**The Case for Reparations**

1. Describe the system of debt peonage.
2. Discuss Clyde Ross’ childhood. In so doing, explain the opportunities that he could see but not touch.
3. On housing…
   1. Explain the implications of buying “on contact”.
   2. What is a “restrictive covenant”?
   3. What is “redlining” and how was the FHA complicit in this practice?
   4. Discuss the goals of the Contract Buyers League.
4. Some telling numbers
   1. Patrick Sharkey, a sociologist at New York University, studied children born from 1955 through 1970 and found that ­­­­\_\_\_\_ percent of whites and \_\_\_\_\_ percent of blacks across America had been raised in poor neighborhoods. A generation later, the same study showed, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
   2. The Pew Research Center estimates that white households are worth roughly \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ times as much as black households, and that whereas only \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ percent of whites have zero or negative wealth, more than \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of blacks do
   3. Sharkey’s research shows that black families making $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ typically live in the kinds of neighborhoods inhabited by white families making $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. “In the contest of upward mobility, Barack and Michelle Obama have won. But they’ve won by being twice as good—and enduring twice as much. Malia and Sasha Obama enjoy privileges beyond the average white child’s dreams. But that comparison is incomplete. The more telling question is how they compare with Jenna and Barbara Bush—the products of many generations of privilege, not just one.” Analyze this assertion. What are the implications of this line of thought?
6. Cite two early examples of reparations in U.S. history.
7. “But still we are haunted. It is as though we have run up a credit-card bill and, having pledged to charge no more, remain befuddled that the balance does not disappear. The effects of that balance, interest accruing daily, are all around us.” Extrapolate this metaphor. In so doing, evaluate the degree to which it is accurate.
8. What does Coates mean when he criticizes patriotism à la carte
9. Use evidence from your studies in U.S. history to support, modify, or refute Coates’ assertion that, “American begins in Black plunder and White Democracy, two features that are not contradictory but complementary.”
10. Coates cites John C. Calhoun as stating, “The two great divisions of society are not the rich and poor, but white and black …And all the former, the poor as well as the rich, belong to the upper class, and are respected and treated as equals.” Calhoun’s argument is fundamental to Coates’ argument. Draw on your knowledge of U.S. history to explain the degree to which Calhoun’s argument is valid.
11. Offer evidence from the piece arguing that American wealth was built on the backs of slaves.
12. Describe Redemption.
13. How did Roosevelt’s New Deal & the G.I. Bill perpetuate white supremacy?
14. Describe the housing and civil rights dilemma in post-WWII Chicago.
15. What is “block busting”?
16. What is the significance of the story of Billy Lamar Brooks Sr. as it pertains to Coates’ thesis?
17. Coates asks the reader to, “[i]magine yourself as a young black child watching your elders play by all the rules only to have their possessions tossed out in the street and to have their most sacred possession—their home—taken from them.” Please do so. And then respond freely below.
18. “Reparations—by which I mean the full acceptance of our collective biography and its consequences—is the price we must pay to see ourselves squarely…Reparations would mean a revolution of the American consciousness, a reconciling of our self-image as the great democratizer with the facts of our history.” Analyze Coates’ assertion(s) here.
19. What conclusions does Coates seems to draw from the debate over German reparations to Jews and the results of this debate?
20. Pose 1-2 questions to Coates about this piece.
21. Synthesize this article with your knowledge of U.S. history to answer this question: what, if anything, does the United States owe to African-Americans?