



University
of Glasgow



**JAMES McCUNE SMITH
ANNUAL
CONFERENCE**

WELCOME FROM THE JMS SCHOLARS

On behalf of the organising team, we are delighted to welcome you to the second James McCune Smith Annual Conference.

We have an amazing programme, with a wide range of inspiring speakers and facilitators lined up for our special two-day event. This conference will continue to be an essential platform for Black academics to address and discuss their distinct experiences in navigating higher education in the UK, considering their positionalities and research backgrounds.

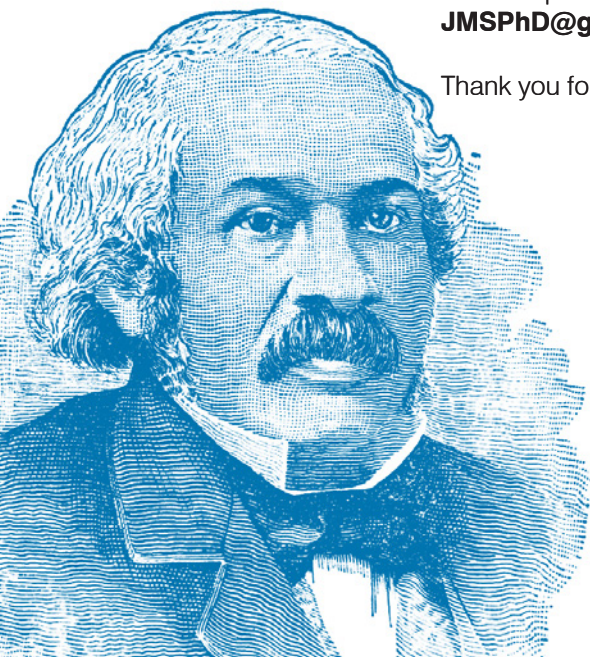
Last year, our speakers collectively emphasised the support of community groups. As scholars of the JMS programme ourselves, we can also attest to the importance of such friendships as we embark on the start of our own careers. Therefore, the theme that we have chosen for this year is *Curating Circles: Finding Yourself and Others in Higher Education*. We believe that community groups that nourish every part of the self, are a vital component in navigating higher education and taking care of your mental health.

Following in the footsteps of last year, the 25th of June will be an 'unconference'. This moves away from the traditional conference format to provide a space where different styles of exhibitions can be showcased. We believe that unconferences like these have important roles to play in the creation and dissemination of knowledge.

We hope that you foster many lasting friendships and networks as you go through the next two days. Additionally, we encourage you to sign up to our James McCune Smith Network! This features a regular programme of talks from Black Academics, creative practitioners, and industry representatives. If you like to be added to our mailing list to receive updates on this please contact

JMSPHD@glasgow.ac.uk

Thank you for joining us and we very much hope that you enjoy our conference!



**James McCune Smith
broke many barriers
in his professional life**

GUEST SPEAKERS/ FACILITATOR BIOGRAPHIES



Dr Gabriella Beckles-Raymond

Dr Gabriella Beckles-Raymond, Senior Fellow of Advanced Higher Education (SFHEA), is an independent interdisciplinary philosopher, writer, educator, wife, mother, sister, friend, basketball coach, and Co-CEO of EQBR. Her work has been published internationally in a range of journals, books and commissioned reports. Gabriella's research and writing is concerned with questions of love, moral psychology, culture, justice and ethics and what it means to 'Liv Good' at the intersections of systemic domination. She has over twenty years of experience in education as a leader, administrator, faculty member, and program developer. She is and co-founder of the Collective Knowledge Production Group, a member of Metronomes Steel Orchestra, the Collegium of Black Women Philosophers, and the Caribbean Philosophical Association. Gabriella earned her MA and doctorate in Philosophy from the University of Memphis. She earned her BS in Psychology and MA in Sociology from Morgan State University in Baltimore, where she was Director of the pioneering Academic Enrichment Program. Gabriella also has a P.G.C.E. in Secondary Education from the Institute of Education, University of London.

Dr Peggy Brunache

Dr Peggy Brunache is a lecturer in the Public History and Archaeology at the University of Glasgow and the founding Director of the Beniba Centre for Slavery Studies. As a historical archaeologist, she has excavated sites in West Africa, Caribbean, and the United States. Many of her public-facing projects include designing Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCS), and working with national and international theatres, science and culture festivals. Her international media appearances include the Discovery Science Channel, BBCTV, ITV, and documentaries in the US and Germany.



Cllr Graham Campbell

Cllr Graham Campbell is a longstanding socialist campaigner and community activist who was elected as Glasgow's first African Caribbean Councillor in 2017. He is the chair of the city's Black Lives Matter/ Slavery and Colonial Legacy Working Group and project leader of Flag Up Scotland Jamaica, campaigning for Jamaica to be recognised as a country of specific significance for Scotland. As a musician and cultural producer, Graham spearheaded council recognition of August 1st as Emancipation Day in 2014 and founded the first African Caribbean Centre in Merchant City. He has spoken at several debates and seminars and appeared in TV, podcast, and radio documentaries on the legacy of slavery.



He is currently completing his Masters in Reparatory Justice at the University of Glasgow.

Dr Adetunmise Dada

Dr. Adetunmise Dada is a Lecturer at the University of Glasgow, specializing in quantum optics and quantum information. He explores quantum light sources for high-dimensional quantum entanglement, quantum communication, and quantum metrology. Besides his academic pursuits, Dr. Dada hosts "The Science Show with Dr. Dada," a live radio program that delves into complex scientific topics in an engaging and accessible manner.



Satya Dunning

Satya Dunning is a Glasgow based Facilitator specialising in:

Body literacy - by fostering and facilitating a return to and reconnection with the body, can a healing - grounded in the body's wisdom - of thinking, feeling and genuine relating in connection with nature and its cycles begin. Satya believes this process naturally opens the human heart towards the humanity of self and others, and body of the earth.

Emotional literacy - Satya supports self-awareness and transformation from inside out using the tools of Nonviolent Communication and compassionate processes.

Nutritional literacy - Using food as medicine to foster vitality and maintain health whilst exploring the emotional and mental patterns at the root of your relationship with food, as well as dietary and lifestyle choices.



Professor Jason Gill

Professor Jason Gill, Professor of Cardiometabolic Health at the University of Glasgow, chairs the James McCune Scholarships Steering Board while leading a dynamic research group focusing on vascular and metabolic diseases. With over 200 peer-reviewed papers, his research delves into the epidemiology of lifestyle factors, particularly physical activity, diet, and sleep, and their impact on cardiometabolic risks.

He actively collaborates across disciplines and with external stakeholders to develop sustainable lifestyle interventions for chronic disease prevention. Jason's influence extends to shaping UK guidelines on physical activity, type 2 diabetes prevention, obesity, and cardiovascular disease. As Chair of the Diabetes UK Research Strategy Group, he drives efforts in preventing and managing type 2 diabetes.

A fellow of prestigious societies, Jason established an MSc program in Sport and Exercise Science & Medicine at the University of Glasgow. He's dedicated to public engagement, making science accessible through TV appearances and public events.

As one of the few Black professors in STEM in the UK, Jason advocates for diversity in academia and supports young scientists from ethnic minority backgrounds through mentorship and other initiatives. By championing diversity, he aims to enhance both organisational outcomes and the aspirations of underrepresented groups.



Montel Gordon

Montel Gordon, a PhD researcher specialising in race and education, is a regular contributor to esteemed publications such as *The Voice* and *The Jamaican Gleaner*. Recognised for his scholarly prowess, he has published articles in reputable outlets including *Vice*, *The Metro*, *iNews*, and *The Independent*. Adding to his accolades, Montel also curates annual magazines under his *Nostalgia '99* series, with a keen focus on music and cultural themes.



Hannah Lavery

Hannah Lavery is a poet and playwright from Edinburgh, named by Owen Sheers as one of the Ten Writers Asking Questions That Will Shape Our Future. Her debut poetry collection *Blood Salt Spring* (Polygon) was nominated for a Saltire Prize in 2022 and named as one Poetry Society Books of the Year. Her second collection, *Unwritten Woman*, will be published by Polygon in August 2024. Hannah is the current Makar (poet laureate) for the City of Edinburgh, and a former associate artist with the National Theatre of Scotland.

Steph Scholten

Steph Scholten (he/him) is the Dutch director of The Hunterian at the University of Glasgow. He studied art history and works since 1989 in the museum/heritage sector. In The Netherlands, he worked for the Ministry of Culture, the National Conservation Institute, the National Museum of Antiquities and as director of the museums of the University of Amsterdam. His major research interest is in museum ethics. He currently serves on the boards of Museums Galleries Scotland and ICOM.

Tawona Sithole

My spirit name, Ganyamatope Dzapasi, inspires me in shared creativity and learning. Co-founder, Seeds of Thought arts group; UNESCO artist-in-residence, University of Glasgow. Mostly I appreciate my work for the many inspiring people it allows me to meet.





Dr Francesca Sobande

Dr Francesca Sobande is a writer and senior lecturer in digital media studies at Cardiff University, where her teaching focuses on critical approaches to media, music, and meme culture studies. She is the author of *The Digital Lives of Black Women in Britain* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), *Consuming Crisis: Commodifying Care and COVID-19* (SAGE, 2022), and *Big Brands Are Watching You: Marketing Social Justice and Digital Culture* (University of California Press, 2024). Francesca is also co-author/co-dreamer with Layla-Roxanne Hill of *Black Oot Here: Black Lives in Scotland* (Bloomsbury, 2022) and the freely available and co-created graphic novel and animation, *Black Oot Here: Dreams O Us* (2023). Francesca's recent research and writing particularly focuses on internet imaginaries, "alternative" music subcultures, desire on screen(s), and cultural memory. Her bylines include Disegno, Paste Magazine, Real Review, The Skinny, and The Vinyl Factory. She also enjoys writing in Margins and embracing all things emo.

Dr Dwayne Spiteri

Dr Dwayne Spiteri is a researcher who enjoys spreading his passion for science. While studying Particle Physics and Cosmology at the University of Birmingham, he worked for the Physics Admissions department. Afterwards he moved to University of Glasgow to do a PhD with the Experimental Particle Physics group where he started the ATLAS UK Virtual Visit Program connecting schoolchildren and interested parties to scientists live at CERN. After this he pivoted to researching scientific computing and sustainability within the same group, and during this time helped to shape the James McCune Smith programme from its inception and currently serves as a member of its steering board.



Lisa Williams

Lisa Williams is the founder of the Edinburgh Caribbean Association and curates' education programmes, arts events and walking tours to promote awareness of Black Scottish history and links between Scotland and the Caribbean. She is an Honorary Fellow in the School of History, Classics and Archaeology at the University of Edinburgh. She works as a consultant to educational and heritage organisations across Scotland.





Yoruba Sonic

Pelumi Odubanjo is a curator, writer and PhD researcher at the University of Glasgow. Her research focuses on women's historical and contemporary vernacular photo archives across West African geographies.

Amina Lawal Agoro is a researcher and cultural producer working between the UK and West Africa. She is currently undertaking a practice-led PhD at the intersection of architecture and curatorial enquiry.

Steven Ulysse is a Postgraduate Researcher at the University of Glasgow, his research mainly focuses on the exploration of Vodou and its links with other Afro-based religious traditions.



JMS SCHOLARS 2023

RESEARCH DESCRIPTIONS

Kwame Amoah-Boateng

Mines and Plantations: Survival at the Edges of Extraction

This research looks towards Black Geographies and Black Ecologies to uncover the extractive logics of mining and bio-fuel plantations in Ghana. It is primarily concerned with the ecological implications of such industries and their impact on the wellbeing and livelihood of neighbouring communities as they attempt to 'make life' at the edges of extraction. As a result, and located within a Ghanaian context, his research seeks to unravel what the relationship between trans-Atlantic slavery, colonisation, modernity and the (un)human can tell us about the globalised, anti-Black, assemblages of the Anthropocene today.

Yohannes Marshall

Premature deindustrialisation and Growth

My research focuses on 'premature deindustrialisation' and its effect on economic growth in developing countries. Premature deindustrialisation (PD) refers to the fall in the share of manufacturing employment and value added (output) in a country's economy accompanied by a shift to the services sectors at lower levels of income (GDP per capita) compared to historical patterns observed in developed countries (30% on average). There's an inverted U-shaped relationship between industrialisation (measured by manufacturing employment share or output share) and Income (GDP per capita). The main culprits for deindustrialisation and/or premature deindustrialisation in developing countries are trade and globalisation, leading to both employment and value-added deindustrialisation. However, in developed countries, due to high productivity in the manufacturing sector, they only experience employment deindustrialisation. In conclusion, since manufacturing is considered as the engine of growth, deindustrialisation at early stages of development is detrimental to economic growth.



Taylor Carty

More Than My Mothers Daughter: Centering Black Girlhood in Barbados, 1750-1838

This research will explore the lives of enslaved Black girls in Barbados from 1750-1838. It aims to construct a picture of their day-to-day lives through case studies and fragmental documents in the colonial archive. Using various methodologies that centre the enslaved voice, it aims to display girl children as individuals with unique experiences and showcase Black girlhood as a methodological approach to investigate the lives of enslaved people in the Caribbean..

Rachel Isaiah

Investigating the Impact of the Menstrual Cycle on Female Exercise Performance

Despite increasing female participation in sports, the influence of the menstrual cycle on exercise performance is under-researched. Hormonal fluctuations during the menstrual cycle can affect key physiological parameters such as strength, endurance, metabolism, and mood. Current training programs often overlook these variations, potentially compromising performance and increasing injury risk. My research aims to fill the knowledge gap by examining how different menstrual phases impact exercise performance. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing tailored training regimens that optimize performance and support female athletes' health. The findings might show that hormonal fluctuations during the menstrual cycle significantly impact endurance, strength, and recovery in exercising females.

Dorcas Iyanuoluwa Fakile

Autistic Wahala and the Black Community: Exploring the cultural and spiritual attitudes of autism in Black communities

Although awareness and discussions surrounding autism have become increasingly prevalent, the perspective in Black communities often remains negative. Autism is frequently seen through a deficit lens, perceived either as a 'curse' from God or as a sign of bad behaviour. These stereotypes and criticisms make it 'particularly dangerous to be autistic while Black,' often leading to social exclusion. This research examines the intersectional identity of Black autistic individuals in religious spaces, exploring how different identity components interact to shape their unique experiences. It aims to understand the beliefs and perceptions of autism within a Black church community in the UK and develop an educational approach that respects cultural and religious values whilst fostering more informed conversations about autism.

Pheona Matovu

Where next for Racial Equality in the Scottish Workplace? Exploring best Practice Antiracism in Scotland

Attempts to address racism in Scotland have been made through developing policies and setting up initiatives such as antiracism toolkits, task groups, awareness events and training programs. However, much of the research informing antiracism practice comes from other parts of the world such as The United States of America and the wider UK, yet, Scotland has positioned itself as different from these contexts. Additionally, the demographics in Scotland are different and until fairly recently, race conversations have been avoided, resulting in very limited research and understanding of antiracism practice in the Scottish workplace. My project will seek to understand antiracism practice within the Scottish context.

Shylet Njanike

Exploring the lived experiences of Black African families of adults with learning disabilities living at home in the United Kingdom.

This study will explore the lived experiences of Black African families of adults with learning disabilities living in the United Kingdom. Following a systematic review to examine existing work and to identify the gaps in knowledge, a qualitative study with semi-structured interviews will explore the daily lived experiences of the Black African families of adults with learning disabilities. The study will also consider their experiences in accessing support, and the factors that may influence both informal and formal support, including whether or not they see, culture, religion, and ethnicity as impacting on their experiences and needs. A mixed methods approach will be adopted which will look at the wider context of living with an adult person with learning disabilities in the UK.

Alphaeus Ngonga

Climate Change and Human Rights: How best can International Human Rights Law inspire the future design of National Climate Change Legal and Policy Framework to achieve Climate Justice? (A Case Study of Malawi)

My research is concerned with investigating how best international human rights law can inspire future policies for climate justice, using Malawi as a case study.

My research aims to investigate the complex connection between climate change and human rights, with particular emphasis on the development of effective legal frameworks and remedies that promote climate justice. Using Malawi as a case study following the impact of Tropical Cyclone Freddy (March 2023) which caused unprecedented devastation and human rights violations, the research seeks to analyse the people's experiences and the government's response to the impacts of climate-induced harm on people's rights to draw lessons on how effective remedies can be developed and applied using a human rights-based approach.

Caitlin Omobola Knox

Scottish Museums and the Black Lives Matter Movement: A critical analysis into decolonial initiatives and changing practices

My PhD explores the numerous collaborative projects, workshops, exhibitions, interventions and public events undertaken by Scottish museums and galleries in recent years that have engaged with Scotland's historical links to chattel slavery and its wider colonial past, as well as the contemporary legacies of this.

My main aim is to examine the reasons and motivations behind the sharp rise in various initiatives since 2020, and evaluate whether change within the sector has been a direct result of the global emergence of the Black Lives Matter Movement.

My research will frame the Scottish museum and gallery sector as a case study through which to investigate and analyse decolonisation, in theory and in practice.



Connor Sullivan

Understanding the ecology and evolution of amphibian pathogens in Scotland and Ecuador

Disease causing organisms and viruses (pathogens) threaten amphibians globally. The biggest culprit being the amphibian killing chytrid fungus, *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* (Bd). Bd was detected in Southern Scotland in 2008 however no surveillance for the pathogen, nor other emerging pathogens, has been conducted since. In Ecuador, Bd has been associated with the loss of several species and populations since the 1980s. Despite Bd being present in Ecuador for so long, we know very little about the pathogens ecology and evolution within Ecuador. My PhD investigates 1) the diversity and distribution of amphibian infecting pathogens and parasites in Western Scotland 2) and the changes in the genetic structure, diversity, and distribution of Bd across space and time.

Adelaide Lunga

Designed Mimics of Protein-Protein Interfaces

This project will involve the design and synthesis of ubiquitin binding domains.

Ubiquitin is a small protein that is added (in a process called ubiquitination) as a post translational modification (PTM) to other proteins as a means of targeting them for further processing. Disruption within the ubiquitin signalling has been reported to cause various diseases such as immune disorders, and cancer.

This research will develop new tools to characterise ubiquitination patterns of target proteins, these can be later used for better understanding of different diseases.

Adebolaji Nimyel

Pathway experiences to accessing, progressing, and completing higher education – a case study of refugees and asylum-seeking people in Scotland

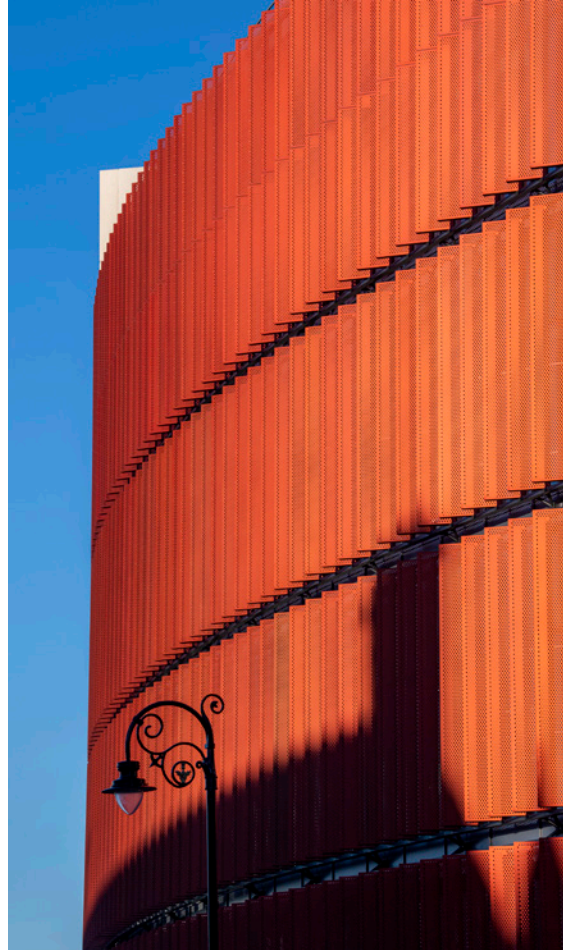
Peaceful and inclusive societies are a critical component of the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals 4, which call for inclusive and equitable education and lifelong opportunities for all, including refugees (UNHCR, 2015). This case study will uncover the constraints refugees and those seeking asylum encounter in their journey through higher education in Scotland. While the UK has implemented progressive measures to integrate displaced people in receiving countries, considerable obstacles remain. These include the asylum process's complexities, non-acknowledgement of previous qualifications, proficiency in the English language, mental unwellness, and financial limitations. Factors such as discrimination, difficulties in adapting to a new culture, and past traumatic experiences can make their educational journey more challenging. Previous studies have shown that Scotland's supportive framework for educational access is a good starting point. However, the system still has significant gaps, particularly when retaining displaced students in higher education. My study aims to investigate and propose strategies to effectively enhance the academic success of refugees and those people seeking asylum in Scottish higher education.

Umloda Ibrahim

Sudanese Cinema: Locating Sudanese filmmakers within its transnational industry

African cinema has established a strong presence on the global cinematic stage yet Sudanese Cinema, with its history predating the 1950s, seems to have been overlooked. Recent film releases by Sudanese filmmakers have evoked questions regarding the history of filmmaking in Sudan, its contemporary industry and the images that are emerging.

My research aims to explore how resistance appears in Sudanese films and modes of production. In trying to locate Sudanese Cinema and provide a framework to look at its vast moving image archive and contemporary industry, it has led me to explore two questions – what constitutes as Sudanese Cinema and how do we read this vast body of films?



Leslie Thompson

Preferences and Market Dynamics in the Global Search Engine Industry: A Consumer-centric Approach

The Internet has changed our lives and altered our habits in numerous ways, most notably, search engines are intertwined with our daily lives. This is evidenced by Google the market leader, with a market share of 81.95%, being a verb in the dictionary.

From a consumer-centric perspective, my research examines how user behaviours, perceptions, and preferences drive and sustains market leadership in the highly competitive global search engine industry. Additionally, the study investigates the ubiquitous competition from the combination of generative artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies, as alternatives.

From a positivist philosophical stance, a comprehensive quantitative methodology will be developed for the research. The findings will impact the digital marketplace's policy, strategic decision-making, competitive practices, and contribute to theoretical advancements in the field of study.

Oluwajuwon Okunade

Discovery of Iron Catalytic Methods for the Synthesis of Pharmaceutical Intermediates

For the last 50 years, chemical building blocks for industrial applications have been prepared using transition metal catalysts, that allow efficient synthesis under mild conditions. However, many of the catalytic processes use expensive and toxic precious metals such as palladium, rhodium and iridium. In recent years, to overcome these issues, chemists have turned to inexpensive and non-toxic, earth-abundant metals such as copper and iron. The aim of this PhD is to discover new chemical transformations that can be catalysed by iron. Research already completed has shown that iron catalysts can be used to make complex aromatic compounds, allowing the preparation of key intermediates for the synthesis of pharmaceuticals and biologically important compounds. This presentation will highlight the work achieved to date and future work aimed at the use of this novel chemistry for the synthesis of HIV inhibitors.

Rose Kitoyi

Investigating the Role of Transcription Factor Post Translational Modifications (PTMs) in Gametocyte Biology

Malaria is a parasitic disease that is transmitted by the bite of female mosquitoes. Africa remains disproportionately burdened by the global prevalence of malaria, with over 247 million new cases of malaria documented in 2021. The parasite, developing within insect vector and mammalian host, exhibits both asexual and sexual life cycle stages. Gametocytes, from the sexual life cycle stages, represent a potential target for transmission blocking since they navigate between insect vector and mammalian host. *Pfap2-g* gene is a well-known master regulator of gametocyte development. My project will look at the effect of knocking out this gene on gametocyte development. Furthermore, I will embark on introducing gene mutation to another related gene, *pfap2-g4*, to observe effect on gametocyte development.

Zaki El-Salahi

From 1898 to Now: Omdurman, Edinburgh, and Pan-African activism within the Sudanese diaspora in Scotland

Edinburgh's Sudanese community has led groundbreaking research into structural Racism, Reparations and Restitution since 2018, seeking 'to redress the power dynamics between Africans and The University of Edinburgh past, present & future'. My presentation grounds this grassroots initiative in 120 years of Pan-African activism in Scotland's capital city, and illustrates how Community Researchers have navigated the contradictions of a unique piece of Reparatory Justice academic enquiry commissioned by the institution as Total War unfolds in Sudan.

Sharing documentation from the Sudanese community's journey alongside initial findings from my own PhD research - including the shock of discovering our Omdurman Shaheeds' (Mahdiyya martyrs) skulls, held within Edinburgh since 1901 - my presentation considers the place, position and powers of Communities of Reparatory Justice Interest in the Black diaspora.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the James McCune Smith Scholars for their hard work on delivering the conference. We are privileged to work with such a fantastic group of students. We would also like to thank GSK for their support and all the mentors and companies who contribute to our programme.



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