

*Relational Reparations: On
the Promise of Post-National
Repair*

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Introduction

In 2019 the European Union Parliament passed a resolution entitled “Fundamental Rights of People of African Descent in Europe” (henceforth the Resolution), which urged EU member states to adopt legislation focused on improving the condition of Black Europeans. The Resolution had as its explicit focus the reckoning and atoning for Europe’s involvement in the transatlantic slave trade and its crimes against Africa committed under European colonialism during the 19th and 20th centuries, and the enduring effects these systems have had on Europe’s black population. In her opening remarks about the

Resolution during its hearing, Cécile Kashetu Kyenge, the Italian representative to the EU parliament and one of the authors, stated that the Resolution was Europe's first attempt to pass legislation which sought to repair the region's relationship with Black Europeans: "For the first time Europe has recognized its violent form of racism, racism against people of African descent, something which is, unfortunately, more and more common in Europe. This Resolution is only the first step towards a more inclusive, multicultural, fair and respectful society--a society where there is no longer room for racial hatred" (EU Parliament Website 2019). In addition to redressing contemporary harm toward Black Europeans, the EU Parliament also presented the Resolution as a form of reparations for historic crimes against humanity through its reckoning with Europe's dark history of enslavement and colonization (EU Parliament News 2019). Yet, in this paper I argue that the Resolution falls short of achieving these stated objectives, in part due to the nationalistic way in which reparations have largely been defined and construed across Europe and beyond. This paper offers a post-nationalist critique of reparations policy in Europe, noting that the EU's nation-state bounded conceptualization of reparations is limited in its ability to make legible the ways in which former geopolitical structures of power operated historically, making them only attentive to issues at home while failing to connect to those beyond their borders. I argue that reparations which attempt to redress long-stand-

ing injustices between communities must embody three characteristics: (1) historicity, (2) transnationalism, and (3) postcoloniality. This paper proposes an alternative framework for conceptualizing reparations that is relational in nature and suggests that the restitution of cultural antiquities represents one way of constructing and executing a relational approach to reparative justice. I conclude by presenting the case of Germany's recent reparations efforts as an illustrative example of such a relational model.

Defining Reparations

It is first important to define what is meant by reparations generally, and more specifically how the EU has framed the concept. Reparations are largely thought of as compensation for grievances or damages incurred by one party at the hand of another. Lisa Laplante has defined reparations as “measures to address the material and moral damage suffered by victims” (Laplante 2014, 71). Within the nation state context of internal colonization, Ernesto Verdeja has defined reparations as “those policies and initiatives that attempt to restore to victims their sense of dignity and moral worth and eliminate the social disparagement and economic marginalization that accompanied their targeting, with the goal of returning their status as citizens” (Verdeja 2008: 208). The Rabat Report suggests that reparations programs are “meant to provide material and symbolic gestures that might

help repair the harms and assuage the pain suffered by victims” (International Center for Transitional Justice 2009). Others have framed reparations in terms of the programs they include, for example apologies, truth commissions, civil rights legislation and financial compensation” (Brophy 2006).

These definitions each contain two important features: first, there is an emphasis on addressing the *historic* injustice, or the initial violation committed in the past. Second, these definitions focus on repairing the relationship and restoring justice to the community initially harmed in the violation. This paper argues that while the Resolution seeks grounding in these principles of reparations, in principle it fails to deliver on these commitments due to the ahistorical nature of the Resolution and misguided focus on the population it is meant to benefit.

About the Resolution

The Resolution was largely the result of research, actions and policies developed within the EU framework to address issues happening across the continent. In 2017 the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) published a 2017 report entitled “Being Black in the EU” that details experiences of racial harassment and discrimination primarily in the labor and housing markets (EU Website on Integration 2018a). The report was one of the primary resources used in the development of the

Resolution and is cited frequently throughout its text. In 2018 the European Parliament also sponsored the EU's first ever People of African Descent Week, described as an initiative to raise awareness of Europe's 15 million residents of African descent and to discuss solutions to address the injustice and violence they face, including racial prejudice, discrimination and Afrophobia (EU Website on Integration 2018b). This event was considered to be a formative step in the drafting of the Resolution as a symbolic gesture of the values and sentiments the legislation represented. Furthermore, in 2017, the Council of Europe High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a comment condemning what they referred to as "Afrophobia" in Europe, which began with the following statement:

Human enslavement and the slave trade were appalling tragedies in the history of humanity which still cast a shadow on Europe. Colonialism scarred the destiny of millions of men, women and children and left an indelible mark on our world. It shaped European societies for centuries and led to deeply rooted prejudices and inequalities. Its consequences are still largely ignored or denied today (Council of Europe, Commissioner for Human Rights Website 2017).

The 2017 EU Fundamental Rights report defines Afrophobia as follows:

A specific form of racism, including any act of violence or discrimination, fuelled by historical abuses and negative stereotyping, and leading to the exclusion and dehumanisation of people of African descent; whereas this correlates to historically repressive structures of colonialism and the transatlantic slave trade (EU Agency for Fundamental Rights 2017).

Despite its stated commitment of addressing the long-term effects of colonialism and the slave trade, identified as the roots causes of injustices against Black Europeans, the Resolution largely fails to attend to the people, places and institutions most directly affected by colonialism and the slave trade--African communities decimated by those systems as well as the enduring legacies of harm between Europe and those communities. The Resolution, while important for protecting the lives of Black residents of Europe, does little to confront the legacies of slavery and colonialism elsewhere, where arguably the effects of these historic systems of oppression loom much larger. These structures are not simply institutions of our past, but continue to inform the ways in which Europe and its former colonies relate to one another in the present, a reality which requires attending to through more direct forms of repair. A focus on Black Europeans presents a version of history which misrepresents the location of harm and where accountability lies. Ultimately addressing the needs of Europe's black population serves to primarily benefit the former

imperial nation state and its residents, while failing to reallocate resources and power to the colonized nation, a cornerstone of reparative justice.

The Resolution is grounded in historical rhetoric that explicitly names the violence of Europe's historic injustices and calls for more transparency about the structural vestiges of historic violence in the lives of Black Europeans. It acknowledges such legacies explicitly:

[W]hereas histories of injustices against Africans and people of African descent, including enslavement, forced labour, racial apartheid, massacres, and genocides in the context of European colonialism and the transatlantic slave trade, remain largely unrecognised and unaccounted for at an institutional level in the Member States (ibid, section F).

Furthermore, Measure 5 of the Resolution calls for days of remembrance to be instituted as one way of acknowledging the ongoing violence of the past:

Encourages the EU institutions and the Member States to officially acknowledge and mark the histories of people of African descent in Europe, including of past and ongoing injustices and crimes against humanity, such as slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, or those committed under European colonialism, as well as the vast achievements and positive contributions of people of African descent (ibid, Measure 5).

While the stated goal of the Parliament is to reckon with the continent's brutal past, the focus of the recommendations is less attentive to the histories of these events, which I argue must be a critical component of reparations. The Resolution calls for 28 measures to be adopted and implemented by member states, the vast majority of which are affirmative action style social policies. Measure 3 calls for the development of "national strategies for the social inclusion and integration of people of African descent"; Measure 10 encourages member states "to make efforts to systematically fight ethnic discrimination and hate crime"; and Measure 11 calls for member nations "to develop national anti-racism strategies that address the comparative situation of people of African descent in areas such as education, housing, health, employment, policing, social services, the justice system and political participation and representation."

Despite the Resolution's explicit focus on righting historic wrongs and bringing Europe's dark history into the present in order to begin the process of atonement, the proposed solutions are nationalistic and largely lack historical orientation. In contrast to the language of historicism of crimes committed under systems of colonialism and slavery, these social policy measures largely focus on issues related to Europe's more recent immigrants without attending to the conditions which produced their presence in Europe. Consequently, the question of how Black Europeans arrived to Europe is rarely interrogated.

There is a sense of amnesia about the origins of the violence that produced many of Europe's Black citizens and residents. By returning to the point of their arrival to Europe, we may develop a new understanding of what is owed to this population.

The affirmative action style social policy measures outlined in the Resolution are a necessary component of reparations in Europe but are not sufficient in bringing about justice-oriented repair. Reparations, in addition to attending to the contemporary manifestations of harm in Europe, must return to the historical point of violence *elsewhere*, where the initial violence was committed, and begin to atone for wrongdoings in these places as well. Such work would require returning to the moment of imperial conquest and colonial expansion and confronting the people in places that endured colonial violence, not just their descendants in Europe. Ariella Azoulay encourages us to examine *potential history* by returning to the point of origin of the historical injustice before violence was an inevitability in order to excavate the possibility of a post hoc alternative in the form of repair. "Rather than going forward, undoing imperialism entails going backward, revisiting violent conjunctures and their effects and giving these situations a second life, knowing that we live in their wake," she argues (Azoulay 2019). For reparations efforts to be effective they must not just attend to the legacies of historical events, but the historical events themselves. The Rabat Report sug-

gests that “the distinction between reparations and social policy is clear; the challenge is how to articulate it. The distinctive feature is historical memory.” In short, reparations without historical memory may make for sound social policy but do little to address crimes of the past. As such, a more historical framework for reparations is necessary to fully begin redressing Europe’s treatment of Black communities.

What this means for reparations in the EU is that member states must go beyond social protection measures for Black Europeans within their borders and consider the ways in which their imperial histories continue to manifest in their ex-colonies. In short, Europe’s reparations efforts must be rooted in history, transnationalism and postcolonialism. Reparations agendas that remain only focused on addressing contemporary issues at home risk reifying the colonial nation state’s position of power without redressing the global inequities produced by centuries of slavery and colonization.

There are two articles of the Resolution which explicitly name the project of reparations as a historical project. Measure 8 calls for Member States to adopt “some form of reparations such as offering public apologies and the restitution of stolen artefacts to their countries of origin” and Measure 9 “calls on the Member States to declassify their colonial archives.” These two measures embody the historical, transnational, and postcolonial

qualities that I argue are necessary for a relational approach to reparations. Applying such an approach to the social protection objectives of the Resolution, thus expanding the impact beyond Black Europeans to those in ex-colonies, in ways that are locally and contextually specific, would amount to relational reparations that would help to overcome the nationalistic bias of the present Resolution.

Relationalism

Relationalism as a theory first emerged with the growth of postcolonial theory and has since risen to prominence across the social sciences and humanities as fields from sociology to history of science to literature have found utility in the framework. In *Orientalism*, Edward Said examines the ways in which Western epistemologies constructed the Orient as regressive, static and singular while the West was held as progressive, modern and universal, and that overcoming such binary distinctions through relational thinking was critical to undermining hegemonic paradigms (Said 1979). Édouard Glissant describes the poetics of relations as “relational comparison as the complexities and entanglements among cultures and communities (Glissant 1997).” And Lisa Lowe and Kris Manjapra have theorized an “analytic of relation that seeks to reckon with the coloniality of knowledge that divides and regiments the world into areas, objects, properties, and scales of meaning, by observing instead

asymmetrical conflicts, entanglements, survivals, and transformations” (Lowe and Manjapra 2019). Dipesh Chakrabarty’s call to ‘provincialize Europe’ is a relational declaration that seeks to destabilize Europe’s position at the center of analysis and global relations in an effort to undermine its universality while turning attention to the importance of considering ‘the periphery’ and its relation to Europe and beyond (Chakrabarty 2000). This paper is a call to provincialize reparations in Europe by asking how their reach may extend beyond Europe’s borders, unearthing ways in which Europe continues to benefit from centuries of slavery and colonization, and how reparations applied relationally might begin to address such realities.

A popular concept of postcolonial relational theory is the idea of the mutual constitution of the colonizer and colonized. This notion largely extends from Fanon’s conceptualization of the master-slave relationship which was rooted in his engagement with Hegel’s theorization of the dialectic. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon argues that the slave and master constitute one another: “When there are no longer slaves, there are no longer masters (Fanon 1967).” Slaves and their masters, according to Fanon, are only able to recognize themselves through mutually recognizing each other and occupy a human world that is “a world of reciprocal recognitions (ibid: 171).” Social theorists since Fanon have extended this theory to describe colonizer-colonized relations, arguing

that Europe was influenced and shaped by its colonies as much as it was an agent in influencing and shaping them. Postcolonial social theorists have also used terms such as metrocentrism and methodological nationalism to refer to this bias in Eurocentric perspectives. Sociologist Julian Go has further suggested that analytic bifurcation occurs when relations that might not, in reality, be separate are analytically held apart and he calls, instead, for a relational approach that “emphasizes the interactional constitution of social units, processes, and practices across space (Go 2013: 28).” One example of this is Go’s claim that in *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault only attends to violence in France and the *ancien regime*, while ignoring the simultaneous and connected violence in France’s colonies, such as Saigon, Senegal and Algeria. As such, Foucault perpetuates the myth that colonial history was not, in fact, Europe’s history.

In practice, in discussions about reparations, Europe is almost exclusively concerned with how the vestiges of its empire continue to manifest domestically, while paying scant attention to the ongoing implications in ex-colonies. A relational reparations approach would help Europe overcome this singular, nationalistic focus on the member state, recover the interactive relations between the nations, and open up the possibility of acknowledging the legacies of imperial violence both at home and abroad, and the space between. Similarly, Parliament, by allowing each country to develop its own nation-based

strategy as well as focusing on only reparations for Black Europeans, and not addressing the need for reparations in former colonies across Africa, structurally maintains a form of analytic bifurcation and Europe-centered metropolitan nationalism.

By thinking of former colonial states such as the UK, France, Germany and Belgium not as individual nation-states, or independent entities, but instead as historical actors in a global imperial network; or thinking of former metropolitan centers and former colonies not as distinct sites with discrete characteristics, but instead bringing them into the same analytic frame, one can both more accurately assess the impacts and endurance of the imperial world and address the appropriate population in need of reparative justice. Relational thinking serves as a critique of the nation state as a framework for analysis and policy. “Relationality disrupts the presumption of essentialized, singular cultural origins, and emphasizes internal heterogeneity and differently scaled connection among different traditions, rather than the comparison of uniform abstractions, such as nation, region, or culture,” argues Glissant (1990: 24). As such, relationality as a concept encourages a mediation on what the nation state paradigm obscures in conversations about reparations and how we might overcome such limitations. The Resolution, in its adherence to the nation state paradigm as a solution within a reparative justice framework, further exacerbates the inequities between former imperi-

al nations and ex-colonies which have endured in the postcolonial period. It is through the work of thinking and acting relationally—between and across, as opposed to within and apart—that such forms of parity may be pursued. Instead of thinking and acting in terms of discrete spaces, what is needed is a way of acknowledging relations between the colonial and colonized worlds and reconnecting and reconstructing them.

Over the last several decades, postcolonial social theorists have explored this ‘relational turn’ in their historical analyses of global power. Edward Said early on suggested that we attend to “overlapping territories” and “intertwined histories” and construct narratives that are “common to men and women, whites and non-whites, dwellers in the metropolis and the peripheries, past as well as present and future (1979: 46).” This means acknowledging that the experiences of the colonizer and colonized were not easily disentangled. Richard Price suggests that relationalism is a way of returning to the period of colonization and thinking about the way that empire manifested as more than just an event that took place at home, and which affected people at home, but a process of encounter, contact, association and interaction that stretched across geographies and, now, temporalities (Price 2006). He develops the concept of “imperial circuits” as a way of interrogating these mutual connections between the colonial nation and its empire which is often construed as distant, distinct and foreign.

On the British empire, Price advances the idea that there is no such thing as an autonomous British state, both during the height of the colonial period and as the nation exists today:

The British state was neither a fixed nor an essential category. It assumed different shapes and forms from different historical moments or geographical vantage points. [...] Indeed, the state provides perhaps the best example of the mutually constitutive relationship of empire and British history. Historically speaking, the idea of the British state was inseparable from the idea of empire (ibid: 614).

While Price is describing the historical conditions which facilitated the development of an awareness of Britishness with respect to its colonial world, I argue that the same logic applies to ways of developing and implementing strategies for decolonization and repair. It is not possible to colonize at the level of an empire but only decolonize at the level of a state--the entire empire, or its modern corollary, must also be contained in such efforts. This fact is made even more complicated by the reality that the EU is of course comprised of multiple former competing imperial nations that are now acting as one body which issues non-binding guidance to individual members states, highlighting the need for a pluralistic, yet unified, response. As such, reparations cannot just be a project focused on the plight of Black Europeans but must be relationally configured to also

incorporate the multiple enduring empires it has left behind.

An over reliance on what many have referred to as the “metropolitan gaze” also has the effect of isolating the metropole from its colonies. As Price has described it, “The metropolitan gaze is insufficient to properly scan the links of Britain’s history to its empire. To approach empire from the metropolitan perch is to miss a great deal of the process of constructing empire. One big thing that is missed is the agency of the subjects of empire in the making of British history” (ibid 626). The Resolution suffers from a metropolitan gaze that only allows it to develop policy for descendants of imperial violence that live within its borders but does not fully address the needs of those ‘subjects’ whose role in the construction of the imperial world was just as central as European involvement. A relational model of reparations would thus deconstruct the metropolitan gaze and re-shift the focus of analysis and efforts toward a more interactional, constitutive, transactional approach between Europe and Africa.

Much of postcolonial theory is trying to overcome what Antoinette Burton refers to as “the persistent conviction that home and empire were separate spheres (1997: 231).” She argues that distinctions between concepts such as “home” and “away” defined the imagined geography of empire during periods of European coloni-

zation and have persisted through the present day. Such distinctions, citing the work of Mrinalini Sinha on the British empire, risks “remaking Britain (itself a falsely homogenous whole) as the centripetal origin of empire, rather than insisting on the interdependence, the ‘uneven development’, of national/imperial formations in any given historical moment (ibid).” Though specific to the British imperial case, Burton’s study has generalizable applicability to other European imperial contexts, and the EU more generally, given the ways in which both systems of direct and indirect rule facilitated similar patterns of imperial replication that continue to reproduce this very binary across nations.

Instead, a relational approach to the analysis of empire would recognize not just the interconnectedness of the spaces—because interconnectedness would imply that they are two distinct things that are connected—but an actual sameness that binds the two together. Burton argues that the nation is not an independent entity, but “an imperialized space--a political territory which could not, and still cannot, escape the imprint of empire (ibid: 240).” Empire, thus, does not need to be brought into the nation—it is the nation. The nation, as Burton describes it, “often stands as the mirror to which imperial identities are reflected back (ibid: 232).” She describes a form of relational thinking that conceives of the ‘nation’ as, in fact, “a set of relations that are constantly being made and remade, contested and refigured, that

nonetheless produce among their contemporaneous witnesses the conviction of historical difference (ibid: 235).” The distinction between home and the colonies was an intentional discursive project in order to provide evidence for modernity and civilization in the former. As such, undoing such categorizations and recognizing the fluidity between the two is a decolonial move toward undermining colonialist discourses of progress and development that persist today.

The nation-state is an insufficient site of redress because it misrepresents the scale, nuance and structure of empire, and creates a false notion of clarity about borders and their ability to contain the dubious effects of colonization while, in reality, the vestiges of empire are much more widespread and messy. Colonization was far from a nation-state based enterprise, but rather a global system of racial capitalism which superseded contemporary notions of the nation state and Europe. As such, its solutions must also be rooted within these global systems, which can only happen through decentering the European nation state and its populations. I propose a relational approach to thinking about reparations that maps onto the realities of global imperial domination, an approach that helps to clarify the impact of empire in order to use it as a starting point to undo its lasting harm. Such an alternative framework for reparations is already, on a small scale, being conceived through recent acts of cultural heritage restitution, namely the return

of artifacts plundered during colonial wars from Western museums to their indigenous source communities across Africa.

Cultural Heritage Restitution

Restitution, which generally refers to the return of property to its rightful owner, is a concept that dates back centuries, often in situations in which victims of war are seeking the restoration of objects looted during conflict. One of the first large-scale global restitution efforts was the return of Jewish cultural property—including artwork, personal belongings and other valuables—to Holocaust survivors and descendants of victims at the conclusion of the Second World War (Zweig 2001). Over the last few decades, claims for restitution among ex-colonies of former European empires have been growing as awareness and outrage over the withholding of imperial plunder in Western museums have increased with the rise in racial justice movement organizing. An estimated 90 to 95 percent of Africa’s cultural heritage is held outside the continent, largely in elite museums, galleries and private collections in the Northern Hemisphere. African governments are one constituency which have, for decades since gaining their independence from European nations, fought to retrieve their artifacts from Western museums that were acquired mostly during the decades between the Berlin Conference and the First World War (Hicks 2020). Since the publication of the Sarr Savoy

report, commissioned by French President Macron in 2017—which urged the restitution of artifacts held in French public museums which had been looted from Africa under French imperial conquest—there has been a great deal of energy and interest from European museums in initiating conversations around restitution, and many successful returns have taken place¹.

Restitution as a practice is structurally oriented around the tenets of relationalism and provides a viable model for an historically attuned reparations agenda for Europe. It acknowledges the entanglements between territories and obligations states have to one another, seeking to push beyond the binaries of home/away and metropole/colony through a recognition that the processes which affect those at ‘home’ are produced by the same dynamics which continue to bear implications for those elsewhere. Restitution is a process that not only acknowledges the existing relations between ex-imperial states and colonies but seeks to actively return to the historical moments at which such relations became fraught in order to excavate their ‘potential history’ for future generations. Nations pursuing strategies of restitution live in full recognition that it is not enough to honor the

1 See recent examples of restitution by the University of Aberdeen and University of Cambridge in Chow, V. (2021) “After Years of Debate, Two Universities Have Become the First U.K. Institutions to Restitute Benin Bronzes,” *Artnet News*, accessed on December 17, 2021, <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/uk-universities-restituted-benin-bronzes-2027670>.

legacies of slavery and colonization by addressing the problems within their borders, but must be responsive to all who have suffered as a result of these systems, regardless of citizenship or nationality.

Case: Relational Reparations in Germany

The German government's recent reconciliation efforts toward their former colonies is one model that provides a relational approach to reparations. Over the last few years, the German government and cultural establishment have begun to prioritize the return of cultural artifacts that have been illegitimately held. In 2018 the government returned the skulls of victims of the Herero-Nama genocide in Namibia that they had held for over a century. The following year, in 2019, Germany agreed to return a Portuguese Stone Cross that was of great cultural significance to Namibia which had been looted in 1893. And most recently, in early 2021, the German government announced that it would begin the process of returning Benin Bronze cultural objects to the Nigerian government that were looted from the ancient Kingdom of Benin in 1897. In addition, Germany has for many years been an active member of the Benin Dialogue Group, an organization committed to seeking the reunification of the community of Benin with their heritage and has been a key player in the development of a new cultural museum in Benin where the repatriated objects will be replaced.

In early 2021, the German government agreed to pay the Namibian government 1.1 billion euros as a gesture of reconciliation over the early 20th century genocide. The compensation will go toward development projects including land reform, rural infrastructure, and technical assistance. The German government explicitly did not refer to the compensation as reparations or issue a formal apology, as both actions would trigger a set of legally binding mechanisms that would make other forms of compensation necessary and would set an unwanted precedent for payment for Germany and other European and former imperial nations, and the Resolution was not formally referenced with regard to such decisions. Yet while the German government has been unwilling to use the term ‘reparations’ with regard to their reconciliation efforts, the sum total of their efforts related to cultural heritage restoration and direct financial investments represent a comprehensive form of reparative justice that is inherently relational. Beyond simply providing material support to people of African descent living in Germany, or Namibians whose recent ancestors were subject to violence in the genocide, the German government is addressing the decades- and centuries-long interactions between the communities implicated, interrogating how they continue to manifest and influence one another and seeking solutions that stretch across time and space. Julian Go argues that relational approaches must transcend discrete actions: “Rather than focusing narrowly

upon processes within societies (western, colonized, or non-Western) or even just *between* them (as in *international studies*), it *would track the processes and relations between diverse but connected spaces in the making and remaking of modernity*” (2013: 41).

In addition to being transnational, Germany’s efforts are also deeply rooted in historical realities of violence and plunder, as well as a postcolonial framework that acknowledges the mutuality of relations between Germany and its former colonies. While there is much left to be desired in the German case—including but not limited to stronger social and economic inclusion and anti-racism projects, and an explicit naming of reparations and financial compensation to the victims of the genocide—the German government’s efforts provide a strong argument for why incorporating a relational approach into our theory and practice of reparations is necessary and will make the repair process more whole.

Conclusion

In its current iteration, the “Fundamental Rights of People of African Descent in Europe” resolution addresses only the specific needs of Black Europeans who are citizens of individual member states without attending to both the imperial legacies within ex-colonies as well as the supranational legacies of the EU’s multiple empires which each bear their own vestiges of colonial power

across Europe and the colonized world. The spirit of article 8 in the Resolution, which calls on “the restitution of stolen artefacts to their countries of origin,” must be applied more broadly to not just artifacts, but to all the ways in which the EU has conceptualized repair within the Resolution. The affirmative action style social policies, in addition to efforts to curb discrimination and harassment and symbolic gestures meant to commemorate and memorialize the contributions of Black Europeans to society throughout history, must also be applied with this relational orientation.

While Germany’s framework for reparations provides a solid starting point from which other EU countries may begin thinking through their reparations program, it is far from perfect and represents just one model that is appropriate only for the specific German case. Given that each EU member state has its own distinct historic relationship to the institutions of slavery and colonization, so too must they develop their own strategies that consider such unique circumstances. As such, no two reparations plans would look alike as each member country must devise a plan that would be locally and contextually specific to the conditions of their imperial histories. For example, because Germany’s colonial crimes in Namibia involved a large-scale genocide that were particularly deadly for the Herero and Nama ethnic communities of Namibia, their plan is focused on socioeconomic rebuilding as a form of recovery for the

nation. In Nigeria, on the other hand, where the enduring effects of the artifact looting are most strongly felt, reparations interventions might focus more on the cultural dimensions of repair and rehabilitation, such as investments in the arts and culture sector.

Instead of thinking nationally, a more justice-oriented and historical approach would be to think imperially in order to begin to unravel empire's enduring legacies. We must return to the time and site at which historic relations of extraction were formed to think through who was harmed in these interactions and who benefited. If European nations were the primary beneficiaries in the transatlantic slave trade and colonial projects, reparative solutions that only reify the nation state are necessary insofar as they support descendants of those harmed through these systems of dominations, but are insufficient in bringing about repair for those affected who are seeking justice beyond the nation state boundary. Given that each nation's imperial history is different, each member state must return to its own point of initial violence to embark on the work of recuperation. Marcy Norton warns of "the persistence of a historiography that conceives of Atlantic (or global) history as the history of competing empires and/or settler colonial societies" and advocates, instead, advocating for a mode of entanglements between interconnected and interdependent worlds (2017: 18). Addressing the realities of an entangled capitalist imperial world economy in produc-

ing the alienation of cultures from their heritage may be one step toward unraveling the legacies of colonialism. Instead of looking inward, toward one's own citizenry, a relational approach to reparations would look outward and between to tell a new global imperial history that moves beyond the metropolitan centers. Approaching reparations from a historical perspective which recognizes the ways in which harm continues to manifest in all the spaces along the imperial route is a necessary way of collapsing the boundaries between nations, ultimately allowing our entanglements to ground us in a space of mutual repair. We are living through a moment in which decades, if not centuries, of organizing around the restitution of colonial plunder is coming to fruition, providing a pathway through which to envision and practice such forms of connected care and allowing us to imagine new ways of being, relationally.

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