Black people, which can then shed light on finding solutions to the problem of reparations.

The central idea that will be explored in this chapter is pedagogical one, similar to the one offered by Marie Battiste\(^{259}\) and Anne Godlewska et. al\(^{260}\) regarding the decolonization, or Indigenizing, of education. In this article, they refer specifically to curriculum reform in geography, offering a method for remedying the lack of Indigeneity in the formal education of youth. If Indigenizing education refers to adopting a teaching method that is inclusive, fair, and honourable, this can be true of not only Indigenous people, but all minorities excluded by the white heteronormative social standard. In this way, we are practicing what Andrea Smith calls “queering,”\(^{261}\) i.e. challenging unjust social standards.

The first aim of this chapter is to show what becoming compassionate may look like

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\(^{260}\) Anne Godlewska, Jackie Moore, and C. Drew Bednasek, “Cultivating Ignorance of Aboriginal Realities.” \textit{(The Canadian Geographer/Le Géographe Canadien} 54.4, 2010).

within an institution, specifically the institution of education given the discussions about epistemology in Chapter 2. This will be accomplished by explaining the idea of a virtuous educator and virtuous education by drawing upon the cultivation of compassion as discussed in Chapter 3. Regarding the former, this includes personal projects for educators to locate themselves socially, allowing them to better understand themselves in relation to a diverse group of students. Regarding the latter, this includes discovering what Indigenizing, or decolonizing, educational curricula consists in. This refers to methods for teaching but also what is considered worthy of being taught.

The second aim of this chapter is to argue that making these kinds of shifts within educational institutions can help both educators and students to better recognize and understand the injustices experienced by Black people. The broader suggestion is that if we can begin to adjust how and what students are taught, they are better equipped for dealing with complex philosophical problems like the problem of reparations so that meaningful solutions may come to fruition in the future.
1.0 A VIRTUOUS EDUCATOR

If changes within education are to be made, those who educate must be a part of what changes. Only changing curricula will not be enough, as there is a relationship between one who educates and what and how they educate. The development of the individual must come first, because without the support of those who are educating, the reformation of education will not be effective. If those representing new methods of teaching, ways of learning, and a wider range of educational content are not fully engaged in and understand what and how they are teaching, then reformation will likely fizzle out. It is the obligation of educators to make the necessary internal changes to teach virtuously, taking on this personal responsibility in their role as an educator. Moreover, it is important that they keep this momentum going for future educators, as it is easy to return back to traditional conceptualizations of education which have been practiced for so long.

1.1 Self-Reflection of Educators

It was previously mentioned that if an educator is in a position to understand and believe in what is being taught, the medium for teaching, etc., then she is more likely to want to continue what she is doing, which therefore perpetuates a healthier and more honest learning environment for all people. In order to cultivate a better learning environment, a process of self-reflection and evaluation must occur.\footnote{This is an idea that dates back to John Dewey’s work in 1933, \textit{How We Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process} (Heath, 1933).} If an educator has prejudiced views, whether she is aware of it or not,
then those to whom she is prejudiced will inevitably be affected.\textsuperscript{263} Whether the prejudice results in a quieter, subtler effect, or an overt one, those being taught are still exposed to an injustice.\textsuperscript{264} In fact, quieter racist attitudes are often more difficult to detect, and could be negatively affecting students on a less than obvious way, rendering them more difficult to repair.\textsuperscript{265} The quieter, subtler kind of racism is very common to our current times, but is being exposed in a variety of ways.\textsuperscript{266}

Of course, it is entirely possible that reforms to education can be occurring at any time, but they cannot be properly employed nor practiced by educators who have not developed a sensitive teaching practice. What this means is that if educators have not done the personal work to become more compassionate individuals, open to a diverse classroom of students, changes within the curricula will not be as effective. The reason why changes within the curricula will not be as effective is because if the individual teaching does not understand or believe in what they teach, they will not be able to properly convey this to the students, and will have a more difficult time connecting with them. Or, certain changes to the curricula will be ignored, likely without consequence. For example, if the educator does not think a particular teaching style is effective

\textsuperscript{263} It is important to note that this does not call for perfectionism, nor does it imply that to be perfectly unprejudiced is even possible. Rather, the idea is that an educator can have negative prejudiced views, whether aware or unaware, and this can cause serious negative effects for Black students. Becoming aware is a step in the right direction, as it opens the possibility for conversation and, eventually, remedy.

\textsuperscript{264} An example of subtle racism could be the following: an educator thinks that the answer a Black student gives to a question is insufficient or maybe even wrong because there is a (perhaps hidden) belief that most Black children are less intelligent. An example of overt racism could be the following: Black students must sit at the back of the class, behind white students. The point being made here is that subtle racism is still as rampant as ever, even if examples overt racism has quieted.

\textsuperscript{265} See: John F. Dovidio and Samuel L. Gaertner, “Aversive Racism.” \textit{(Advances in Experimental Social Psychology 36, 2004).} Dovidio and Gaertner discuss the unconscious biases that white people may hold privately (internally, not specific to the home, but to personal thought), even though they may boast egalitarian principles publicly. For even more on persistent racism and discriminatory attitudes, see: Jennifer Lynn Eberhardt and Susan T. Fiske, eds. \textit{Confronting Racism: The Problem and the Response.} (Sage Publications, 1998).

\textsuperscript{266} Some argue that the election of Donald Trump is an example of this. Long standing racist attitudes eventually surface, much to the surprise of many who remain ignorant to the many forms racism takes.
(such as talking circles) because of certain prejudices (such as thinking Indigenous ways of learning are ineffective), he can simply refuse to teach that way.

More than this, the kind of perspective that is employed here is separate from traditional ethical norms. We cannot simply apply traditional ethical rules, and if we do, they must be interpreted in a much deeper, more conscientious way. For example, one very obvious ethical norm in teaching in Canada is that any form of abuse is prohibited.267 However, with a deeper understanding of racial injustice and the intricate way that it is blended into everyday life, one recognizes that many things that occur in classrooms all across Canada are still tremendously abusive to people of colour.268 A more developed interpretation of abuse is available to the educator once she does the personal work to attain it. Once she has, she then has a responsibility to maintain justice in her teaching by paying more attention to what is being taught and how it is being represented. For example, when discussing history, it is important that an educator provides a fair representation of historical facts. This means that she cannot only consider how historical events are interpreted by people who fit the same social status as her as mentioned in Chapter 3. The notion of identifying one’s social location will be returned to shortly.

Barbara Larrivee writes about the importance of critical self-reflection among educators,

268 For instance, Pigott and Cowen argue that Black children are judged as having more adjustment issues, fewer competencies, and more stereotypical negative qualities by both white and Black teachers. See: Rowan L. Pigott and Emory L. Cowen. “Teacher Race, Child Race, Racial Congruence, and Teacher Ratings of Children's School Adjustment.” (Journal of School Psychology 38.2, 2000): p. 177. Some argue that because Black children have, for example, different learning and communication styles, they sometimes miss out on reinforcement and opportunities such as head nodding and attention given (177). See: Robert S. Feldman, “Nonverbal Behavior, Race, and the Classroom Teacher.” (Theory Into Practice 24.1, 1985) for more on positive reinforcement of white teachers more exclusively with white students. These sorts of occurrences are not as widely accepted as instances of injustice, but have impacts on both white and Black students. White students can interpret the attention and affirmation they are given as warranted, while Black students may interpret the lack of attention and affirmation they are given as also warranted.
providing interesting, thoughtful, and practical approaches for an educator to be successfully reflective. As Larrivee states, “a teacher’s own limiting assumptions about a problem, or student perceived as a problem, can drive behaviour in unproductive directions.” It is important to understand that we each have limitations because of our life experiences, including actions, lessons learned, social location, etc. As educators, we are therefore privy to the life experiences of others and how we may be creating injustice in their lives.

Of course, if one has been ignorant of this for quite some time (as many of us are), then changing thought patterns, actions, behaviours, etc. is quite transformative. There are many fears that accompany any kind of growth, as one is likely to feel lost or confused. But figuring out how to actualize new ways of thinking and being is certainly not outside of the capabilities of the individual. What is required is an openness to change, to quiet the thoughts and beliefs of the individual and listen to those of others from marginalized groups. As such, what is required is a mental shift that allows for the individual to recognize the many, many people – including their thoughts, ideas, feelings, experiences, etc. – outside of themselves who comprise different social groups. As discussed in Chapter 3, this mental shift can be achieved through something like Buddhist meditation. One becomes more compassionate by losing parts, or the entirety of the self in order to better understand the situation and suffering of others.

In relation to educators, this process would not necessarily only happen on one level; that is, interaction about what oppressed students in a classroom require to promote, achieve, and

269 Barbara Larrivee, “Transforming Teaching Practice: Becoming the Critically Reflective Teacher.” (Reflective Practice 1.3, 2000); p. 302.
270 Larrivee notes that once one begins to be critically reflective, she may be liberated by losing dearly held assumptions, but then easily fall into a state of fear, or a state of limbo (304).
271 The thought is that abandoning certain assumptions is a real loss which invokes a response to immediately replace the assumption, or revert back to the old assumption. The uncertainty, however, is where transformation can occur (Larrivee, 304).
maintain just learning conditions would not only be between students and educators. There would be changes to curriculum that occur alongside student and educator interaction. But what educators are required to do is maintain the curriculum changes while also recognizing the specific needs of the students in each particular student body. This involves practicing the reflective process, and therefore being a virtuous educator requires constant attention and maintenance, as is true with practicing any other virtue.

If an educator has gone through a process of critical self-reflection, she gains a perspective on teaching that others who have failed in this process do not. She is able to relate better to those around her once awareness is gained that her own knowledge, beliefs, ideas, and experiences are not always reflected in those around her. The usual, egoistic approach to teaching ignores this process, which echoes a lack of concern or care for anyone outside the norms constructed by the dominant group. If an educator is to practice virtuous teaching, she must recognize realities and perspectives outside of herself, which is not easily attainable when working within traditional frameworks and methods of teaching.

1.2 Repairing Educators

The kind of self-reflection described above can be quite arduous for many people, as we form attachments to what we think we know. There is also a general ignorance about one’s own social location, as many are raised with liberal ideals like attaining full autonomy. But once one is aware, progress towards achieving justice can occur. Awareness is perhaps the most difficult part;

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272 This of course includes students, but can also include other educators.
273 Larrivee provides a very useful diagram found on page 302 of “Transforming Teaching Practice: Becoming the Critically Reflective Teacher.” She distinguishes four levels that one goes through when reflecting on core values and job performance: philosophical, framework, interpretive, and decision making.
surpassing ego and seeing reality beyond the self is an ontological challenge in the way described in Chapter 3. However, once this transformation has been achieved, it is necessary to then learn to live in this new reality.

To help explain what this means, consider the following brief consideration about forgiveness. To simply say one is sorry – or to even act apologetically without truly being sorry – is not living in the reality of repentance. It is not realizing and/or accepting one’s wrongdoing and the necessary movement that one ought to follow. This is the same sort of thinking here. Once an educator reflects on the world outside of herself, she must then use this understanding to fuel impetus for living in a more honest reality. She has created new sphere for herself, and living her life justly and authentically would mean residing in this fresh, virtuous environment.

As a recap, being a virtuous educator involves not only recognizing that injustices between the races exist, but that education is framed in a way that maintains racial injustice. As such, educators – particularly white educators – must be aware that their role as an educator ought to change and that they are in a position to make those changes.

Socially Locating

Some of Tompkins’ views were introduced in Chapter 3, and it is useful to return to her thoughts here. Learning about one’s location in the social world is one way that an educator can begin to become more virtuous in her teaching. If she is not able to properly recognize that the

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275 See: Tompkins (2002).

276 It may be the case that an educator can see, in a sense, that a student has a very different social location. For example, she may see that they come from a different socio-economic or racial background. With that said, she may
location of her students does not always reflect her own location, then injustices are very likely to occur. This is because she would not be possible for her to understand the ways in which she may be disadvantaging certain students to the benefit of others. For example, if Black students have different communication styles, as Robert Feldman suggests, they may not pick up on the same expression of affirmation by an educator that a white student would. Or, a white educator may miss a useful comment given by a Black student because of how the student said it. Being in a state of genuine compassion in the classroom allows for this kind of understanding, and can be highly useful and effective for becoming a better educator.  

For white educators, this is likely a challenging task, given that whiteness is seen as the norm and norms are not often challenged. As Tompkins says, it is risky for white people to engage in this kind of work, knowing the ridicule and criticism that is likely to occur when they begin to reflect on where they fit in the social world. The more privilege one has, the more they have to lose, and the less likely they are to engage in the kind of activities that threaten their privilege. But challenging or not, if one wants to strive for virtue in her teaching, she must be aware of the harmful prejudices she may carry and work towards diminishing them.

**Critically Reflecting on Teaching Methods**

Once an educator starts to find her social position in the way described earlier, it might become natural to then change her teaching methods. Part of what makes for effective teaching methods

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278 Consider the quote included at the beginning of this project, where Tompkins discusses why white people are not usually apt to take on this challenge (Tompkins, 413-4).
is the ability for an educator to properly communicate. This means understanding different forms of communication via different mediums, and teaching in the varied ways that different students learn.

There are different ways of teaching that are being integrated into the traditional classroom setting. Some of these involve the orientation of the students in work stations and the communication between students and their peers and educators via literature circles. This is likely derived from Indigenous talking circles, wherein the orientation of individuals in a circle is believed to enhance a more collaborative and fair attitude among students and educators. Having students form a circle allows for a physical openness and transparency, which can then perhaps echo the same openness and transparency intellectually and communicatively, as well. Talking circles promote equality and unity among those who comprise the circle, with no person being inside or outside of the circle, including the educator. All voices are considered valuable, and conversation continues to make its way around the circle until a consensus is reached. This allows for more thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and arguments to be heard and considered, which can allow for more diverse information shared and reflected upon.

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279 For a discussion about effective communication in the classroom, see: Ann Bainbridge Frymier and Marian L. Houser. “The Teacher-Student Relationship as an Interpersonal Relationship.” (Communication Education 49.3, 2000). For an interesting study on hierarchy in the classroom regarding teaching and learning, see Kurt Squire, “Changing the Game: What Happens When Video Games Enter the Classroom.” (Innovate: Journal of Online Education 1.6, 2005).
280 This can range from students having different socio-economic backgrounds, to coping with social stigma. For some work on these topics, see: Signithia Fordham and John U. Ogbu, “Black Students' School Success: Coping With the ‘Burden of ’Acting White’” (The Urban Review 18.3, 1986); Lisa Delpit, “The Silenced Dialogue: Power and Pedagogy in Educating Other People's Children.” (Harvard Educational Review 58.3 1988); and Linda Darling-Hammond and John Bransford, Preparing Teachers for a Changing World: What Teachers Should Learn and be Able to Do. (John Wiley & Sons, 2007).
In her discussion about ways to implement diversity in the classroom, Mel Ainscow presents evidence which suggest that learning barriers can result from existing ways of thinking, and therefore interruptions in these patterns of thinking must be made.284 For instance, there are studies that show how accents can affect how someone is perceived.285 If a Black student has a different way of speaking from a white educator, it may be the case that they are not interpreted by the educator as having provided intelligent comments.286 This sort of evidence must be taken into consideration when educators are deciding how they want to approach a particular subject, or, furthermore, how educators teach others about how to educate.287 Once again, one way that this sort of approach to education can be made possible is by cultivating the kind of compassionate mindset discussed in Chapter 3.

2.0 A VIRTUOUS CURRICULUM

Coupled with mental shifts within educators themselves, reforming educational curricula is also extremely important in order to better understand and chip away at the enduring injustices

286 Linguist Geoffrey Pullum discusses some ideas surrounding African American Vernacular English (AAVE). He describes how outraged people became when a California school board suggested teaching Black students who spoke AAVE in this dialect. Pullum argues that AAVE is not slang; instead, it is a dialect of English and ought to be recognized as such. See: Geoffrey Pullum, “African American Vernacular English is Not Standard English With Mistakes.” (The Workings of Language: From Prescriptions to Perspectives, 1999).
experienced by Black people. The cultivation of ignorance about the realities of Black people is one that is perpetuated by all who are unaware of their social position and how that contributes to injustice for those in disregarded groups, including and reinforced by what we are taught not only privately, but publicly. Once those educating have a better idea about their place and therefore what their role is in regards to just education for all, it is important to discuss the current educational frameworks and ways that they may change to reflect a better understanding of the injustices found within them. If educators are prepared to educate in a way that avoids perpetuating and further establishing injustice for marginalized groups, it is vital that what they are teaching is in line with a newfound understanding about ways in which curricula can perpetuate racial injustice against Black people.

Not recognizing that different people, including those who develop curriculum, play a part in repairing injustice is one reason for its perpetuance. If we continue to accept certain beliefs about education, then we are setting precedent for the future to continue with business as usual. To reiterate, this is especially detrimental when it concerns matters of injustice towards a particular group because acceptance and perpetuance often makes the injustice appear acceptable, or neutral. It then causes injustice to be very deeply hidden and difficult to detect. We are then left with instances of injustice that are difficult to recognize as such, likely felt and sensed by the slighted, but generally completely ignored and undetected by the esteemed. Explained in

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288 Let us return to the initial problem in Chapter 1, i.e. the problem of reparations. Reforming formal education can be a useful method for better understanding the injustices and experiences of Black people, and could help to illuminate discussions about reparations. Education reform not all that needs to be done, since injustice is found in many other areas, including politics, religion, social institutions, etc. The offering is a milder than others, which implicitly claim that all that needs to be done is change to political/economical institutions. Claims such as this are non-inclusive, so they will not be mimicked here.

289 This is argued by Elizabeth Anderson in “Epistemic Justice as a Virtue of Social Institutions.” (Social Epistemology 26.2, 2012). Anderson also uses Fricker’s discussion on epistemic injustice and applies in on a larger scale by considering institutions. She also mentions education as one such institution lacking in a true democratic operation, and is therefore epistemically unjust.
Chapter 2, we call this enduring injustice. As such, unless these frameworks are changed, the injustices will remain hidden, progressively worsening over time as they become more accepted as part of the social fabric. And, as also discussed in Chapter 2, epistemic injustice can occur when false ideas about who we are arises from this perspective.

There have been a variety of ideas offered about how to repair education in a way that includes, but more importantly, respects, diverse ideas and people, deviating away from very Eurocentric models of education. Two that will be briefly noted here are decolonizing education and the application of queer theory to education.

2.1 *Decolonizing Education*

One way to repair education is by decolonizing it. Marie Battiste discusses a decolonized approach to Indigenous knowledge, language, and education.\(^{290}\) For example, she discusses how important language is to Aboriginal people, and that Canadian educational systems still exclude Aboriginal languages from curricula.\(^{291}\) She importantly discusses how this reflects cognitive imperialism wherein white people automatically receive inclusion (via language, knowledge, etc.) and those who are not white continue to be led into believing that the injustices that they face are the result of their own race.\(^{292}\) These kinds of strategies need to be understood, unraveled, and addressed if the goal is to avoid repeating Eurocentric patterns that are disproportionately destructive to particular groups.

\(^{290}\) See Battiste (1998).
\(^{291}\) Ibid., p. 16-17.
\(^{292}\) Ibid., p. 20-21.
Additionally, Godlewska et. al\textsuperscript{293} offer a perspective on education and teaching, using education in geography as an example. The opening line of their article is the following: “The principal problem in Aboriginal education in Canada is the education of Canadians.”\textsuperscript{294} From this line, the direction of the paper is clear. They define the problem of Indigenous education as a problem for all Canadians. There is a broader issue here that extends far beyond the community that it appears to affect; miseducation is something that effects all people and therefore needs to be addressed by all people, not only the group who is, on the surface, most seriously affected.\textsuperscript{295}

Coming from a geography background, Godlewska et. al discuss how the geography curriculum can be amended to decolonize it. They note, importantly, that humanist, feminist, and emotional geography have reinterpreted space or spatial generalizations, now considering space “as a series of relationships, interactions and flows, understood to be dynamic, historical, contingent, relational and inseparable from human perception and experience.”\textsuperscript{296} This is offered as one way to connect education to Indigenous thought, as it allows students to see the links between land and human experience. The ideas presented by Godlewska et. al are not only applicable to geography, but any subject.

2.2 \textit{Queer Theory and Education}

Another way to consider reforming education is offered by Andrea Smith\textsuperscript{297} regarding queer

\textsuperscript{293} See Godlewska et. al. (2010).
\textsuperscript{294} Ibid., p. 1.
\textsuperscript{295} What this alludes to is the thought that all people lose when voices are not heard.
\textsuperscript{296} Ibid., 19.
\textsuperscript{297} Andrea Smith’s character has been called into question for having claimed Cherokee descent, though she is not recognized by the Cherokee community as a member. For some coverage on this, see: “Cherokee Women Scholars’ and Activists’ Statement on Andrea Smith.” \textit{Indian Country Today}. Web. Accessed 7 Dec. 2016. Because of this, Smith’s name often causes scholars to retreat, and some claim that she has caused a great deal of mistrust between
theory and Native\textsuperscript{298} studies.\textsuperscript{299} Smith provides an interesting way of developing Indigenous studies, which is to conceive of it as a “queering.” Smith focuses on the conceptual nature of queer theory, and uses it to guide her ideas about how Native studies can flourish. First, it is important to explain her use of queer theory regarding Native studies, then extend it to education more generally to include Black people in the discussion.

Smith wants to forward Native studies by removing Indigenous people from the subject of study to having something to offer epistemologically. In other words, Native studies traditionally studies Native people, and is therefore more of an ethnographic field.\textsuperscript{300} But Smith wants to make a much more progressive movement by transitioning Native studies to a subjectless critique. In other words, Indigenous people are no longer the subjects of the field, but are contributors to boarder intellectual projects. In this way, Indigenous people are no longer subjects to be studied, but those who study. What this means is that Indigenous people are thinking beings, not simply beings to be studied. They experience the world around them, interpret, and conceptualize. As such, Indigenous people are not what is studied, but the ones who do the studying. Native studies would therefore transition to a field more like queer theory in that it offers critical reflection, deviating from anthropological or religious accounts of Native people. A queering of Native studies means providing a framework for interrogating and analyzing the normalized logic of settler colonialism, which inevitably places all people without

\textsuperscript{298} Smith uses the term “native” so it will be used when referring to her work.
\textsuperscript{299} Smith (2010).
\textsuperscript{300} Ibid., p. 42.
European heritage as outsiders.\textsuperscript{301}

Smith recognizes that there has been a lot of work done in studying Native people, but that it is limited. It is limited because it homogenizes a large group of people into one type of being, one who is Indigenous.\textsuperscript{302} Studying a group of people, rather than recognizing that the individuals in that group of people have their own thoughts, experiences, emotions, etc. demonstrates a lack of recognition that the individuals in the group even have thoughts, experiences, and emotions. This absorption of distinct individuals into one, broad thing is damaging in a variety of ways, including both the people who are homogenized and those who homogenize them. Those who are homogenized are silenced and limited, and those who homogenize them do not benefit from the contributions of those individuals. Moreover, we are presented with an issue that affects all individuals, and therefore takes a collective movement to remedy.

A contribution like Smith’s can be considered when working on education reform because she makes the observation that there are developments which can take place even within Native studies itself. It is important to study Indigenous populations, but it is also important to recognize that Indigenous people are not only subjects to study; there are Indigenous scholars with valuable thoughts, ideas, and experiences that add to a general knowledge base in incomparable ways. This cannot be seen by non-Indigenous people unless they have gone through the process of losing parts of themselves that speak to the opposite and perpetuate long-standing negative prejudices against certain social members.

\textsuperscript{301} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{302} Ibid., p. 49.
2.3 Repairing Education

The accounts mentioned above are just two among many different ideas offered regarding the changes necessary regarding both education generally speaking, and also the field of Indigenous studies. The direction taken here regarding the shifting of education away from perpetuating injustice can be applied to Black people as well. Since the organization of education is deeply rooted in colonial lessons and ways of thinking, starting a process of decolonization is vital to combatting the enduring injustice of Black people, similar to that of Indigenous people.

The ideas presented above about the ways in which education continues to oppress Indigenous people, and maintain the ignorance of non-Indigenous people, is the same sort of situation for Black people. Their continued oppression is solidified through education, by both educators and systems of education. Systems of education exclude much of what it means to be Black, ways of thinking and knowing and learning, and also limit the information shared about Black history and, in particular, the history of Black people’s oppression. There are numerous ways to correct this, starting with accountability and integrity.

Accountability and Integrity in Historical Accounts

When repairing education so that it begins to more accurately and concretely integrate non-colonialist, non-racist content and ways of learning, we are practicing accountability and integrity. This is perhaps one of the more intuitive and general ways of repairing education at this level, but important nonetheless. It is important for the obvious reason that in order for a general understanding about the history of oppression experienced by Black people, we must pass
on the narrative as accurately \(^{303}\) and honestly as possible. This is discussed by Kristan Morrison et. al, who study culturally relevant pedagogy in the classroom. \(^{304}\) Although they admit that further studies need to be done in order to understand how educators can effectively teach from a diverse perspective, attention is paid to the importance of making the classroom reflective of those who comprise it. This means being honest about unjust histories, and sharing them in the most transparent and respectful way available.

It is also important to practice accountability and integrity for a significant but less obvious reason, which is that it shows better understanding of, and sensitivity to, a tumultuous past. The recognition and effort to present accounts more accurately and honestly demonstrates that the continued oppression of Black people is real. It shows that it is important for all people to become aware of and understand the inception and endurance of injustice for Black people in order to work towards achieving more just conditions. Making concrete and meaningful steps towards combatting injustice is a sign of recognition; it shows compassion regarding the injustices that Black people experience, and does so in a way that is more practically effective.

Accountability and integrity in historical accounts is likely difficult to achieve and maintain for a variety of reasons. Reasons can vary from power imbalances (i.e. those who experience injustice have little impact alone in making sure that those who perpetuate injustice are holding themselves accountable, but also, are not responsible for taking this on) to a lack of

\(^{303}\) This is perhaps a sticky concept, given its implication that all of the facts must be absolutely correct. It is of course ideal if this were possible, but it does not necessarily have to be the case. It may be less of a problem if particular dates or experiences are not recalled perfectly in regards to individual experience. What is important are properly recalling the main events, the overarching oppression of Black people from slavery, and the after effects of slavery. The specific ways that Black people were effected by slavery and their individual stories are important and valuable. The accuracy, or what we decide is true in regards to individual stories, need not be perfect, nor can it. Ultimately, we need to understand the true history of the oppression. Whether or not all individual narratives hold truth does not take away from this.

care, to a lack of information. One worth expanding on, given that it can have such serious negative and long-lasting effects, is national pride due to ignorance and domestic attachment. There is a difficulty in admitting to past wrongs, taking responsibility as a community for recognizing past wrongs and their endurance, and admitting that we all have a part in repairing it. There seems to be an attachment to ideas about one’s country, a clinging to positive accomplishments of the country, and ignorance to many negative effects.

But recognizing past wrongs and taking responsibility for their current effects is essential when trying to make movement regarding the enduring injustice of Black people. As Mills notes, “all whites are beneficiaries of the Contract, though some whites are not signatories to it.”305 What he means is that although all white people did not tacitly agree to white supremacy as a political structure, they all continue to benefit from it. Because of this, white people have a piece in the accountability and integrity project, given that they have at least participated in and helped maintained unjust conditions over time. In educational institutions, one piece could be making sure that historical accounts do not purposely omit particular events to the benefit of the socially dominant white people.306 This way, students have access to the accurate information. Tackling ignorance regarding factual occurrences from the past is a primary step in being accountable for history, which inevitably seeps into the present, and informs the future. This project is straightforward in the sense that we can see how we may integrate a more encompassing historical account into what is learned, and provides the information necessary for beginning to unravel the enduring nature of injustice for Black people.

306 Some work has been done in regards to teaching about racism, including the difficult emotions that are sure to arise when doing so. See: Beverly Tatum, “Talking About Race, Learning About Racism: The Application of Racial Identity Development Theory in the Classroom,” (Harvard Educational Review 62.1, 1992).
Specific to education, if those who devise educational curriculum follow the beliefs of the dominant group and maintain an attachment to their national pride, there is no way to see past their own ignorance and make the aforementioned curriculum changes. This is where the importance of cultivating compassion comes in, as discussed in Chapter 3; without being able to think clearly and compassionately, there is little hope for students who do not fit within the Eurocentric norm to be recognized and really included in the classroom.

**Inclusion of Past and Current Lived Experience**

To continue from the previous conversation, one method for including all parts of history in educational curricula is to integrate past and current lived experience. What this means is that in addition to providing historical factual evidence, it is useful to incorporate more intimate and personal accounts. Including lived experience allows for more of a connection between the author and the reader (student). In other words, when more personal details are offered in the text, it can be easier for the reader to empathize, understand, and connect to the people they read about.

Most often, plain facts are not effective alone. One reason for this is because unless a student cares about what he is reading, he is unlikely to retain or even understand the information being relayed. For example, if an individual reads about the ill-effects of cigarette smoking and the damage it causes to his lungs, and he cares about his body, the information will mean something to him. But if he does not care about his physical health, and cares more about how he feels when he smokes, the information about the ill-effects of cigarette smoking will not

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307 Which, as discussed earlier, is based off false perceptions and limited sets of knowledge, and lacks real compassion.

308 For a more extensive discussion on this topic, see: Max Van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy.* (Routledge, 2016). For another interesting read, see: Rashné Jehangir, “Stories as Knowledge: Bringing the Lived Experience of First-Generation College Students into the Academy.” *(Urban Education* 45.4, 2010).
motivate him to stop smoking. The same kind of logic applies here; if a student does not experience the injustices that Black people endure, or does, but does not see them as unjust, simply reading that Black people are incarcerated at alarming rates, are not trusted by law enforcement, are perceived as less intelligent by educators, have more financial difficulty even with high-paying jobs, is not enough to really have an affect on her. The student may even rationalize these facts into untrue and unreasonable beliefs, like the idea about internal conflict mentioned in Chapter 2. If, however, educators who devise school curricula have learned to practice compassion as understood in Chapter 3, then the importance of including the lived experience of specific individuals who have suffered from enduring injustice can be considered extremely valuable.

If lived experience is included in school curriculum, it is vital that both historical and present accounts are provided. Historical accounts ensure that students aware that injustice has been experienced by Black people for a very long time. And, having learned about a Black person’s experience with chattel slavery and civil rights movements through the mouths of those who experienced the injustice, students are likely to connect more deeply to their suffering. This also acts as a segue into current injustice, and understanding the roots of our current problems. As important as reflecting on the past is, it is equally important to recognize that injustice still occurs for Black people. If we only focus on past injustice, an assumption is made that the injustices no longer occur, or there is no way to make sense of them, or no way to combat them. This leaves us with a false representation of what is going on currently, and what can be done about it, allowing for injustice to endure and for reparative efforts to remain at a standstill.

Providing personal accounts of the injustices that occur now not only reflects the understanding that Black people continue to suffer disproportionately compared to white people, but what that suffering looks like currently. Now, it is easy to see the repugnance and savagery of
slavery. This was not true for people who lived during the time when slavery was more socially acceptable. This phenomenon, i.e. a difficulty in really understanding and being sensitive to current forms of injustice, still holds true now. It is difficult for many people to understand that much of what Black people continue to face now is in fact gravely unjust, otherwise it would not have such an enduring force. The suggestion is that including current events and having discussions about what Black people experience now can help break down the massive ignorance regarding the current injustices they face.

Straight historical facts are enriched by the experience of these events by those who experienced them, which includes struggles with emotion, identity, knowledge, ways of living, spirituality, etc. The injustices that Black people experience are ones that affect many areas of life, and it is these other elements that connect us on a very human level. Since people are complex, their affairs are also complex, and providing only part of an experience cheapens it. To only say that Black people were made into slaves, and explain what their day-to-day life was like, is not enough for a student to gain a fuller perspective on the experience of a slave. Likewise, to take someone through the factual evidence of the Michael Brown case is not enough for that person to grasp what it is to be a Black man in the modern day.

What is needed is a fuller, more humanly connected picture, which is provided by authors like Toni Morrison in *Beloved*. Morrison wants the reader to be affected by the main character Sethe, a slave who kills her children so that they do not have the endure the life she did. Morrison helps us to learn about Sethe, and learning about her helps us understand her choices. A student who reads *Beloved* can become connected to the characters (who, ultimately, represent real people from the past with similar experiences) and care about them. This kind of approach

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to sharing experiences allows us to care about those who are affected. Caring is less likely to occur from only scanning statistical charts about racial disparity.

Often, people come together in times of joy and tragedy. One of the most compelling reasons why people come together is to celebrate or grieve something those particular people regard as important. For many people, this includes graduations, marriages, birthdays, jobs, deaths, social issues, health, religious and spiritual events, etc. What connects people during these times is the value they place on that which brings them together, i.e. occurrences like the ones listed above. Therefore, what is valued, and the extent to which it is valued, will have a more or less of an effect on an individual. So, if one is not affected by something, it is likely that they do not place much value on it.\textsuperscript{310} What one places value on, and is ultimately affected by, comes from learning to understand others. As argued in Chapter 3, this understanding can allow those outside of racial oppression to better understand the experience of those within it.

What is more, if a person who does not know what it is like to experience injustice in the way Black people have for hundreds of years, it must be learned from those who are most strongly affected by it, i.e. Black people. The experience is firsthand, raw, and carries a significant personal element that is lost in translation when one only reads factual evidence from a book. Sharing lived experiences provides unimpaired details of the lives of those who experience enduring injustice, adding the very personal, human ingredient to events full of peripherals beyond sheer facts.

\footnote{This is a strong statement, and one that may cause a defensive reaction. The point is not to say that one must be constantly affected by everything around them at all times. If that were the case, we would be experiencing extraordinary amounts of suffering every day. However, if upon hearing about or even witnessing the massive injustice that Black people continue to face, and one is not affected in the least, it is probably because they do not place value on it. An unaffected person may completely ignorant, think that the injustices experienced by Black people are not important enough to put time into understanding, have some information but chooses to ignore it, or just cannot seem to escape their own position to really grasp another’s life experience.}
If teaching lived experience is done through formal education, it may perhaps reach those who would not normally pick up Morrison’s book on their own accord. It has been argued that those who do not care about issues that seem irrelevant to them are unlikely to make any change. These people are also less likely to find Morrison’s book. If her book and others like it are included in curriculum, a broader audience is reached. Moreover, those who are not inclined to read books like *Beloved* may need to hear her message even more than those who are.

**Teaching (Analytic and Continental) Philosophy**

Let us begin with an example for this discussion on including philosophy in school curricula. The Ontario school curriculum does not offer any kind of philosophical training for children in primary schools, and offers electives for students in secondary schools.\(^{311}\) This also includes private schools in Ontario who are not required to strictly follow the government enforced curriculum.\(^{312}\) The Ministry of Education website offers detailed accounts regarding the main areas of philosophy that are available for educators to offer students in secondary schools, boasting a diverse and inclusive plan. With that said, there are problems with the philosophy curriculum.\(^{313}\) Some of the ideas, methods, and plans that are mentioned on the website are advanced and far too complicated for first-time philosophy students. More than this, educators would also need a very developed philosophical training in order to teach the curriculum described. As such, it seems as though the curriculum shared on the website is to impress parents, not to introduce philosophy to young minds having little to no exposure to the field before.

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313 Ibid. See the “Philosophy” section, 327-54.
For secondary schools in general, there is a significant focus on mathematics, science, social studies, and English, with some attention paid to other areas like fine art, fitness, and religion. As noted, philosophy is offered at a senior level, but it is made optional, therefore considered an alternative credit and not necessarily a core subject.\textsuperscript{314} Perhaps this reflects a broader, socially established stigma that philosophy is not a subject to be taken seriously as a core part of learning and development, but rather an elective, something to choose out of sheer curiosity or to fill open credit space.\textsuperscript{315} This is similar to what Godlewska et. al. argued about Indigenous studies. Rather than Indigenous studies being a part of school curriculum, it is instead offered as an option in some schools.\textsuperscript{316} In regard to the field of philosophy, this is problematic for several reasons, the two most prevalent discussed next.

First, young people are not given enough practice for developing concrete critical thinking skills to learn about different ways of thinking, learning, being, knowing, etc. There is only one knowledge set that young students are exposed to in the classroom, a place where young people spend much of their time. Yet having sharp critical reasoning skills is imperative in any person’s life, both personally and professionally. This is a point argued by Jill Aoki-Barrett et. al, who discuss the lack of attention paid to areas including critical thinking, environment, and diversity to name a few.\textsuperscript{317} It is a faulty belief that all young people learn the same way, yet we continue to educate by following a very particular regiment. What is taught and how it is taught benefits one kind of listener and effectively excludes all others. This could be described as an

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\textsuperscript{314} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{315} Certainly, to be curious and follow curiosity is not being negatively portrayed here. Rather, the point is that philosophy is not regarded as essential to the development of young minds, particularly in regards to flourishing critical thought.
\textsuperscript{316} Godlewska et. al. (2010).
\textsuperscript{317} Jill Aoki-Barrett et al., \textit{Social Justice Begins with Me}. (Toronto, ON, Canada: Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 1999).
\end{flushright}
epistemological injustice, since we are guided by a false view of knowledge with the result that the communication between the speaker and listener is faulty and the listener suffers because of it. It may be unknown to the educator that the student does not benefit from the subjects and teaching method, but that is also true for Fricker’s speaker and listener; there are faulty beliefs on one party’s behalf, and the other suffers because of it, even if the speaker is unaware that they are creating that suffering.

As a reminder, a listener can commit an injustice by relying on prejudiced beliefs about the speaker, and attributing either an excess or deficit of trust on the speaker’s word. This kind of reasoning can also be used when we think about students and teachers, or perhaps, education more broadly speaking. The way we receive information, express thoughts, etc. changes from person to person. Perhaps on the whole, people are able to learn in the traditional Western way, at least in some capacity. But there are those who do not benefit as much from this type of learning, and have skills, interests, and behaviours that a traditional curriculum cannot accommodate.

A lack of critical thinking skills can cause suffering for a student because they do not learn how to develop their skills and interests in their own way, or that they are even able to do so. That can cause the student to feel trapped in their education rather than be liberated by it. This then trickles into other parts of life, like their family life and future career, to name a couple. The ways of learning and the information that is shared with young people at school shapes much of

319 There are many articles available about the importance of a diverse approach to teaching in the classroom. As examples, see: Christine E. Sleeter, “Preparing Teachers for Culturally Diverse Schools: Research and the Overwhelming Presence of Whiteness.” (Journal of Teacher Education 52.2., 2001); and Gloria Ladson-Billings, “Fighting For Our Lives Preparing Teachers to Teach African American Students.” (Journal of Teacher Education 51.3, 2000).
their adult years, and without being able to think more critically, both personal and public progression is hindered.\footnote{For a discussion on the lack of critical thinking skills for young students and why, see: John E. McPeck, \textit{Critical Thinking and Education} (Routledge, 2016); and Bonnie Benard, “Fostering Resilience in Children.” (ERIC Digest, 1995).}

Being exposed to fields outside of the traditional curriculum that has been around for many years – one that focuses on facts and memorization – can allow for more progression in many areas of life. If progression is to occur in different areas of life, like interpersonal relationships and family, mental and emotional wellbeing, spirituality, and global compassion, progressive thinkers are required. If young people cannot learn to think, we will be stuck in similar issues that have plagued our communities for years, including racial injustice. We may be very well-developed in areas like engineering, computer technology, traditional Western medicine, business, and analytical philosophy, but suffer greatly when it comes to the love, care, and compassion necessary for real learning; that is, learning what needs to be discovered and not what was conceivable previously. Learning to think compassionately helps us to think clearly in any area, including seeing beyond our ignorance about the state of the world and cultivating loving and compassionate attitudes to others in recognition of the grave inequalities that currently exist.

When philosophy is not offered until the senior level of high school, and moreover, when it is presented as an elective, the underlying message received is that philosophy not publicly respected as an important part of intellectual development. When a subject is given little importance by government mandated curriculum, the public often times conforms and adopts a shared attitude about what is valuable regarding the education of our children. But when young
people are not taught how they can use their mind in different ways, or even that they are able to
do so, everyone suffers from it. What is more, young people who do not naturally conform to
traditional ways of thinking and learning will end up failing in the classroom, which can
negatively affect their self-esteem. Older people who eventually rely on younger people for
shaping and enhancing our world also suffer when poor choices are made, or when there is a
massive imbalance in the kinds of careers young people are pushed in to, and little importance is
given to caring for others. Non-human animals and the environment could also suffer, if young
people are encouraged to chase careers where the most significant factor is annual salary.

A second problem with teaching philosophy is what we consider philosophy, not to
mention ‘good’ philosophy. The Western tradition – which, again, refers not to global location
but instead a way of being or living – centres on almost entirely analytical philosophy. Even
Western feminism is tightly knit to the kinds of arguments that come from purely analytical
thinking. The current conversation is not simply about teaching young minds about
philosophy, but that there are different kinds of philosophy. If students are only exposed to
Western analytical philosophy, we continue to injustice them by representing philosophy in a

321 A study investigating self-esteem in many respects reveals that high self-esteem – which has a strong link to overall
happiness – can result from success in the classroom. See Roy F. Baumeister et al., “Does High Self-Esteem Cause
Better Performance, Interpersonal Success, Happiness, or Healthier Lifestyles?” *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*
4.1, 2003).
322 Now that baby boomers are beginning to retire and age, the business of caring for the elderly is becoming vital.
For some statistical information on baby boomers, see: “Generations in Canada.” *Statistics Canada*. Web. Accessed 22
Apr. 2017
323 For statistics on graduates in Canada and their fields of study, see: “Postsecondary Graduates by Institution Type,
different fields, see: “Average Hourly Wages of Employees by Selected Characteristics and Occupation, Unadjusted
324 Consider Fricker, who has been used throughout this work. Her lines of reasoning and philosophical method are
tightly knit to traditional analytical thought. Although her contribution is significant and considers the injustices
experienced by racialized and sexualized people, her argumentative methods are rooted in traditional philosophy. As
such, branching out into other ways of understanding like the one found in Buddhism was used to supplement and
enrich the picture she provides.
very limited way. If students are being taught a subject, then it should be clear that what they are learning is only a part of a larger whole.\textsuperscript{325}

**Taking Responsibility re: Training and Curriculum**

Taking responsibility is a theme that has run throughout this discussion, particularly for educators in regard to their place in the world and how that affects what and how they teach. An educator needs to be responsible on an individual level, being sure that they are teaching in a way that is effective for students, both in method and content. Educational methods and the material shared, however, begin at a broader level. In other words, an educator can only be as good as her training, and her training is more effective when the content is not dogmatic. What this means is that changes must be made at a higher level, i.e. whichever institution oversees the educational sector. In Canadian elementary and public schools, that means modifications are necessary at the provincial level. In Canadian colleges and universities, modifications are necessary at the departmental level. Either way, those who develop curriculum must provide training and information that reflects values like open-mindedness, equity, care, and compassion. If they do not, students are not taught to think and care for themselves and others, and injustices, especially ones that have endured for many years, cannot be remedied in educational institutions.

\textsuperscript{325} Feminists have been pointing out issues in philosophy for many years, including the lack of involvement of women, racialized people, and gay people, as examples. Because those voices are not properly represented in the work being taught, and new work is not being researched and accepted, philosophy tends to maintain its infamous white cis male status. This means that even if young students are taught to critically reflect, the odds are against anyone other than a cis white male to first, find themselves reflected in the work, and second, to be heard when making arguments that are not shared by the majority. It must be known that this is how philosophy is currently operating, and that strides must be taken to balance out the philosophical playing field. Everyone is negatively affected when different voices are not heard and when the curriculum is not reshaped so that when they are heard they matter. So, it is not only an epistemological injustice for those who are ignored, but all who do not benefit from what they have to say. For a discussion on this, see Louise Antony, “Different Voices or Perfect Storm: Why are There So Few Women in Philosophy?” (*Journal of Social Philosophy* 43.3, 2012).
The current socio-political trends are quite individualistic. Socially, the Western world has accepted the idea that the individual can do and be anything they choose, which follows liberal ideals.\textsuperscript{326} There are at least two problems with this. The first is that maintaining such a high level of equality and freedom for individuals tends to separate us from each other, even though people rely heavily on others for a variety of reasons. When people are misled into believing that what they have accomplished was done on their own, they separate themselves from others, as if no one and nothing helped them to achieve any of their goals. The reality is that there are many external factors that lead a person to success, one includes their social ranking, which is only sustained from the suffrage and sacrifice of others.\textsuperscript{327}

The second problem is that the idea of freedom and equality is actually not attainable for many people, but only those this world serves. In other words, middle/upper class, able-bodied white cis males are highly favoured when compared to any other person of any other intersection. Therefore, they have more opportunity for freedom and equality in the world we currently live, and thus another facade is born when the idea of freedom and equality is extended to others in the same way. There is a host of problems that accompanies this facade. One is that particular groups are set up for failure given that options for freedom and equality do not exist in actuality, but are made to appear so. Because genuine choice is not available to all people, those who have limited choices are burdened by, first, the limitation of choice to begin, and, second,


being led to believe that choice is available and it is up to the individual to make the right ones, rendering failure her own fault.\textsuperscript{328}

The way that current curriculums operate reflects the primacy of individual choice and autonomy, because it takes for granted the liberal premises mentioned in Chapter 2. It has difficulty recognizing philosophical perspectives that do not accept such premises. They are mostly from outside the North Atlantic and central to Indigenous traditions of North and South America, without also giving importance to other ways of thinking and living in order to create a fairer balance. An idea is sold that a particular kind of existence is superior and attainable, when in fact it is neither. Massive inequalities therefore endure, because many are not equipped to see through the ignorance of popular opinion. And, if they are able to see that not everyone is able to live a certain kind of life, they do not have the power alone to make significant change. Which, as previously discussed, is not the only or the most important place to create the necessary changes to combat enduring injustice for Black people.

When training new educators or seasoned educators, it is important that there is an understanding of the faults found within education. This is sometimes challenging, given that education is generally viewed as positive. As evidenced here, it is subject to criticism just as all other institutions are.

3.0 MODERN REPARATIONS

Chapter 1 discussed the difficulties in paying reparations to Black people in particular, given our traditional understanding of what paying reparation consists in. To reiterate, reparations is a backwards operation. Definitionally, reparation is understood as restoration of conditions to a

\textsuperscript{328} Again, consider the references in note 42 for similar arguments.
previous, more just state. The underlying assumptions here are that there is an accessible and relatively straightforward method for compensation, and that the injustice is over. On a narrower, individual level, examples include offering wages to a person who was fired from their job without just cause, or monetary compensation for medical bills when a person is hurt by the actions of another (whether physically or emotionally). On a broader, collective level, examples include the institution of social programs and services to civilians post-war, or monetary payment for human rights violations by one country to the next.

Sometimes, the cases where reparation has been paid – even if mildly successfully – include cases where those who survived the injustice are still alive, no longer experience the injustice, and have an authentic chance for a successful future. But many individuals and groups simply do not fall into this category, and therefore never receive effective reparations, or any at all. Moreover, this often means that the injustices were likely severe, complex, and/or enduring, and therefore traditional reparations are impossible to pay. For Black people, the nature of injustice is enduring as it is inextricably linked to slavery and the various social and movements since then. The injustices faced by Black people do not fall into a traditional category where the payment of reparations is offered to those who no longer experience injustice, i.e. when injustice is episodic.

This calls for the reparation of reparations. It has been suggested that questions are not being raised about how we come to know what we know, a point made by Fricker. If a method for remedying injustice is ineffective, then it, too, needs to be repaired. Traditional models of reparations are particularly exclusive, and individuals and groups suffer further injustice because of this, including Black people. But this does not mean that reparations are simply never paid simply because our definitions and subsequent methods are deficient. We have begun with thinking about a group who deserves reparations, why it has not been paid, and how we can
begin to think differently about one of the most difficult cases of injustice, even as it currently ensues. The idea is that this process can help to pave the way for chipping away at the problem of reparations, and furthermore, that education can be a place to begin working on this.

3.1 Repairing Reparations

It is not good to think about and define reparations in the traditional way. It is likely the most obvious and simplest way to go about seeking redemption for cases of injustice, yet not the most inclusive nor effective. Reparations must include much more than monetary payment, public apology, or the development of social programs. Reparations can include a much deeper, honest understanding about why the injustice occurred in the first place, and remedying injustice at its core. This is a more honest, valuable, and permanent solution to injustice. Reflecting inward upon the realization that another experience of injustice at one’s own hands is the beginning of remorse which can lead to acts of redemption.

To repair reparations, it is necessary and important to conceive of the different ways that the affected individuals can actually be redeemed. It was suggested in Chapter 3 that the kind of intellectual focus necessary to separate oneself from her own social construct can be attained by applying Buddhist principles like recognizing the effects of ego and focusing on building awareness of the cause and effect which leads to the practice of love and kindness, properly understood, as indicated here. With this sort of mind frame, one may be able to think about how reparation can be implemented in different yet effective ways. The suggestion in this chapter is that educational institutes can be offered as a convenient portal for reeducating and relearning the injustices that Black people have endured. Since education allows for people to understand ideas, thoughts, situations, circumstances, concepts, etc. and to be transformed by what they learn, educational institutes, being that they are so broadly trusted and implemented, are spaces
that must be reformed not for moral reasons but for the sake of education. Again, understanding is at the heart of this argument.

Regarding the injustices experienced by Black people, understanding must start with acknowledging that the injustices that occurred from slavery and that the after effects of slavery are still maintaining. It is then important to recognize why this is the case. From this, creative methods for repairing these injustices can take place. Currently, changes are taking place much less formally, through grassroots activism. But to act together towards social movement in the right way, educational institutions need to reflect back what the community is demanding. This can therefore be considered an effort towards contributing to the problem of reparations; we begin by repairing the minds and hearts of all people in a community so that they are able to recognize the privileges that they have been given, and that they can be a part of the solutions to these problems.

3.2 Going Forward

This chapter provides reasons and ways for educators and educational curricula to become more virtuous. More general work for the future could include thinking more about teacher training in a way that cultivates the kind of compassion discussed in Chapter 3, ways of integrating different kinds of learning techniques, and the integration of historical perspectives from different groups of people.

More specific to philosophy, moving forward includes recognizing gaps in the curriculum. What this means is not only teaching about diversity and the injustices that are caused from drowning out particular voices, but actually incorporating those voices into the curriculum. For

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329 This refers to organizations like Black Lives Matter. This organization has received massive response, both good and bad, but is a campaign for Black people to gain traction for the global recognition of their sustained injustices. See their website at: http://blacklivesmatter.com.
example, rather than merely pointing out that Black people are treated as deserving of injustice and their thoughts disregarded, we must include work by Black philosophers into any philosophy course, not simply courses dedicated to social diversity and oppression. By doing this, we make this the new norm, a new standard that begins to recognize the many important voices in our communities that enrich our learning experience more than we can currently imagine.
Conclusion

This project began in Chapter 1 with the question about why reparations have never been given to Black people. Even though many other groups have received reparations for injustices, Black people continue to be denied. It was argued that it is important that we do not lose sight of reparations for Black people because it shows that we recognize a repugnant past of slavery, dehumanization, and colonization among many other atrocities.

Chapter 2 discussed the nature of the injustices experienced by Black people, noting two aspects that are generally not discussed. This includes its enduring nature and its epistemological nature. The injustices experience by Black people began centuries ago and is still occurring currently, and there is an unbreakable link between past and present. In order to understand the current injustices experienced by Black people, we must understand the past. And, we must understand present injustices as inextricably linked to past injustices. More than this, there is an epistemological aspect to the injustices experienced by Black people. Black people also experience epistemic injustice because the way they are conceived by themselves and by others is unjust.

In Chapter 3, approaches to dealing with the injustices of Black people were discussed and criticized. A compassionate approach, understood by Buddhists, was forwarded as a better way of understanding the injustices experienced by Black people. Meditative practices were offered in order to reach the kind of loving and compassionate mind frame necessary to see the world without clouded judgment.

Lastly, Chapter 4 used the institute of education to show how the Buddhist conceptualization of compassion can be applied. Virtuous educators and virtuous education was discussed, and different methods were encouraged like an educator locating herself socially and
including past and lived experienced into curricula. Gaining a better understanding about the injustices experienced by Black people can be achieved through actions like those discussed here, which can then shed light on solutions to the problem of reparations.
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