

Contemporary Abolitionists

Civil Disobedience
Walden, a game EDU

Ava Duvernay (b. 1972)

- Directed *13TH*
 - A documentary which critically examines the American prison system as both a legacy of slavery and a system of oppression
- Award-winning director & filmmaker
- **Quote:** “If I could, I would abolish prisons. Literally. Factually, statistically, again and again for decades, it has been shown that incarceration does not improve rates of crime. It just doesn’t. It’s the wrong way to do it. Some folks see that as radical, but I’m a prison abolitionist. Incarceration is a money-making venture for some private companies. It doesn’t help people. It doesn’t help the communities. It doesn’t help the victims. It doesn’t truly help us grow as a society. The way that we punish is so arcane, outdated and just ridiculous that we’re spending money to let people out of prison who have not been reformed or rehabilitated. It’s a vicious, ridiculous cycle.”



Angela Davis (b. 1944)

- Political activist, professor, and writer
- **Quote:** “One may perceive in the penitentiary many reflections of chattel slavery as it was practiced in the South. Both institutions subordinated their subjects to the will of others. Like Southern slaves, prison inmates followed a daily routine specified by their superiors. Both institutions reduced their subjects to dependence on others for the supply of basic human services such as food and shelter. Both isolated their subjects from the general population by confining them to a fixed habitat. And both frequently coerced their subjects to work, often for longer hours and for less compensation than free laborers.”
-- from *Are Prisons Obsolete?*, 2003



Mariame Kaba

- Personal information protected
- Community organizer, writer, and curator
- **Quote:** “Enough. We can’t reform the police. The only way to diminish police violence is to reduce contact between the public and the police... There is not a single era in United States history in which the police were not a force of violence against black people. Policing in the South emerged from the slave patrols in the 1700 and 1800s that caught and returned runaway slaves. In the North, the first municipal police departments in the mid-1800s helped quash labor strikes and riots against the rich. Everywhere, they have suppressed marginalized populations to protect the status quo.” -- from the New York Times Opinion, “Yes, We Mean Literally Abolish the Police”, published July 2020

Ta-Nehisi Coates (b. 1975)

- Writer & Journalist
- Author of *Between the World and Me*, *We Were Eight Years in Power*, and *The Water Dancer*
- Also co-wrote Marvel's *The Black Panther* from 2016-2021
- **Quote:** "Perhaps after a serious discussion and debate—the kind that HR 40 proposes—we may find that the country can never fully repay African Americans. But we stand to discover much about ourselves in such a discussion—and that is perhaps what scares us. The idea of reparations is frightening not simply because we might lack the ability to pay. The idea of reparations threatens something much deeper—America's heritage, history, and standing in the world." -- from *The Case for Reparations*, 2014



Eve Ewing (b. 1986)

- Writer, professor, community organizer, artist, and poet
- **Quote:** “Ever since black people came to this country we have needed a Moses. There has always been so much water that needs parting. It seems like all black children, from the time we are born, come into the world in the midst of a rushing current that threatens to swallow us whole if we don't heed the many, many warnings we are told to heed. We come into the world as alchemists of the water, bending it, willing it to bear us safe passage and cleanse us along the way, to teach us to move with joy and purpose and to never, ever stop flowing forward into something grand waiting at the other end of the delta. We're a people forever in exodus.” -- from *Electric Arches*, 2017

