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Abstract: Discusses the development by African American ex-*slave* Frederick Douglass of a theory of nationalism that rejects the concepts of homogeneity and unity as standards for America. Reluctance of Douglass to call America home; Effect of the passage of the *Fugitive Slave* Law in 1850 on Douglass.

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"AS TO NATION, I BELONG TO NONE": AMBIVALENCE, DIASPORA, AND FREDERICK DOUGLASS

Concluding his introduction to *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855), the black abolitionist James McCune Smith moved to his peroration with an unexpected statement. Frederick Douglass's second autobiographical narrative, he writes, "is an American book, for Americans, in the fullest sense of the idea" (xxxii). Although the autobiography of a man who works his way up from ignominy to international renown as a lecturer and editor echoes the Franklinesque saga of American selfhood, Smith's claim is nonetheless steeped in irony. *My Bondage and My Freedom* is bounded by a well-elaborated juridical and governmental apparatus that would never accord the bondsman (or former bondsman) legal subjectivity, let alone extend him national affiliation as an American. Slave codes worked to strip the slave of his or her humanity, and the refusal of the United States government to permit Douglass the protections and immunities granted to all its citizens travelling abroad indicates the extent to which African-American identity in the nineteenth century had to be imagined outside the dictates of American nationalism.[1]

Smith's endorsement of *My Bondage and My Freedom* as an "American book" as well as his praise of its author as a "Representative American man--a type of his countrymen" are disjunctive expressions that affiliate Douglass with a nation that would not recognize him as a citizen (xxv). These tension-fraught identifications hold Douglass's homeland in deferral and his self in abeyance, yet such statements are the grist of a critical consciousness that interrogates the precepts and limitations of American national identity. Within the contradictions of Douglass's Americanness lies the search for a discursive topography not indebted to the rhetorical constraints of nationalism that limit the imagining of citizenship and self to a geographically and ideologically bounded space. Assuredly these contradictions reveal the complex and conflicted aspects of Douglass's subjectivity; however, his national representativeness is unsettling, disarticulating the symbolic, sovereign presence of the nation so that America resides uneasily in the literal, miscegenated body of an African American. If Douglass is American and his 1855 autobiography is as prototypical as any document of national identity, then for the nineteenth-century citizen, America is no longer home: instead, it has become, to borrow Homi Bhabha's description of postcolonial difference as *unheimlich*, an "unhomely" world in which the once recognizable space of the nation becomes uncanny, "forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting" (10, 9). The familiar entity of America--characterized by homogeneity, unity, and sameness--becomes unfamiliar, estranged from itself and dislocated in Douglass's body and narrative that visibly bear traces of an African heritage.[2]

Concentrating upon the narratival autobiographies of Douglass, literary critics have suggested that his achievement lies in articulating a self in manipulating the stolen tools of literacy and inverting discursive prohibitions to formulate an identity that so many aspects of American culture conspired to demean and annihilate. Certainly we should not underestimate how the pun that closes the 1845 *Narrative*--"I subscribe myself, FREDERICK DOUGLASS"--signifies that the ex-slave has written himself into historical being (126). Yet, an analysis of his less narratival, more occasional speeches, lectures, and editorial correspondence, makes clear that in addition to realizing an autonomous selfhood, Douglass repeatedly articulates a desire to experience a disruptive identity, as opposed to a disrupted one, that can dissolve ossified configurations of a nation built upon slavery and racial prejudice. From his writings in exile in the 1840s to his advocacy of Haitian sovereignty in the 1890s, he sought to formulate and experience a deliberately unfixed positionality that would produce, not a fragmented self, but an active, critical consciousness capable of fragmenting forms and institutions of racism coincident with the modern nation-state. His writings contain numerous meditations on nationalism and citizenship, though it is difficult to pinpoint exactly Douglass's final position on these issues. Much of his thinking, like his encouragement for his brethren during the Civil War to enlist in the Union army and join the struggle for the restoration of the Union, urges African Americans to "fight for nationality and for a place with all other classes of our fellow-citizens" (*Life and Writings* 3:345). And yet, he also bristles at the thought of being located within and potentially defined by national borders, for as his *Narrative* underscores, a radical disjunction exists between the boundaries of the African-American self and the boundaries of the United States. In short, the map of the nation that Douglass provides is hardly coherent, and perhaps the only sure thing we can aver about his discursive topography is its profound ambivalence. Positing this ambivalence, however, is not an evasion; instead, the conflicted aspects of Douglass's own thinking correspond to his attempts to contest the nation, to alienate its traditions and unsettle its hallowed doctrines so that descendants of the African diaspora can call--however uncertainly or uneasily--America home.

Still, Douglass expressed great reluctance to call America home. In January 1846, he declared, "I have no end to serve, no creed to

uphold, no government to defend; and as to nation, I belong to none" (Life and Writings 1:126). Writing from Ireland, Douglass is literally thinking from an extra-national space, a location in which the map of his American identity is rewritten so that its distinguishing features become alienation and dispossession. Threatened by kidnappers and denied equal protection under the law, Douglass left the supposed "land of the free" to find refuge in a nation of monarchical traditions. His migration acts as a critical statement, insinuating that American freedom is best realized under the British crown.[3] Via these travels, he privileges fluid cultural affiliation over any national allegiance: he takes up residence in what Paul Gilroy terms the "black Atlantic" to describe a consciousness that is not circumscribed by nationalist confines, but is instead well-adapted to understanding cultural production, political possibility, and artistic expression as the result of a heterogeneous diffusion and intermixture of cultures. Challenging the idea that "cultures always flow into patterns congruent with borders of essentially homogeneous nation states," Gilroy argues for a "transnational and intercultural perspective" to suggest the hybridized and miscegenated underpinnings of a construct like America (5, 15). For Gilroy, Douglass is a "shining example" of a decidedly non-stable, travelling self located in the shifting world of nineteenth-century maritime transnationality (13).

This diasporic context is particularly enabling, according to Douglass the ability to transcend the rhetorical limits and ideological confines that, for Sacvan Bercovitch, so severely thwart and undercut any potential radicalism in the tradition of American dissent.[4] The discursive topography of Douglass's thinking, located at the cultural intersections of the United States, Haiti, and the African diaspora, becomes excessive to the parameters of national consensus because such an ideology is wedded to a traditional geography of permanent sites and discrete borders. By decentering America, by embracing the theoretical possibilities of his exile, Douglass's words can come to signify differently, to speak in inflections other than those usually heard in rhetoric of national consent. Thus, for Gilroy, Douglass and other non-nationally located African Americans create a "revolutionary eschatology," redefining notions of rationality, political praxis, and freedom (68).

Despite this awareness of what W. E. B. DuBois calls the gift of "second-sight in this American world," for the ex-slave at mid-century the lack of a sovereign homeland--as opposed to a theoretical terrain that borrows from diverse locations and traditions--signified that while he belonged to no one, the idea of political belonging, of identifying with a governmental system designed to protect him, was a frustrated desire (214). Gilroy's compelling celebration of the subversive perceptions that accompany exile is somewhat tempered by the ambivalence with which Douglass viewed the consequences of his wanderer's critical insight. A few sentences after proclaiming his lack of a nation, he states, "America will not allow her children to love her" (Life and Writings 1:126). Douglass desires to experience national belonging, to receive the maternal embrace of a nation whose slaveholding practices years earlier had denied him intimate contact with his own mother. The American nation hardly offers itself as a symbolic surrogate to replace the familial bonds severed in Douglass's youth. Certainly his words function critically, asserting his kinship to a nation that refuses to recognize him, and yet the critical impetus of his statement can mask neither the isolation nor the negative foundations--"no end . . . no creed . . . no government"--of his stance in Ireland. But, as his manipulation of Master Hugh's prohibition against reading into a positive encouragement to acquire literacy indicates, Douglass was an affirmative thinker. His challenge, then, was to acquire citizenship, to receive legal protection, to enjoy the right to his own person, in short, to belong to a nation without becoming so thoroughly enmeshed in its ideology that his consciousness would be rendered unquestioningly obedient to the dictates of national affirmation. Just as he reverses Master Hugh's words and resolves that "no precaution could prevent me from taking the ell," he inverts America, recasting its alienation of him into the refuge of exile that, in turn, alienates that nation from its democratic promises and principles of racial homogeneity (Narrative 53). Seeing that America "will not allow her children" to claim their family relation, Douglass responds by defamiliarizing America.

Douglass's ambivalence intensified with the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law in 1850. Encouraging Northerners to support the interests of the slavocracy, this legislation prompted Douglass to cease to regard the geography north of the Mason-Dixon line as a political haven or ideological alternative to the South. His scornful view of this act, along with his growing outspokenness against racial prejudice in the North, confirmed for Douglass that the slaveholding system was not a sectional problem, but a national phenomenon deeply embedded in the discriminatory perspective of United States juridical, educational, military, economic, political, and social systems. The consequences of this growing ambivalence are revealed in two documents from 1853, his letter to Harriet Beecher Stowe and his novella, "The Heroic Slave." These texts reveal how Douglass's search for an extra-national perspective caused him to defamiliarize America, a course that ultimately led him in the 1880s and 1890s to invoke Haiti as a means to recontextualize the sameness of American history within the alien context of diasporic memories.

After Douglass visited and stayed with Stowe, he wrote her a letter, ostensibly thanking her for her hospitality. But even as his letter commends the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* for "the services which you have already rendered my afflicted and persecuted people," it also subtly quarrels with the colonizationist utopia imagined at the end of her novel (Life and Writings 2:229). While he does not directly rebuke Stowe, he finds fault with those real political actors who have too closely followed the plot of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Although he "cannot blame" other black leaders who have emigrated, and although he commends the charity of philanthropists who have purchased land in Canada for black settlement, Douglass nonetheless opposes those who would echo the fictional George Harris and establish a black colony outside the United States (Life and Writings 2: 233). He tells Stowe:

The truth is, dear madam, we are here, and here we are likely to remain. Individuals emigrate--nations never. We have grown up with this republic, and I see nothing in her character, or even in the character of the American people as yet, which compels the belief that we must leave the United States.[5]

At first glance, this resolution contradicts the claim that Douglass exhibits extra-national thinking. The writer of this letter seems fixed in his intention to remain firmly within national borders, and yet it would be misleading to assume that for African Americans to call the United States home has no substantive effect upon American rhetorical and ideological topography. The paradoxical aspect of the declaration that "individuals emigrate nations never" explains how an African-American presence changes the imagining of America. The counterfactual thrust of this statement that persons never considered citizens could leave the United States and yet remain present as a nation provides testimony to the deep interpenetration of African heritage in all aspects of American national life. His words suggest

the complexities of cultural resilience, implying that the American nation is not a single, monolithic entity but a composite gathering of nations within nations, or perhaps more properly given the prevailing antebellum racial hierarchy, a nation layered over nations. America's cultural sovereignty is disrupted by this recognition of its hybridity.

Douglass's words echo Sojourner Truth's determination to recover her son: "I was sure God would help me to get him. Why, I felt so tall within--I felt as if the power of a nation was with me!" (Gilbert 45). For each, the nation is not so much a political entity as a spiritual configuration that transmits an enduring cultural legacy. It communicates long-held traditions, memories, and rituals that effectively challenge the idea that a nation's culture is as intact and as seamless as its borders. Even though Douglass voices a more pragmatic sensibility in comparison to Sojourner Truth's evangelical stance, his economic hints are still infused with the prophetic ideal of further making America African, of intensifying the extent to which the United States becomes alienated from its self-conception as homogeneous. Douglass wants Stowe to support the efforts of blacks to become mechanics and tradesmen; his intent is to make a free black laboring class integral to material production so that America becomes inextricably tied to Africa, its daily commerce a hybrid form. Speaking of himself and other free people of color, he tells Stowe that "we must build as well as live in houses; we must make as well as use furniture; we must construct bridges as well as pass over them"; devising plans for blacks to pervade the economy as both consumers and producers, he implies that he and his brethren must become indispensable to the nation's infrastructure (Life and Writings 2:234). So entangled, descendants of African heritage will cease to be the targets of racist colonization: the question of alienating blacks from the United States will be rendered moot because the United States, as a fiction of white purity, will have already become unfamiliar, alienated from itself.

Built upon an awareness of Yankee materialism, this letter to Stowe adumbrates a practical scheme of achieving national hybridity. "To live here as we ought we must fasten ourselves to our countrymen through their every day cardinal wants," writes Douglass (Life and Writings 2:234). His prescription, however, also provides a theoretical assessment, which recognizes that the material needs, daily customs, and psychological desires of "legitimate" white citizens are fastened to African-American culture. His words prefigure Bhabha's argument that Western identity is founded upon this sort of racial coupling in which "the image of post-Enlightenment man [is] tethered to, not confronted by, his dark reflection, the shadow of colonized man, that splits his presence, distorts his outline, breaches his boundaries, repeats his action at a distance, disturbs and divides the very time of his being" (44).[6] Radically fragmenting the traditional citizen's self, the African presence also assaults the outlines and boundaries of the American nation, splintering its illusion of cultural homogeneity into a bewildering array of nations within nation whose genealogy is a history of repression and expropriation. Just as when a white nineteenth-century reader looks into a black autobiography such as *My Bondage and My Freedom* and unexpectedly finds an "American book," so too the American citizen who participates in the everyday discovers his being and his society rotted in layers of cultural miscegenation and intercultural production. In place of the sovereign United States, Douglass proposes a counter-nation infused with a diasporic flux, which undoes the facile, unidirectional logic of colonization that calls for African removal as the solution to America's racial problems.

The same revisionary principle underlies "The Heroic Slave," except in this instance the aim is not to rewrite the United States economy as an African-American system, but to renarrate American patriarchal history as a "mulatto" articulation. In this fictional account of the 1841 slave uprising aboard the brig *Creole*, Douglass plays upon the central component of national mythology, George Washington, to resurrect an obscured history of black patriotism. At the story's center, in the "manly form" characteristic of the ideal embodied by Douglass's Narrative, stands Madison Washington ("Heroic Slave" 28). Although nominally designated a hefty share of a founding patrimony, Madison Washington enjoys none of the benefits of national ancestry, alienated from the rights and protections accorded regularly descended citizens. In fact, Douglass's hero receives his name from the most unauthorized source who, in the legal code of the antebellum South, has cursed him with slavery--his slave mother: "Madison Washington, my mother used to call me" ("The Heroic Slave" 33). Marked with the political non-markings of slave patriarchy, Madison Washington receives but a mocking, ironic incorporation into national memory:

The State of Virginia is famous in American annals for multitudinous array of her statesmen and heroes. She has been dignified by some the mother of statesmen. History has not been sparing in recording their names, or in blazoning their deeds Yet not all the great ones of the Old Dominion have, by the fact of their birth-place, escaped undeserved obscurity. By some strange neglect, one of the truest, manliest, and bravest of her children,--one who, in after years, will, I think, command the pen of genius to set his merits forth, holds now no higher place in the records of that grand old Commonwealth than is held by a horse or an ox. Let those account for it who can, but there stands the fact, that a man who loved liberty as well as did Patrick Henry--who deserved it as much as Thomas Jefferson,--and who fought for it with a valor as high, and arms as strong, and against odds as great, as he who led all the armies of the American colonies through the great war for freedom and independence, lives now only in the chattel records of his native State. ("The Heroic Slave" 25)

At the spaces unscripted by "American annals" and unacknowledged by national genealogy, what Douglass's narrator writes is not simply a history of a mixed race hero, but a historical discourse that is itself a hybrid articulation. Fact and fiction, prominence and obscurity, master and slave, white and black mingle to uncover a once-repressed history of African-American patriotism that owes no allegiance to the nation. Just as James McCune Smith situated America within the body of Douglass, here the founding narrative of official American history is re-embodied at the site of black resistance.

Heroic man and heroic chattel plot a parallel course in this opening paragraph until they blur. An antebellum reader would identify "he who led all the armies of the American colonies through the great war for freedom and independence" as George Washington, but that immortal name in Douglass's configuration no longer distinguishes between free citizen and slave, between American patriot and black rebel. Patriotic discourse often led the speaker to allude to George Washington without naming him, encouraging the listener to supply the name himself. Yet in Douglass's history the filial respect that refrains from uttering the name Washington is confused with the exclusion of slave names from national history. This signifying ambiguity suggests that for both man and slave, the requirements for

dignity and freedom are the same. The textual hybridity of Washington causes a similar freedom to descend upon the slave as the antebellum reader. Supplying the name Washington, the citizen confirms himself as a citizen versed in the lexicon of American historical narrative. And at the same moment, the slave who affirms an unauthorized, matriarchal history--"Madison Washington my mother used to call me"---engages in a similar proclamation of American identity. Participation in white patriotic mythology is no longer an unequivocal venture: even the simplest reference to Washington opens up a discursive space rife with contradiction that points to a national space, which is dislocated from its traditional moorings and displaced within an African-American context.[7] Speaking the history of the Founding Father and speaking the history of the slave self yield ambivalent results; slave and citizen each realize a share of freedom by naming a patriarch--except that in Madison's case, his slave mother, though defined as unhistorical chattel, passes as a citizen, accessing the lexicon of American historical narrative. She is not simply the site of miscegenation, but rather a subject who names her son by miscegenating a national mythos.

The narrative frame surrounding Washington's manipulation of the founding fathers intensifies notions of passing and amalgamation since the narrative of black rebellion is told by a white sailor. Although Washington calls upon the sailor to recognize his resemblance to Revolutionary ancestors, within the sailor's account dominant cultural codes at first permit the slave no portion of a filial inheritance. The sailor admits Washington resists according to Revolutionary precedent only to tack on the invalidating reservation, "It was not that his principles were wrong in the abstract; for they are the principles of 1776. But I could not bring myself to recognize their application to one whom I deemed my inferior" ("The Heroic Slave" 68). The sailor here outlines the structure of the subversive, transgressive hybrid: Madison Washington is the same yet different; he is, to borrow a formulation from Bhabha, almost the same but not quite--almost the same but not white (86, 89).

Within this discrepancy between George Washington and Madison Washington, between America and African America, and between sameness and difference, the nation is split and rendered "unhomely." Madison confronts the wounded sailor, forcing him to admit that whether aboard a slave ship or on the battlefields of Revolutionary America, black and white rebels each realize "in the abstract" the same founding principles. "In the abstract," principles become unstuck from the lines of genealogy, and patrilineal politics loses its restrictive connection to a single culturally validated color. The legacy underpinning the American nation is set adrift, placed among the migrations of black cultural sources, becoming part of what Eric Sundquist calls a "diasporic aesthetic" (15). The sailor denies any concrete connection between the revolutionaries, yet he confesses that Washington has effectively adopted Washington; he grants the adoption of a political tradition by those most disempowered by that tradition. The sailor concludes "The Heroic Slave" by casting Madison Washington as a founding father to the people he leads into the promised land of freedom:

Uttering the wildest shouts of exultation, they marched, amidst the deafening cheers of a multitude of sympathizing spectators, under the triumphant leadership of their heroic chief and deliverer, MADISON WASHINGTON (69).

These ecstatic moments have dramatic consequences both for the integrity of American national memory and for the conceptual possibilities of African-American political identity in the nineteenth century. A genealogy of the United States returns not to Mount Vernon, but to Nassau, Bahamas, where the self-emancipated slaves follow their 'leader and disembark from the Creole. The discursive topography of the nation has changed radically, making traditional borders an outdated index in articulating the more dispersed and fluid aspects of intercultural memory.

Just as the protagonist of "The Heroic Slave" turns to the Caribbean, so too did Douglass express his views in a context whose extra-national dimensions readily surpassed the confines of United States territory. Before the Civil War he delivered yearly lectures to celebrate the first of August, the anniversary of emancipation in the British West Indies, and in the postbellum era his efforts resulted in his being named as Minister Resident and Consul General to the Republic of Haiti. Douglass's role in the Caribbean is important, especially given United States desires in the 1880s and 1890s to annex Haiti and establish a protectorate. Rather than delve into the intricacies of diplomacy, I want to examine Douglass's theoretical use of Haitian revolutionary legacy to advance an extra-national history that would not only check United States imperialism but would also undercut the order and homogeneity of American cultural sovereignty at its foundations.

In 1889 Haitian president Louis Hyppolite greeted Douglass with recognition of his transnational influence: "As to you, Mr. Minister, your reputation is known in the two hemispheres. You are the incarnation of the idea which Haiti is following--the moral and intellectual development of the African race by personal effort and national culture" (A Black Diplomat 1:255). More than an exchange of official courtesies, Hyppolite's remarks suggest an awareness of the importance of a diasporic aesthetic. He pays tribute to Douglass, not as a national figure, but as a cultural leader who transcends the limits of geography. Thus within Hyppolite's sentence, "national culture" is secondary to the "African race," equally as important as Douglass's individual achievement. His statement perceives that Douglass does not view "national culture" as an end; instead, the nation is one implement among many to be used in the pan-hemispheric struggles of blacks.

Douglass acted precisely in this role on January 2, 1893, when he counterpoised the United States and Haiti in an effort to think in hybrid, intercultural forms. Before examining the specific nature of his speech, it is important to note briefly its international setting. In commemoration of the quadricentennial "discovery" of the Americas, Chicago hosted the World's Columbian Exposition. Representatives and exhibits were housed in pavilions, and the Haiti pavilion was located near those of Sweden, Germany, and Poland. Thus in the heartland of the United States surrounded by European nations, Douglass again unsettles the prevailing world discursive topography, this time by voicing an anti-imperialist critique that he later expanded in a much larger discourse later that day. He considers this positioning advantageous, and couches his satisfactions with the placement of the Haiti pavilion by invoking a traditional scriptural image of American progress: "its [the pavilion's] location and situation are desirable. It is not a candle put under a bushel, but a city set upon a hill" (Frederick Douglass Papers 5:504). In the same way that in "The Heroic Slave" George Washington as a cultural reference emigrates to Nassau, the metaphor that John Winthrop first applied to prototypical New World community in 1631 is transported to Haiti. This model of relocation reverses the direction of the Middle Passage, alienating American references such as Washington and the city

upon a hill from their discursive homeland. America enters the currents of the African diaspora.

Central to Douglass's argument is a rhetorical exercise in comparative history that places a diasporic heritage, not national pedigree, as the source of cultural transmission. To quote Douglass at length:

Our war of the Revolution had a thousand years of civilization behind it. The men who led it were descended from statesman and heroes. Their ancestry were the men who had defied the powers of royalty and wrested from an armed and reluctant king the grandest declaration of human rights ever given to the world. (Applause.) They had the knowledge and character naturally inherited from long years of personal and political freedom. They belonged to the ruling race of this world and the sympathy of the world was with them. But far different was it with the men of Haiti. The world was all against them. . . . As a race they stood before the world as the most abject, helpless and degraded of mankind. Yet from these men of the negro race, came brave men, men who loved liberty more than life (applause); wise men, statesmen, warriors and heroes, men whose deeds stamp them as worthy to rank with the greatest and noblest of mankind; men who have gained their freedom and independence against odds as formidable as ever confronted a righteous cause or its advocates. Aye, and they not only gained their liberty and independence, but they have never surrendered what they gained to any power on earth. (Applause.) This precious inheritance they hold to-day, and I venture to say here in the ear of all the world that they never will surrender that inheritance. (Prolonged Applause) (Frederick Douglass Papers 5:506).

Although Douglass at first appeals to United States history, the parallel quickly ends with his reminder that the men of 1776--the "ruling race"--did not have to battle Western racism, but, in fact, received aid from other European powers. American national narrative only partly compares to the struggle of men like Toussaint L'Ouverture; the Haitian revolution exceeds any American frame. And just as this story of black independence resists encapsulation within the history of "our American independence," Douglass promises that Haiti will withstand any efforts of an imperial power to wrest from this black republic its putatively less hallowed "inheritance." Whereas a Eurocentric tradition having "a thousand years of civilization behind it" might disdain a nation that achieved its independence less than a century ago, Douglass inverts the deficiency of historical newness to contend that this lack of "ancestry" makes the Haitian revolution a startling accomplishment, a "formidable" task to be eyed with continual caution by those thinking to tamper with its autonomy.[8] Haiti's resilience, in Douglass's view, comes in its capacity to think non-nationally: most imminent for Haitians is an awareness that they do not belong to the "ruling race of the world," a situation that is unchanged since the initial days of revolution when slaves rose up against masters. In short, Haiti stands in a position of ever-ready revolt because its citizens realize that their racial identity is the overriding concern in the international arena just as the racial identity of their ancestors was the determining factor in slavery.[9] Revolution--like the incessant foregrounding of racial identity in nineteenth-century world affairs--never fades into the docility of the past. Much as President Hyppolite honored Douglass for his larger cultural affiliation with Africans in the New World that transcended an identification limited to American political nationalism, Douglass discerns that Haitian independence outstrips its island confines, providing a resonant legacy for transnational black resistance. In fact, he writes, black resistance has to be transnational: the traditional confines of the nation hardly correspond with either the history of Africans in the Western hemisphere or to the threats posed by developing world powers.

Such a commitment to transnationality is figured in this oration at the interstitial spaces where Douglass's words come into contact with their larger cultural context. At first, the pronouns in his speech seem to establish two distinct encampments, juxtaposing the distant "they" of Haiti with the more intimate first person plural of "our war of the Revolution." Although his language suggests no kinship with Haitians, his position both as a black man in the New World and as an official representative of Haiti at the world's fair intersects with "these men of the negro race" to create a literate and embodied subjectivity that is at once American and Haitian, at once the same and different. The result of this hybridity is that the content of his speech--the American patriotic legacy--becomes invested with formal properties that are undeniably rooted in race. Where does the listener situate himself or herself? To identify with the American nativist position is to slide into a Caribbean context, and to side with the underdog freedom fighters of the "third world" is simultaneously to echo and alter American history.

This shifting critical consciousness, according to Douglass, is found throughout the people of the African diaspora, no matter if their scattering now places them within other national borders. Though Haiti may be bound to its island geography in the Caribbean, its inheritance is disseminated throughout the "black Atlantic." Technological innovation only increased the pace of this cultural intermixing; minister Douglass thus viewed optimistically forces such as steam and electricity, which bolstered the "interdependence of nations" and the "intercommunication of various nationalities" (A Black Diplomat 1:41, 42).[10] National borders still remain intact; yet, they are also rendered more porous, more susceptible to dislocation from the flux and influx of heterogeneous memories and traditions, a series of back-and-forth movements of people and culture that has always been present in the history of the New World. These foreign, extra-national infusions do not remain foreign, nor do they become the same, reconciled to dominant histories. Instead, they defamiliarize the nation, hybridizing its overall composition. Douglass's appreciation for the modern pathways of communication sheds light on his statement to Stowe forty years earlier that "individuals emigrate nations never." Rather than looking at individual agents who can be overridden by the imperious demands of national culture, Douglass focuses attention on the ways in which political states endanger their own cultural sovereignty as they come into contact with the embodiments of cultural difference. Cultural contact--whether its terms are appropriation, extermination, absorption, or exile--cannot be thoroughly controlled. Even within the most organized and regulated Euroamerican state, a residual African heritage remains, not only resistant to assimilation and displacement, but also deeply inimical to the thinking that would make culture and nation isomorphous. It is a matter of different nationalisms: a dispersed and unbounded cultural nationalism exists within the confines of political nationalism, but it also exceeds those limits. In other words, African-American cultural forms are not coextensive with the United States or its history, but are instead located amid a diffused geography that transcends autochthonous forces such as state-patriotism. In Douglass's understanding, the city upon the hill is hardly a nativist beacon; rather it is a cultural transmitter that has little regard for the sovereignty of nations.

This application of Winthrop's words to Haiti upsets the traditional narrative of American foundations. Whereas United States citizens like

Daniel Webster and Ronald Reagan ritually returned to the city upon the hill to characterize national origins, Douglass cites Haiti as the source of cultural origins. While not discounting the sanctity of Haiti's autonomy, he also positions Haiti as an important conduit in a people's diasporic consciousness. Thinking of the Haitian revolutionaries of 1803, he says: "They were linked and interlinked with their race, and striking for their freedom, they struck for the freedom of every black man in the world" (Frederick Douglass Papers 5:528). As opposed to American nationalism that incorporates Madison Washington "only in the chattel records of his native State," Haitian nationalism is incorporated as part of a diffused yet enduring legacy of black freedom. Thus while nineteenth-century African Americans might have been asked to look back to 1776, Douglass encourages a pan-hemispheric perspective of combined African-American and African-Caribbean politics. In 1845, Garrison prefaced Douglass's *Narrative* by invoking "the soil of the Pilgrim Fathers"; however, by 1893 Douglass was less interested in examining his attenuated and conflicted relationship to American foundations (vii). In contrast, by moving outside of the United States, he began to map a history of foundations having deep roots but no limiting connection to a particular tract of soil.

This essay begins with an investigation of James McCune Smith's motivations for inscribing Douglass at the center of America. But by problematizing the idea of a homogeneous nation, Douglass suggests that the real issue is that America is uncomfortably decentered by its rarely acknowledged intercultural foundations. Like Douglass's own subjectivity that is situated in hybridity, dislocated by a history of freedom and enslavement, and estrangedly caught between the heim and the unheim, America presents a fragmented and often uncanny geography. Smith's preface captures these disjunctions in its mocking address to ethnologists seeking to unearth a racially exclusive origin for the Anglo-Saxon race: "Keep on, gentlemen; you will find yourselves in Africa, by-and-by. The Egyptians, like the Americans, were a mixed race, with some negro blood circling around the throne, as well as in the mud hovels" (*My Bondage* xxxi). To call America home, then, is to utter in slightly different tones the legacy of Africa. The persistent ambivalence toward America in Douglass's writing reveals a complex political attitude, which allows one to live in the United States, even as a citizen, without acceding to its classifications, maps, and designs. At the same time, this conflicted stance also enables Douglass as a self-defined citizen of a diasporic, cultural nation to preserve in the midst of America a set of attitudes and counter-memories garnered, not from a single monolithic culture, but from the spaces between cultures. To call America home is not to belong to a nation; as Douglass's legacy suggests, to call America home is to think in ways beyond geography, tradition, and exclusion.

Notes

1 On the refusal to permit unrestricted foreign travel to Douglass, see Brantley 199.

2 It is further interesting, in the context of Douglass in particular and African-American literature in general, that Bhabha suggests that this "displacement and disjunction" emerges from "'middle passage' of contemporary culture" that resists totalization (5). Toni Morrison argues a similar point in *Playing in the Dark*, contending that American literature is "made possible by, shaped by, activated by a complex awareness and employment of a constituted Africanism" (44).

3 This is not to say that Douglass held Britain as uncontested space of freedom. In fact, Douglass found inspiration for his own freedom in the Irish resistance to British rule, and in the *Narrative* he cites the influence of "one of Sheridan's mighty speeches on and in behalf of Catholic emancipation" (54).

4 Sacvan Bercovitch discusses and elaborates the ideological containment of American dissent in many places including *The American Jeremiad*, *The Rites of Assent*, and *The Office of the Scarlet Letter*. For instance, the final chapter of *The American Jeremiad* offers a fine explanation of the ways in which dissent provides for and acts as consent.

5 For further treatment of the complex relationship between Stowe and Douglass, see Robert B. Stepto, "Sharing the Thunder: The Literary Exchanges of Harriet Beecher Stowe, Henry Bibb, and Frederick Douglass" 135-153.

6 Eric J. Sundquist details the pervasiveness of such hybridity in terms of American literary history, arguing that "American culture, properly read, was already saturated with the black gifts of story, song, and spirit" (5).

7 For a more detailed reading of Douglass's disruption of national imagining, see the final chapter of Russ Castronovo, *Fathering the Nation: American Genealogies of Slavery and Freedom*.

Robert B. Stepto has suggested the significance of naming in this first paragraph of "The Heroic Slave." Stepto writes, "Douglass advances his comparison of heroic statesman and heroic chattel, and does so quite ingeniously by both naming and not naming them in such a way that we are led to discover that statesman and slaves may share the same name and be heroes and Virginians alike: ("Storytelling in Early Afro-American Fiction" 362).

8 Douglass had not always been a supporter of Haitian sovereignty. Two decades earlier he supported annexation of the black republic. It is significant that he takes this attitude as he thinks of himself "under the national flag, which I could now call mine, in common with other American citizens." (*Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* 418), and for Douglass's explanation of his position on annexation, see 416-20.

9 In his speech later that day, Douglass acknowledged that from an American perspective, race--not nationhood--remained the predominant consideration: "But a deeper reason for coolness between the countries is this: Haiti is black, and we have not yet forgiven Haiti for being black (applause) or forgiven the Almighty for making her black" (*The Frederick Douglass Papers* 5:511).

10 For information on Douglass's role in ending "Haiti's self-imposed policy of national isolation," see Brantley 207.

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