UC Santa Barbara
Journal of Transnational American Studies

Title
Excerpt from *Black Cosmopolitanism: Racial Consciousness and Transnational Identity in the Nineteenth-Century Americas*

Permalink
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2j34p63k

Journal
Journal of Transnational American Studies, 6(1)

Author
Nwankwo, Ifeoma Kiddoe

Publication Date
2015

DOI
10.5070/T861025845

Copyright Information

Introduction

IFEOMA KIDDOE NWANKWO

> The principles of creoleness regress toward negritudes, ideas of Frenchness, of Latinness, all generalizing concepts—more or less innocently. . . .
>> Acknowledging differences does not compel one to be involved in the dialectics of their totality. One could get away with: "I can acknowledge your difference and continue to think it is harmful to you."
>
> ——Edouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*

> Every ghetto, every city and suburban place I've been
> Make me recall my days in the New Jerusalem.
> . . .
> Springfield Ave. had the best popsicles
> Main street roots tonic with the dreds
> A beef patty and some coco bread.
>
> ——Lauryn Hill, "Every Ghetto, Every City"

> U-N-I-T-Y
> Dat a unity
> U-N-I-T-Y
>
> ——Queen Latifah (Dana Owens), "U.N.I.T.Y"

Origins

Musical artist Lauryn Hill uses lyrics and accents that evince both African American and West Indian flavors to reconstruct her life as a youth in Irvington, New Jersey. In particular, her reference to enjoying "a beef patty and some coco bread," a typical Jamaican lunch, and her location of the action on "Main Street, U .S. A." highlight the

cultural meeting that characterized her youth.[1] Multimedia artist Queen Latifah employs a West Indian accented hook in a hip-hop song decrying sexism and misogyny in the Black community. The song subtly uses the idea that reggae is political to make a statement about sexism—a subject that classical reggae rarely treated. Coexisting along with the blending in the music of Hill and Latifah, however, are films such as *How Stella Got Her Groove Back* and *Cool Runnings*, which posit stereotypical images of West Indians, and *I Like It like That*, which represents negative attitudes toward Blackness in Latino communities.[2]

I, like Lauryn Hill, Queen Latifah, and so many others who grew up in the contact zones of the New York metropolitan area and the Caribbean, have always understood African American, West Indian, and Latin American cultures to be profoundly interwoven. I was born in Jamaica of a Jamaican mother and a Nigerian father who met in Madison, Wisconsin. I grew up simultaneously in Kingston and in Flemington, New Jersey, moving back and forth between the two throughout my first thirteen years. My formal education began at a virtually all White preschool in New Jersey, then moved on to an all Black primary school in Kingston. I spent my summers in New Jersey, enjoying summer camp, hanging out with my American friends, and improving my command of African American culture and language. During my school years in Kingston, I played "dandy shandy" (a version of dodgeball played with an old milk box filled with scrap paper) and Jamaican ring games, learning Anansi stories, folk songs, and other aspects of Jamaican culture from Miss Lou's television show, and perfecting my command of the English grammar book, *First Aid in English*. It told me that the feminine of "negro" is "negress" and the offspring is "picanniny." I also often heard about and/or corresponded with friends of the family in a range of sites including Panama and Belize. My grandfather, who was a railway stationmaster, always told me stories about all the different people, languages, and cultures he encountered during his years in that position. It made perfect sense to me that there were people who felt connected to both West Indian and Latin American or both African American and West Indian cultures.

Although life in primary school was not perfect (class tensions more than national or cultural tension), my migration to the United States in the mid-eighties forced me to confront the reality that some people did make significant and weighted distinctions between African American, West Indian, and Afro-Latin American people. Although I had always been traveling between Jamaica and America, at heart I had always seen myself as unquestionably Jamaican. At the same time, vacations in the U.S. had made me open to experiencing and learning American culture. I entered Piscataway High School in New Jersey along with several other immigrant girls from a range of countries. My closest friends, girls from Colombia and India, and I clung to each other as we learned our places in this new society. We sat together at lunch, in homeroom and classes (last names—Nwankwo, Osorio, and Patel), hung out at each other's houses, went to the mall, and talked on the phone. That was our first year.

By the beginning of our sophomore year, everything had changed. We began to truly understand our places in U.S. society, and those places were clearly not overlapping. Suddenly, we were all in different and wholly separate social circles. I was no longer welcome at my Latin American friend's house. She and her mother had discovered their affinities with White Americans. My Indian friends only barely spoke to me. They were vacillating between sticking with each other and bonding with White Americans. I was slow to pick up on the rules, and continued to hang out with a range of people, including African Americans, White "metal heads," and White "hippies." I had fundamentally assimilated, however, into African American culture. It was during this year that a young woman I had known since my days at day care in Flemington chastised me for speaking African American vernacular, saying, "Why are you talking like that? You're not Black, you're Jamaican." Despite the fact that my stepfather was not particularly pleased with my newfound understanding and constantly admonished me for talking "that way" (African American vernacular) with my friends on the phone, I persisted. I was much like George Lamming's Trumper, who returns to the Caribbean from the U.S. with a new understanding of his "people" and his "race." My former friend's statement, my stepfather's disgust, and the other experiences of that year raised questions in my mind not just about the perceived differences between African Americans and West Indians, but also about the hierarchies often implicit in those perceptions. I became curious about where those perceptions came from, about who embraces and who rejects them, and about how they shaped the identificatory experiences and decisions of immigrants.

College raised more questions. As a result of the close and also sometimes tense relationship between the Paul Robeson special interest residence section, where I resided and held leadership positions, and the Latin Images special interest section, I began to ask about the meaning of "just like us" and "down with us" and more broadly about perceptions that "Blacks" and "Latinos" held of each other. Throughout my years there the sections continuously alternated between cooperating and emphasizing distinctions. The disparate visions of the significance of the African blood that flowed in the veins of the bulk of the members of both sections were a key but unspoken underpinning of both the sections' desire to collaborate and the drive to distinguish ourselves from each other. The sections were both profoundly linked and profoundly separate. We fought and made up like siblings. It did not always seem logical to everyone that we should collaborate on programs, proposals, and/or political statements. At the same time, it seemed to make sense to everyone that Blacks and Latinos would come together to form the "Minority Greek Council." Consequently, my time on "the floor" made me ponder not just the perceived differences between "Blacks" and "Latinos," but also the rationales behind the highlighting and/or downplaying of those differences in particular situations.

As I moved through my college years, I learned about the U.S. careers of Marcus Garvey and Claude McKay, two individuals who figured prominently in my

education in Jamaica. (Marcus Garvey is, in fact, a Jamaican national hero.) I was struck by the fact that their Jamaican careers were never mentioned in my U.S. classes, and that their U.S. careers had never been mentioned in my Jamaican classes. Such facts forced me to consider the impact of silences (particularly, in the creation of histories and intellectual and political genealogies) on African American-West Indian relations.[3] In addition, I was amazed that the curricula of two academic worlds in which I lived on campus, the English and Spanish departments, functioned as wholly separate, unrelated, and irreconcilable units. I would often be studying literary movements that occurred at the same time in the Hispanophone and Anglophone worlds, but no one, it seemed, ever spoke of the two together. That separation was truly strange to me. I had grown up during the Michael Manley era in Jamaica, an era in which positive conceptions of Cuba abounded. I had heard much about Jamaican immigrants and people of Jamaican descent in Cuba. Cuba was part of my world. Afro-Latin Americans had been part of my epistemological world as a child but not of my formal educational experience. To me, the Anglophone and Hispanophone worlds, while different in many ways, were not just deeply connected; they were incomprehensible without each other. This division structured my educational experience in college, feeding my desire to investigate and interrogate it. In fact, in my graduate school applications, written in my senior year, I spoke of undertaking comparative work on Gwendolyn Brooks and the Spanish writer Azorín (José Martínez Ruíz).

The questions that developed as a result of my life between and among American cultures (in both the continental and the national sense) continue to drive me. This project, in particular, has been undergirded by the following questions: First, what are the perceived differences between African Americans, West Indians, and Afro-Latin Americans? Second, when and how did those perceptions develop? Third, what hierarchies are implicit in those perceptions? Fourth, who holds and/or articulates those perceptions and why? Fifth, how do those perceptions shape relations between the groups? Sixth, when and how are affinities/bonds between the groups highlighted and/or downplayed? When I began research on these questions, the contemporary issues were clearer to me. In addition to my personal experiences in cultural contact, there were the "ten job" image of West Indians on the television show *In Living Color,* grand dame of African American letters Margaret Walker's passing mention of her Jamaican father in a speech at the University of Alabama, and the paucity of discussion of the impact of African American rhythm and blues on the music of Bob Marley, which highlighted the issues of interracial tension and stereotyping, cultural blending, and genealogical silences respectively. I was curious about the history of these modes of relating, so I began to move backward in time. I did research on the Harlem Renaissance era, among others, and found similar modes of relating—potentially problematic forms of othering coexisting with profound engagement and bonding. The friendship of Nicolás Guillén and Langston Hughes as

well as the Caribbean anthropology of Zora Neale Hurston illustrate the persistence of these issues.

I was still not satisfied that I understood why and how these modes of engagement developed, so I went farther back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The texts from that era, I thought, might provide hints about how the ideas of separateness and/or sameness developed. To my surprise, I found no views or even mention of people of African descent from other sites in nineteenth-century American (broadly defined) narratives of slavery. I assumed that this absence had to be an aberration, and continued examining as many narratives as I could get my hands on. The plain fact was, however, that while the eighteenth-century slave narratives, such as that by Olaudah Equiano and Venture Smith, made reference to people of African descent in a range of sites, the nineteenth-century narratives did not. My research suggested that something cataclysmic had clearly happened to make the nineteenth-century texts so different from the eighteenth-century ones in their approaches to the world of people of African descent. The nineteenth-century narrators, primarily creoles by that point, generally do not refer to people of African descent in other locations. This is the case despite the frequent appearance of people of African descent from other sites in the writings of free Blacks, both pro- and anti slavery Whites, and other writings by the (ex)slave narrators themselves. I decided to focus on this moment, one that seemed to be clearly a marker of identificatory transition—a pivotal period in people of African descent's self-definition as "Black" (as in citizen of a Black world) and/or as a citizen of a particular nation. Black Cosmopolitanism is, therefore, an integrative reading of disparities, similarities, and interactions between the varied approaches to identity in general and Blackness in particular articulated by people of African descent in Cuba, the United States, and the British West Indies during the nineteenth century.[4] It lays bare the mechanics of identificatory positioning implicit in contemporaneous texts by and about six individuals of African descent, and ultimately suggests that the desire for modernity, per se, was not, in fact, at the root of choices they (and their descendants) made (and make) about identity. Their goal was to be perceived as equals, and exhibiting and/or proving their modernity was a means to that end.

The "Shout of Battle" Heard Around the World

As numerous contemporary and nineteenth-century thinkers have noted, the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804) was a crucial turning point for Americans of African descent. Martinican thinker Aimé Césaire quite rightly identifies the revolution as the moment "where negritude rose for the first time."[5] The revolution prompted African American leaders like James T. Holly not only to see the revolution as a potent symbol for all Black people, but also to advocate for and enact emigration to Haiti. Holly celebrates the revolution as "one of the noblest, grandest, and most justifiable outbursts against tyrannical oppression that is recorded on the pages of the world's

history," during which "a race of almost dehumanized man made so by an oppressive slavery of three centuries arose from their slumber of the ages, and redressed their own unparalleled wrongs with a terrible hand in the name of God and humanity."[6] He lauds the overthrow as "A Vindication of the Capacity of the Negro Race for Self-Government and Civilized Progress as Demonstrated by Historical Events of the Haytian Revolution; and the Subsequent Acts of That People Since Their National Independence." In light of this event so laden with symbolism for African Americans, Holly encourages African Americans to emigrate to Haiti, by saying

> It may well be a question with us, whether it is not our duty, to go and identify our destiny with our heroic brethren in that independent isle of the Caribbean Sea . . . in order to add to Haytian advancement; rather than to indolently remain here, asking for political rights, which, if granted, a social proscription stronger than conventional legislation will ever render nugatory and of no avail for the manly ele- vation and general well-being of the race.[7]

The revolution also stoked the fires of anger that are so palpable in David Walker's famous Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World (1829), in which he describes Haiti as "the glory of Blacks and terror of tyrants."[8] William Wells Brown sought to secure the place of the revolution in the annals of world history with the publication of another rhetorical aftershock of the revolution—his speech "St. Domingo: Its Revolutions and Its Patriots" (1855), in which he details the roots and results of this "shout of battle" (his phrase).[9]

This moment, however, was not only a turning point because of the symbolic value of the revolution for Black radicals. *Black Cosmopolitanism* contends that Whites' fear of the revolution and its presumably contagious nature forced people of African descent throughout the Americas, particularly those in the public and published eye, to name a relationship to the Haitian Revolution, in particular, and to a transnational idea of Black community, in general. The revolution made a fear of uprising and, by extension, of transnationally oriented notions of Black community, into a continent wide obsession. The fear was not just of people of African descent in a particular location rising up and rebelling against the power structure in that location, but rather of people of African descent from and in a variety of locations connecting with each other and fomenting a massive revolution that might overturn the whole Atlantic slave system. In the wake of the uprising, people of African descent had to decide whether to define themselves as citizens of the world, specifically of the Black world that included the revolutionaries. Public published figures responded to this challenge by developing approaches to self-definition and community delineation that negotiated global and local affinities and exigencies. Many, like William Wells Brown (in his slave narrative), chose to negate or

not mention people of African descent in other countries—an implicit articulation of a relationship, albeit one of distance. Others, like the aforementioned David Walker, chose to embrace the revolution and use it as a threat. People of African descent had to decide where to position themselves, particularly in print, and decide whether and how to embrace both national/local and transnational/ global affinities. Within this context of White fear and potential recriminations, of which they were profoundly aware, they had to decide whether and how to express their connection both to their country of residence and to the world of people of African descent beyond that country. The uprising was significant, therefore, not only because it brought into being the first Black republic in the Americas, but, more importantly, because it encouraged new visions of the interrelatedness of people of African descent in disparate locations as well as of their place in the world. Those approaches established new models for public and published interactions between the people of the African Diaspora in the Americas.

Public published individuals posited newly refined and reconfigured definitions of "Blackness," including delineations of who was to be included in that identity and why. Black Cosmopolitanism argues, through a range of texts by both freeborn and formerly enslaved people of African descent, that individuals' decisions about how and whether to include people of African descent from other parts of the Americas constitute philosophies of Black and American identity. Those texts include Martin Robison Delany's novel *Blake; Or, the Huts of America* (1851-1862) in which he dramatizes the making of a hemispheric Black Revolution, in significant part through representations of Cubans of color. The poetry (1830-1844) of Plácido, the Cuban poet of color based on whom Delany created his Cuban main character, while not explicitly articulating racially based notions of community, uses romantic tropes and both nationally and internationally oriented themes in order to construct subjectivity. Also under study here are Frederick Douglass's autobiographies and speeches (1845-1895)—texts that reveal the profound relationship between his decisions about how to represent African American community, and his engaging the Black world beyond the U.S. in general and Haiti in particular. The spatial and ethnographic language of West Indian ex-slave Mary Prince's narrative (1831) locates her not only within a Black world but also in the world at large. The autobiography of Cuban ex-slave Juan Francisco Manzano (1840) forces us to confront the issue of racial disidentification directly.

These nineteenth-century texts illustrate modes of conceptualizing the relationships between people of African descent in the Americas and through- out the Atlantic World that are pivotal to a theoretical/conceptual genealogy of which the twentieth-century texts (such as W. E. B. Du Bois's *Souls of Black Folk* and Claude McKay's *Banjo*) that feature so prominently in recent scholarship on the transnational engagements of Black Diasporan subjects are a part. The nineteenth-century texts ponder the complex meanings and methods of being both "Negro" and "American," broadly defined, and reveal the struggle to define self and community between

multiple local and global affinities, as the later texts do. Unlike the twentieth-century ones, though, these earlier texts do so while also confronting the realities of slavery in the nineteenth century, including both Whites' fear of continent-wide rebellion and the official view of a man of African descent as three-fifths of a man.[10]

My goal here is not to posit these as the ur-texts of the African Dias- pora in the Americas, to present these individuals as the ultimate representatives of the development and articulation of identity during this period, or to hold up the U.S., Cuba, and the British West Indies as the only sites in which these negotiations of identity took place. I aim to present them as case studies that, while born of specific local conditions, index trends in approaches to conceiving and articulating relationships to the Black world, in particular, and to the world at large, that recur in any number of texts from this period, whether we are reading the documents on the Black sailors discussed by Julius Scott, Jeffrey Bolster, and Marcus Rediker and Peter Linebaugh, the rebellious slaves on ships explored by Maggie Montesinos Sale, the Black women travelers studied by Cheryl Fish, or the slaves who tell their stories in the autobiographies analyzed by William Andrews.[11]

Modernity, Cosmopolitanism, and the Black Subject

Implicit in the Atlantic power structures' fear of violent uprising and designation of people of African descent as less than a whole (hu)man was the notion that they were primitive savages, that is to say, premodern barbarians. The perception of people of African descent as less than human and not worthy of being seen as equal to those of European descent operated in tandem with the construction of people of African descent as an antithesis of the modern. People of African descent's desire to be seen as equal was always already bound up with their desire to be seen as modern, so statements made in the public sphere were grasped firmly as opportunities to prove the individual's or the community's modernity.

Cosmopolitanism, the definition of oneself through the world beyond one's own origins, was a crucial element of modernity (and the Enlightenment). Imperialism and Orientalism were in fact forms of European cosmopolitanism, and more specifically of the ways Europeans constructed their definitions of self and community in relation to and through their relationship to the broader world.[12] Orientalism, as Edward Said explicated it, "is . . . a certain will or intention to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly different (or alternative and novel) world."[13] It should come as no surprise, then, that responses and resistance to these totalizing and hegemonic cosmopolitanisms also often employ cosmopolitanism as a conceptual frame. Immanuel Kant, for example, had a vision "of cosmopolitical culture as the promise of humanity's freedom from, or control over" "the finitude of human existence."[14] Karl Marx also posited a utopian cosmopolitanism, through which the proletariat would cast off loyalty to the nation and its economy in favor of the creation of "a

universal class transcending boundaries."[15] As part of this historical and ideological context, people of African descent in the nineteenth century evaluated the usefulness of cosmopolitanism for their struggle to be recognized as human and equal.

People of African descent's approaches to public self-representation were born, in significant part, of the Atlantic power structure's attempts to deny them access to cosmopolitan subjectivity. The White fear that arose in the wake of the Haitian Revolution was not only a fear of violence, but also a fear of people of African descent's embrace of cosmopolitanism—of their defining themselves through a Black world that included the Haitians. This denial of access for people of African descent to cosmopolitan subjectivity coexisted with a denial of access for that same population to both national subjectivity and human subjectivity, and, perhaps most significantly, with an emphasis (from above) on their race, effectively determining the possible parameters of identity for people of African descent. The result was a uniquely tenuous situation. Race, nation, and humanity were three major referents through which individuals defined themselves and others in their world (the Atlantic world), but only one of the three referents was allowed people of African descent— race. Consequently, this population essentially had to prioritize, and choose which of the parameters denied them they most wished to challenge, and by extension which referent they most wanted to have the right to claim.

The modes of self-definition I describe collectively as "Black cosmopolitanism" were, consequently, born in this period.[16] The term is not meant to indicate that people who were already "Black" became cosmopolitan, or that cosmopolitanism was a corrective alternative to Blackness, but rather that Blackness and cosmopolitanism became two pivotal axes of identity in relation to which public people of African descent defined themselves.

The Blackness of Black cosmopolitanism inheres not in the race of the individuals who express it (as illustrated by the fact that analyses of Cuban government documents and White abolitionist writings are key subjects in this study),[17] but rather in the ways individuals and entities seek to define people of African descent and articulate the relationship among them and between them and the world at large. Faced with dehumanization and the Atlantic power structures' obsession with preventing the blossoming of their cosmopolitanism, people of African descent decided to stake their claim to personhood by defining themselves in relation to the new notions of "Black community" and ubiquitous manifestations of cosmopolitanism that the Revolution produced. The fear created by the Haitian Revolution forced these individuals to take a position on both Blackness and cosmopolitanism whether or not they wished to do so. At the same time, they were forced to work through and with the three aforementioned referents—race, nation, and humanity.

In both its emphasis on engagements with an Enlightenment approach to self-definition (cosmopolitanism) and its allowing for the possibility of racial

disidentification, this notion differs significantly from Pan-Africanism. Central to Pan-Africanism as understood by Pan-Africanist leaders and scholars then and now is political action that seeks to ameliorate the lives of all people of African descent everywhere.[18] Consequently, I do not use the term to describe the writing or ideology of most of the writers I engage. I call attention instead to the complexity of their perceptions of and relation- ships with people of African descent from other places. Instead of taking pan-Africanism as a given or as a broad spectrum term that can be applied to all texts that treat the experiences of people of African descent in different locations, I choose to move more methodically by analyzing the method, ideology, and implications of those treatments.

The term transnationalism is also inadequate for indexing the complicated approaches to defining self, community, and other I uncover here. Although useful for referring to general physical or ideological movements across national boundaries its usefulness for describing how and why such movements drive or constitute arguments with dominant nineteenth-century discourses about civilization versus barbarism (and, in particular, people of African descent's barbarism) as well as about appropriate bases for identity is limited.[19] In addition, it foregrounds geographical-national boundaries and presumes them to be salient, which is not a viewpoint put forth by a number of the individuals and ideologies engaged in this study. The term cosmopolitanism allows for attentiveness to a range of modes of defining oneself and one's community in relation to the world.

Cosmopolitanism is not posited here, however, as a race-less panacea that serves as a counterpoint to an essential or essentializing notion of Blackness, but rather as one of the master's tools (Blackness being another) that people of African descent tested for its possible usefulness in attempting to at least get into the master's house, if not to destroy it.[20] The goal is to explicate the stance toward cosmopolitanism and Blackness taken by individuals occupying a range of geographical and identificatory positions, rather than to attach a particular value judgment to any of them. Because of the Haitian Revolution, the constitution and articulation of "Blackness" at this moment was always already bound up with a decision about whether or not to espouse cosmopolitanism. In investigating the ways in which a range of thinkers of African descent negotiated between the two and came to vastly different conclusions about how to best locate themselves, this study simultaneously interrogates the notion that cosmopolitanism was an unproblematic and always desirable alternative and reveals the mechanisms by which Black identity and community were imagined.

Black cosmopolitanism therefore does not simply complicate, but also often undercuts traditional understandings of cosmopolitanism. The cosmopolite is typically understood as a "citizen of the world," whose relationship to a specific nation is distant if it exists at all. In Mihai Grunfeld's discussion of cosmopolitanism, for example, he describes the cosmopolite as "un ciudadano universal, una persona que considera el universo como patria suya"[21] ("a citizen of the universe, a person

who considers the universe as his nation"). Grunfeld presents cosmopolitanism in opposition to national identification—a conceptualization frequently replicated throughout the scholarly discourse on cosmopolitanism.[22] This binary is insufficient for interpreting the relationship between cosmopolitan subjectivity and national affinity for people of African descent in the nineteenth century. It cannot take into account the power dynamics that produce or prevent the production of the cosmopolite, and more specifically the ways in which the Atlantic power structures' denial of humanity, cosmopolitanism, and national citizenship to people of African descent, their obsessive fear of their cosmopolitanism, and their obsessive focus on defining them racially, and people of African descent's own desire to be recognized as equal interacted to produce distinctively configured approaches to engaging the world and representing the self.

The person of African descent's citizenship in his or her specific nation of residence has been denied, negated, and generally troubled. Positing national identity and cosmopolitan subjectivity as polar opposites presumes that national identity is available to all individuals. Our understanding of cosmopolitanism must consider that, for some (people of African descent in this case) national identity may be desired but inaccessible, and consequently that cosmopolitanism, while not necessarily the object of desire, may be conceptualized as a means to the end of gaining access to national identity (as it is for Frederick Douglass) and/or as the basis of a substitute national identity in itself (as it is for Martin Delany). In addition, that substitute national identity may include people in places they have never visited, and with whom they have never had contact, because the connection they imagine is based on the common experiences of slavery and discrimination and African heritage, rather than shared terrain or face to face encounters.

As a result, the questions whether the person of African descent in the Americas conceptualizes him or herself as a citizen of a specific nation or of the Black world, or how she or he claims citizenship in both, demand answers that go beyond positing cosmopolitanism and national affinity as two sides of a neat binary. The dynamic interaction between the two, and the push/pull forces that have pushed the person away from cosmopolitanism, national identity, and humanity and toward race have produced his or her approach to self-representation. Black cosmopolitanism is born of the interstices and intersections between two mutually constitutive cosmopolitanisms—a hegemonic cosmopolitanism, exemplified by the material and psychological violence of imperialism and slavery (including dehumanization), and a cosmopolitanism that is rooted in a common knowledge and memory of that violence. The violence may remain unacknowledged, but is nevertheless the basis of the desire exhibited by public figures of African descent to imagine or reject a connection with people of African descent in other sites or with the world at large. The desire to be recognized as an agent is interwoven with the desire to be a citizen, and both desires determine both individual identity and textual and ideological engagements with people of African descent in other sites.

Contemporary and historical definitions of the cosmopolite characterize (and gender) him or her as one who loves to travel. As scholars such as Melvin Dixon have pointed out, Black people's relationship to travel and movement is inherently fraught because of the way in which they were brought to the Americas. People of African descent did not "travel" to the Americas, inasmuch as travel implies leisure and volition. They were forcibly brought as commodities. Given this history, one of the pivotal questions of this study is whether a slave can "travel," define himself/herself through the places to which s/he travels, and by extension be considered cosmopolitan. Slavery sought to control the movements of people of African descent (both free and slave). This effort was quite often in vain. People of African descent found ways to move between physical and/or geographical sites. They also, as is evident in the texts interpreted here, moved conceptually between sites as they constructed their ideologies and identities. Those conceptual movements, whether manifested through an explicit bonding with people of African descent in other sites as in Martin Delany's *Blake; Or, the Huts of America* (1861-62) or through the dedication of a Romantic poem to Poland as in Plácido's poem "A Polonia" took place in the service of eking out a space for subjectivity—a space wherein an individual or a community could be recognized as human and as equal to those at the top of the Atlantic world.

Traditional understandings of the cosmopolite assume that the person has the means to travel, reflecting the inherently classed nature of cosmopolitanism as most often articulated. Inderpal Grewal has hinted at this issue in her discussion of the classed nature of the terms immigrant and exile. Those with education and means are exiles. Everyone else is denigrated and designated an immigrant. Similarly cosmopolitan is reserved for those at the top, and everyone else is viewed as comfortably provincial. *Black Cosmopolitanism* traces the dialectics of a cosmopolitanism from below.[23] It is one that came of age at the same time that the forces of hegemonic cosmopolitanism in the Atlantic world (cosmopolitanism from above) were forced to reconfigure themselves to deal with the new threats posed by the uprising in Haiti.[24]

It is worth noting, however, that the drive to be acknowledged as equal ensures that not all those who display Black cosmopolitanism have a desire to travel, whether materially or conceptually, in terms of the definition of self or community. In fact, even the individuals who seem to travel the most simultaneously exhibit a certain resistance to doing so. This irony inheres both in hegemonic forms of cosmopolitanism (as Said's aforementioned comment on Orientalism suggests) and in "cosmopolitanism from below" because the latter, although resistant, is fundamentally concerned with proving a group or individual an equal member of the societies that produced the hegemonic forms. In fact, in people of African descent's published demands for citizenship, cosmopolitanism is often viewed both as an obstacle to the achievement of that goal and as the quality that proves that the individual or group is worthy of citizenship. The case of ex-slave Frederick Douglass

who became U.S. consul to Haiti shows this conundrum especially clearly. Douglass and other U.S. Black writers are one part of a continent-wide discourse inspired by the revolution in Haiti on the question of how people of African descent should locate their own subjectivities in relation to each other and the broader Atlantic world.

My close readings of the texts by Douglass and the aforementioned others highlight the mechanics of self-definition and approaches to representing, engaging, or defining people in other sites. I pay particular attention to the methods individuals developed to negotiate ever present tensions between local and global affinities during this period. Those methods include creation of a transnational notion of Blackness and "Black" history; intense focus on claiming the nation of residence; manipulation, reconfiguration, and redeployment of the tropes and conventions of Romantic poetry and the slave narrative; employment of nation as a metaphor for race; binaristic Blackness—the idea that in order for one group of people of African descent to be protected, elevated, or humanized, the other must be made vulnerable, debased, or dehumanized; cosmopolitan cartography—mapping the world at large through language; cosmopolitan consciousness—a simultaneous embrace of Black consciousness and cosmopolitanism; community autoethnography—the ethnographic representation of a community that is foreign (geographically or linguistically) in order to create, reveal, or emphasize kinship; the highlighting of one's own individual intellect and achievement or that of others one wishes to mark as a member of one's own community; and disidentification with the Black race. As they formulate these modes of self-definition and self-articulation, these public figures' approaches to shaping their texts are framed by several expected or imposed understandings of identity—the White power structure's fear of their cosmopolitanism (and by extension the attempts to control their textual and physical movements), the presumption that everyone must define himself/ herself through the referents race, nation, and humanity (and by extension the denial of the latter two to people of African descent), and the traditional geographical and identificatory boundaries of particular genres.

Beyond the Boundaries: Locating Black Discourses

In historical scholarship comparative and transnational work have long had a strong presence.[25] Several of the most touted historical analyses of slavery and early Black life on the continent are transnational in scope.[26] Melville Herskovits writes in his classic *The Myth of the Negro Past* (1941) that "the approach in the ensuing pages, though oriented toward the study of the Negro in the United States, takes into full account the West African, South American, and West Indian data, lacking which, I am convinced, true perspective on the values of Negro life in this country cannot be had."[27] The notion that African American culture refers to the cultures of Blacks in the Americas is a significant aspect of the highly controversial work The Birth of

African American Culture by Sidney Mintz and Richard Price.[28] The concept of the Atlantic world conveyed to literary studies through Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* has long been a structuring unit in historical scholarship.[29] The work of Richard Price, Herbert S. Klein, Alfred Hunt, David Barry Gaspar and Darlene Clark Hine, and John Thornton among many others bears this truth out.[30]

Toni Morrison's *Playing in the Dark*, Eric Sundquist's *To Wake the Nations*, and Dana Nelson's *The Word in Black and White*, begin to engage the related question of otherness within, in terms of the engagements between White American literature and the figure of the Black.[31] This issue of the "other within" has undergirded British cultural studies works such as Iain Chambers' *Migrancy, Culture, Identity* and Stuart Hall's many essays.[32] Literary scholars such as Houston Baker in *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance* have formidably taken up the issue of the biculturalism within the constitution of African American identities and literary traditions.[33]

African American literary criticism has begun to reevaluate itself as a result of an increasing number of calls for an inclusion of other Black/ American literatures in the scope of what is called African American literature and calls for the development and application of a cross-national critical methodology. Examples include pioneering work by Hortense Spillers on reconceptualizing/recutting the border between U.S. and Nuestra American literature, by Vévé Clark on the importance of going beyond the binary of Black Us and White Them in Black American literary criticism and theory, and by José David Saldivar in his inclusion of Ntozake Shange in *The Dialectics of Our America*.[34] The burgeoning discourse on the impact of Intra-American migration on Black American identities exemplified by Carol Boyce Davies's *Black Women, Writing, and Identity* and Farah Jasmine Griffin's *Who Set You Flowin'?* amplify this call and initiate the articulation of a response.[35] At the same time, recent years have seen the growth of scholarship on the Black (literary) transatlantic, exemplified by Paul Gilroy in his work on the European ideological encounters of seminal African American figures Richard Wright and W. E. B. Du Bois.[36] Brent Edwards's analysis of the parallel, distinctive, and intersecting worlds of Black expressive culture in the United States and the francophone world in the 1920s and 1930s builds on the foundation established by Gilroy and earlier by James DeJongh (*Vicious Modernism*, 1990).[37] The comparative method of George Handley's study of the "family ties" between U.S. and Cuban literatures of the twentieth century, particularly in the area of race, bridges the transnational impetus in recent African Diaspora discourse with its increasing attentiveness to the place and function of race in the formation and representation of U.S. and Cuban subjectivity.[38]

In addition, recent years have seen an explosion in critical and theoretical scholarship calling attention to the multiplicity within the Black community in terms of gender, class, and color. From J. Martin Favor's analysis of the problematic implications of the "perceived necessity" to identify "authentic Blackness" during the Harlem Renaissance era, to Hazel Carby's interrogation and ultimate rejection of

the concept of the "race man," scholars have revealed the continually moving and always already tenuous ground on which assumptions about the meaning of "Black community" rest.[39] Work by Stuart Hall on identificatory hybridity, Carole Boyce Davies on "migratory subjectivities," and Myriam Chancy on women in exile has similarly revealed the range of ways individuals relate to and define Caribbeanness.[40] At the same time, publication of literature and scholarship by and about Afro-Latin Americans has increased markedly. Historical work on slavery in Latin America such as Franklin Knight's work on slave society in Cuba has been supplemented by pioneering work by Richard Jackson on historical images of Blacks in Latin American literature, Marvin Lewis on Afro-Argentinean literature, Carol Mills-Young on Afro-Uruguayan life and literature, and Laurence Prescott on Afro-Colombian literature.[41] These important explosions have largely occupied separate spheres within academia, in large part because literature departments and the study of literature are generally organized according to language and/or nation. Black Cosmopolitanism links the interrogation and expansion of notions of Blackness represented by the new directions in these fields, and posits a theoretical framework for comprehending and analyzing the historical and contemporary relations between African American, West Indian, Latin American and Latino (including Afro-Latin American) discourses and groups.

Black Cosmopolitanism is a conversation with these scholars and a call in itself for a rethinking of the very terms and grounds of the discourse. We need to rethink what we mean when we say "African American" so that we include the other Black Americas there (in "Nuestra América"), as well as here (in the United States). I focus on the points where here and there meet, and where the lines between the two not only cross but become blurred. Reading the identificatory and ideological border crossings of people of African descent produces a reconceptualization of these literatures as arising out of intra-Diasporic dialogues. Going beyond the nationally bounded and the comparative brings us closer to the hemispherist and integrative critical approach that, as this book will illustrate, is so often begged by the texts themselves and the lives of the people who produce them.

W. E. B. Du Bois famously prophesied that the greatest problem of the twentieth century would be the color line. In fact, debates over lines demarcating differences on the "Black" side of the line, both explicit and unspoken, have long been concomitant with the color line. Treatments of ethnic and national difference on this side of the Black-White color line lay bare both the conceptual underpinnings of the color line itself and of people of African descent's methods of engaging that line that are not as apparent when the focus is on interactions with Whites. Edouard Glissant identifies negritude as a generalizing concept that is powerful precisely because it enables the minimizing of differences between people from disparate sites. He goes on to identify, in his discussion of Western European thought, the limitations of acknowledgments of difference. A key question, then, for this study in particular and for work that explicates the multiplicities within the African Diaspora,

is whether attentiveness to difference and/or cultural mixture can exist within or coexist with the "generalizing concept" of Blackness. Glissant suggests "acknowledging differences does not compel one to be involved in the dialectics of their totality. One could get away with: 'I can acknowledge your difference and continue to think it is harmful to you.'"[42] Brent Edwards argues that "décalage is proper to the structure of a diasporic 'racial' formation, and its return in the form of disarticulation—the points of misunderstanding, bad faith, unhappy translation—must be considered a necessary haunting."[43] Disjointedness and difference are as constitutive of African Diaspora culture and history as are manifestations and evidence of contemporary and historical bonds.

Analyses of the treatment of or engagement with intraracial difference have focused almost exclusively on twentieth-century texts and expressive culture. Implicit in this focus is the notion that such engagements began in the twentieth century, in the wake of World War I. The result of this orientation has been an emphasis on moments of physical contact between thinkers of African descent in disparate sites and on the ways in which they consciously linked their political or artistic movements. Through the focus on the nineteenth century here, the equal importance of ideas held about each other in the absence of such direct contact becomes clear. The twentieth- century focus has allowed us to miss the pivotal importance of nineteenth-century texts in the development and public articulation not just of Black or African Diasporan identity, but also of ideas about the significance of transnational engagement for those identities. The result has been that the discourse on the identity constitution undertaken in slave narratives (including the work of Houston Baker, William Andrews, and Frances Smith Foster) has come to be understood as separate from the discourses on Black transnationalism and pan-Africanism. Slave narratives are representative not only of individual identity and the individual's struggle to be recognized as human, but also of a worldview (quite literally, a view of the world). In fact, the bulk of the phenomena identified by scholars of twentieth-century Black transnationalism have evident roots in the nineteenth-century texts in general, and often slave narratives in particular.

The rise of Black modernity, for example, has been a central concern in the discussions of twentieth-century texts. It stands to reason, though, that this would be an even greater concern in texts produced at the very moment in which the people of African descent in the Americas were seeking to be freed from the bonds of slavery. They also sought to free themselves from the concomitant understanding of them as uncivilized beings, and to prove themselves part of the civilized (aka modern) world.[44] Why else would James Holly feel the need to characterize the Haitian Revolution as "A Vindication of the Capacity of the Negro Race for Self-Government and Civilized Progress as Demonstrated by Historical Events of the Haytian Revolution"? Why would Frederick Douglass make a point of representing Haiti at the 1893 Columbian Exposition, noting that "I have, since my return to the United States, been pressed on all sides to foretell what will be the future of Haiti—

whether she will fall away into anarchy, chaos, and barbarism, or rise to the dignity and happiness of a highly civilized nation and be a credit to the colored race? I am free to say that I believe she will fulfill the latter condition and destiny."[45] Both his evident pride in Haiti's growth as a republic and his subtle ambivalence about Haiti's distance from barbarism (clearest in the fact that he spends most of the speech either explaining why Haiti is not primitive or explaining away the aspects of Haitian culture that might be perceived as primitive) reveal the relationship between the transnational desires to be seen as modern, that is to say, to be seen as civilized, human—and equal—and transnational engagement. For both Holly and Douglass the fate of African American modernity (civilization, humanity, and equality) is tied to the fate of Haiti and the Haitian people.

These statements illustrate that during the ninety-six years after the success of the Haitian Revolution (that is, the wake of the Revolution) people of African descent sought to determine the specific configurations of their paths to freedom and equality (aka modernity). One of the crucial decisions facing them was whether racial community or national affinity was the more effective means to their desired end. As Kathleen Wilson's book on "the island race" of England as well as Dana D. Nelson's oeuvre and Eric Hobsbawm's (subsequently controversial) *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780* (1990) have shown, both race and nation were frequently understood as anchors of identity and as evidence of ontological subjectivity.[46] Public figures of African descent understood and employed the language and conceptual frameworks of their period. The structure of *Black Cosmopolitanism*, therefore, is based on the ways in which these two referents were used in tandem, separately, and dialogically by a range of individuals of African descent in order to prove their status as equal, human, and modern. *Black Cosmopolitanism* begins by illuminating the ways Blacks and Blackness were created during the ninety-six years of the nineteenth century that followed the creation of the Haitian Republic, spotlighting the tensions around made Blackness and the self-concepts of those who were made Black.

Part One, "The Making of a Race (Man)," lends insight into the multiple agents of racial identification during this period by considering Plácido (aka Gabriel de la Concepción Valdés), the Cuban poet who was executed by the Spanish government in Cuba for allegedly leading the largest anti- slavery conspiracy in Cuban history to that point. He was constructed as a "race man" by the Cuban colonial government as well as by white European, American, and African American abolitionists. This section uses the language and ideological nuances of these three groups' texts to index implicit tensions and surprising similarities in the racial identity and ideology they ascribe to Plácido. All groups construct their desired image of Plácido by way of the three referents I argue were pivotal for people of African descent during this period—race, nation, and humanity—emphasizing certain referents and downplaying or negating others.

Part Two, "Both (Race) and (Nation)?" begins by discussing racial identity and national affinity in Plácido's verse, including his political and pastoral poems, revealing a methodology for conceptualizing and articulating racial identity that is not based on divorcing it from national identity. It continues with an exploration of the ways Frederick Douglass's "twice- doubled" consciousness, evident in his writings on Haiti, was foreshadowed in his Narrative. As U.S. consul to Haiti, Douglass found himself in the awkward position of feeling a kinship with the Haitian people while charged with overseeing the U.S. imperial enterprise of obtaining a part of Haiti for a military base. He had to balance being U.S. American and U.S. Negro, and also being U.S. American and racial brother of the Haitian people—a "twice-doubled" or "complicated" consciousness.

Part Three, "Negating Nation, Rejecting Race," considers attempts by public, published figures to find identity, and by extension humanity and equality, beyond the referents of race or nation. Significantly, they are unable to let go of both simultaneously, reinforcing the pivotal role of these referents in the search for the recognition of humanity and equality and in the conceptualization of identities and relationships between disparate groups within the African Diaspora. Mary Prince posits a notion of Black identity that includes Blacks from a variety of geographical sites, but does not express connection to a particular nation. Her conceptualization thus cannot accurately be described as transnational; it can, however, be described as cosmopolitan. The autobiography of Cuban slave poet Juan Francisco Manzano serves as the medium for exploring disidentification with a Black community in terms of the identity formation of people of African descent in the Americas. Manzano repeatedly marks the difference between himself and the Blacks in his autobiography. As I illustrate, this distancing is more than simply "selling out." I thus explore the implications of the fundamental question of what drives tensions between people of African descent from disparate sites for both historical and contemporary relations. Specifically, *Black Cosmopolitanism* asks us to take a moment to reconsider our assumptions about the bases on which we construct African Diaspora canons in general and nineteenth-century African American canons in particular.

Notes

1. At first glance, Lauryn Hill's cross-cultural ease may not seem strange to those who are familiar with contemporary discourse on the multi-locationality and multi-culturality of Caribbean diasporan identities. Juan Flores's work on Newyorican identity, Paule Marshall's novels on West Indian/African American life, and Stuart Hall's work on hybrid Black British subjectivities all elucidate the multiple cultural and identificatory sites negotiated by Caribbean diasporan people. Lauryn Hill's work would seem to fit perfectly into this paradigm, except that she is not Caribbean diasporan. Juan Flores, *Divided Borders: Essays on Puerto Rican Identity* (Houston: Arte Publico Press, 1993); Paule Marshall, *Soul Clap Hands and Sing* (New York: Atheneum, 1961); Marshall, *The Chosen Place, the Timeless People* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1969); Marshall, *Brown Girl, Brownstones*, with an afterward by Mary Helen Washington (Chatham, N.J.: Chatham Bookseller, 1972); Marshall, *Praisesong for the Widow* (New York: Putman's, 1983); Marshall, *Daughters* (New York: Atheneum 1991); Stuart Hall, "New Ethnicities," in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (London: Routledge, 1995); Hall, "Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation," in *Black British Cultural Studies: A Reader*, ed. Houston A. Baker, Jr., Manthia Diawara, and Ruth H. Lindeborg (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Padmini Mongia (London: Arnold, 1996); and Hall, ed., *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (London: Sage, 1997).

2. In addition, Melvin B. Rahming, for example, has detailed the prevalence of stereotypical images of West Indians in earlier African American literature including Ellison's *Invisible Man* and Du Bois's *Dark Princess.*

3. Although it addresses a more immediately violent history, see also Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).

4. Carole Boyce Davies among others has pointed out the difficulty with descriptive terminologies for Blacks in the Americas. Carole Boyce Davies, *Black Women, Writing and Identity: Migrations of the Subject* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 5. This difficulty exemplifies why the transnational heading toward supranational conceptual framework I suggest here is necessary. There has been so much migration and movement within the Americas that defining an individual or group through a specific site, or tying a specific site only to a specific group, is virtually impossible, not to mention inaccurate. As a result I vary the terms that I use throughout the book, highlighting the tension associated with the use of those terms. I use the terms U.S. Black, U.S. descended Black, and African American (albeit reluctantly) to describe Blacks who are born, raised, and have multigenerational roots in the U.S. I use the terms Caribbean and Caribbean descended Blacks to describe people who have roots in the Caribbean (which is difficult to do since so many "African Americans" have eighteenth-, nineteenth-, or twentieth-century Caribbean roots). By including Hispanophone Caribbean writers in this project, I call them

Black by implication. I want to point out here that this is simply a heuristic, and that part of the project of this book is to interrogate the expectation that all people with African blood must define themselves racially, and that if they do not they are "sell outs." The other side of this interrogation is the questioning of the significance of disassociating from Black racial identification for inter-American relations. Most frequently, I use the term people of African descent in the Americas. I believe that African American is the more appropriate term, but at present, it connotes a specific (U.S.) national site in many minds. Like Davies, I am dissatisfied with the available terms, but cognizant of the fact that neologisms can impede reader comprehension. In the service of achieving the larger ends my project identifies, I dare to tread on the quicksand that is the field of descriptive racial/ethnic/national terminology in the Americas.

5. Aimé Césaire, *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, 1947, trans. and ed. Clayton Eshleman and Annette Smith (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 2001), 15.

6. James Theodore Holly, "A Vindication of the Capacity of the Negro Race for Self-Government and Civilized Progress as Demonstrated by Historical Events of the Haytian Revolution; and the Subsequent Acts of That People Since Their National Independence" in James Theodore Holly and J. Dennis Harris, *Black Separatism and the Caribbean, 1860*, ed.Howard H. Bell (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1970), 23.

7. Holly, "A Vindication," 65.

8. David Walker, *David Walker's Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World* (1829; University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 23.

9. William Wells Brown, *St. Domingo: Its Revolutions and Its Patriots* (Boston: Bela Marsh, 1855), 8.

10. Julius S. Scott, "The Common Wind: Currents of Afro-American Communication in the Era of the Haitian Revolution," Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1986; W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1997); Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000); Maggie Montesinos Sale, *The Slumbering Volcano: American Slave Ship Revolts and the Production of Rebellious Masculinity* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997); Cheryl J. Fish, *Black and White Women's Travel Narratives: Antebellum Explorations* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004); William Andrews, *To Tell a Free Story: The First Century of Afro-American Autobiography, 1760-1865* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986).

11. U.S. Constitution, Article I, Section 2, Clause 3.

12. Walter Mignolo makes a similar point when he writes of the intrinsic link between cosmopolitanism and coloniality, and more specifically of colonialism's "global designs." Walter Mignolo, "The Many Faces of Cosmo-polis: Border Thinking and Critical Cosmopolitanism," *Public Culture* 12, 3 (2000): 721-48.

13. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 12. Said anticipates the analyses of Mary Louise Pratt, who delineates the impact of encounters with the newly discovered, imaged, and imagined others on European and creole American ideology, self-concepts, and worldviews. Pratt's reading of creole intellectual Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's travel book on Europe is particularly instructive. Sarmiento, author of *Civilization and Barbarism* (1847), a text that both established and analyzed racial hierarchies in Spanish America, is forced to reflect on his own discursive and identificatory position as he travels through Europe. As Pratt puts it, "he takes up the question before him . . . how does the creole citizen and man of letters position himself with respect to Europe?" Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 1992 (New York: Routledge, 1998), 190.

14. Pheng Cheah, "Given Culture: Rethinking Cosmopolitical Freedom in Transnationalism," *Boundary 2* (Summer 1997): 176, 175.

15. Cheah, "Given Culture," 176.

16. I employ the term cosmopolitanism to emphasize that the Haitian Revolution brings about and/or creates the assumption of a certain global sophistication (the most common definition of cosmopolitanism) on the part of people of African descent in the Americas. White fear was based on the notion that people of African descent everywhere had knowledge of the revolution and felt connected to the revolutionaries. At the same time, people of African descent were endeavoring to conceptualize and articulate the grounds of a globally oriented notion of community. My use of the term builds on definitions of the term that emphasize interest in global knowledge and engagement, and runs counter to definitions that ascribe cosmopolitanism only to White Europeans and/or members of the elite. Thomas Schlereth, for example, provides a useful history of the term, characterizing it as an attempt to overcome provincial national affinities and associating it with the elite. He identifies the cosmopolite as one who values knowledge of a range of people and places of the world. Thomas Schlereth, *The Cosmopolitan Ideal in Enlightenment Thought: Its Form and Function in the Ideas of Franklin, Hume, and Voltaire, 1694–1790* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976). Several scholars have recently pondered the role of cosmopolitanism in the intellectual's work, most particularly in the intellectual's work as a radical. See Paul A. Bove, "Afterword: Global/Local Memory and Thought," in *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary*, ed. Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanayake (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996); David A.Hollinger, "Ethnic Diversity, Cosmopolitanism, and the Emergence of the American Liberal Intelligentsia,"*American Quarterly*, 27, 2 (May 1975):133-51.; Tim Brennan, "Cosmopolitans and Celebrities," *Race and Class: A Journal for Black and Third World Liberation* 31, 1 (July–September 1989): 1-19; Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002).

17. Elisa Tamarkin revisits, for example, African Americans' relationships to and representations of England. Elisa Tamarkin, "Black Anglophilia; or the Sociability of Antislavery," *American Literary History* 14, 3: (2002): 444-78.

18. For a more detailed historicization of Pan-Africanism, see Ronald W.Walters, *Pan-Africanism in the African Diaspora: An Analysis of Modern Afrocentric Political Movements* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993).

19. Sankar Muthu's *Enlightenment Against Empire* (2004) shows clearly the extent to which even the idea that European identity should be constituted by the type of cosmopolitanism that Empire represented was a subject of substantial debate. Sankar Muthu, *Enlightenment Against Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

20. In this, my project's approach to cosmopolitanism differs significantly from that of Paul Gilroy, especially as it appears in Gilroy, *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line* (Cambridge,Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2000); he posits such engagements as a means for achieving the "liberation from 'race'" which he argues "is an especially urgent matter for those peoples who, like modern blacks in the period after transatlantic slavery, were assigned an inferior position in the enduring hierarchies that raciology creates" (15). Especially troubling are his equation, throughout the work, of the embrace of racial community with backwardness and history and the embrace of universality with progress and the future and his decrying the fact that "nobody ever speaks of a human identity," suggesting that there is an inherent contradiction between being attentive to a community's humanity and defining that community as a culturally or historically identifiable community. I am arguing that it was precisely the negation of people of African descent's humanity that led them to claim or reject Blackness and/or cosmopolitanism as bases of identity. As the remainder of my study shows, I concur fully in taking a critical view of Blackness and specifically of the ways particular notions of Blackness have been used to exclude, subsume, and marginalize a range of individuals and populations, but the answer is not to negate either the forces that led to its production or the extent to which it has served a range of individuals and communities well, and provided the basis for casting off various oppressive millstones. Carole Boyce Davies in a review of *Against Race* makes a similar point, noting that the book "challenges the philosophy of 'race' as a formation but it leaves intact the . . . hierarchy of racial oppression and racial structuring." Carole Boyce Davies, "*Against Race* or the Politics of Self-Ethnography," *Jenda: A Journal of Culture and African Women Studies* 2 (2002): 1.

     Black Cosmopolitanism recalls Joan Dayan's characterization of her difference from Gilroy: "I am less interested in how the enlightenment and philosophers of modernity, whether called Habermas or Du Bois, Hegel or Douglass crafted their analyses . . . than in how slaves and their descendants interpreted and revealed what white enlightenment was really about." In Gilroy's pursuit of an anchor for "black modernism," "slavery. . . becomes nothing more than a metaphor." Joan Dayan, "Paul Gilroy's Slaves, Ships, and Routes: The Middle Passage as Metaphor," *Research in African Literatures* 27, 4

(Winter 1996): 7; see also Simon Gikandi, "Race and Cosmopolitanism,"*American Literary History* 14, 3 (Fall 2002): 600, 602, 610.

21. Mihai Grunfeld's article, for example, uses this description as a conceptual basis. Mihai Grunfeld, "Cosmopolitismo modernista y vanguardista," *Revista Iberoamericana* 55, 146–147 (January–June 1989): 33.

22. See, for example, Bruce Robbins's analysis of Martha Nussbaum's *For Love of Country*. Bruce Robbins, *Feeling Global: Internationalism in Distress* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 147-68.

23. I use this phrase instead of "vernacular cosmopolitanism" to index the dialogical relationship between "cosmopolitanism from below" and cosmopolitanism as more typically understood—a cosmopolitanism that is really a "cosmopolitanism from above." Both are, in significant part, constituted by their interaction. Identifying a cosmopolitanism as being "from below" necessarily calls attention to not only the cosmopolitanism from above in and of itself, but also the power that it has vis a vis any other cosmopolitanism—its always already hegemonic position. The term vernacular cosmopolitanism is used most often to complicate the binary between native and foreign. For an explication of a vernacular cosmopolitanism, see, for example, Mamadou Diouf, "The Senegalese Murid Trade Diaspora and the Making of a Vernacular Cosmopolitanism," *Public Culture* 12, 3 (2000): 679–702.

24. Here, I refer to the alternating cooperation and conflict between the dominant powers in the slaveocracies of the Americas over the appropriate approaches to preventing another Haiti. The ambivalent relationship between the colonial government in Cuba and the British as well as that between the creole elites in Cuba and the United States (discussed in greater detail in Chapter 1) exemplify this vacillation.

25. My point is not that historical discourse on the early Black Americas has been wholly transnational, because it certainly has not been. The fixation with national borders has certainly been a significant presence in the field. Insightful yet nationally bounded works such as Philip Curtin, *Two Jamaicas: The Role of Ideas in a Tropical Colony1830–1865* (Cambridge,Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955) pepper the historiographical landscape. My point is that transnational and/or comparative methodologies have been valued in historical scholarship.

26. Works considered foundational include Melville J. Herskovits, *Myth of a Negro Past*, with a foreword by Sidney W. Mintz (1941; Boston: Beacon Press, 1992); Sidney Mintz and Richard Price, *Birth of African American Culture* (1976; Boston: Beacon Press, 1992); Richard Price, *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979); Laura Foner and Eugene D. Genovese, eds., *Slavery in the New World: A Reader in Comparative History* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969); Charles H.Wesley, ed., *The Negro in the Americas* (Washington, D.C.: Graduate School, Howard University, 1940); Melvin Marvin Tumin, comp., *Comparative Perspectives on Race Relations* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969); Roslyn Terborg-Penn and

Andrea Benton Rushing, eds.,*Women in Africa and the African Diaspora* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1996).

27. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, xxvii.

28. These works, however, do not posit Blacks as agents in the creation of their own cultures—a concept presented as an organically occurring process, or of their own identities—identity is not even mentioned as part of the Black experience in the Americas. See for example, Eugene D. Genovese, *The World the Slaveholders Made: Two Essays in Interpretation* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1988). Other works such as Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977) and Eugene Genovese *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage, 1974) begin to refute the assumption that history "happened" to Blacks in the Americas, and detail ways Blacks crafted their own American cultures. I engage in a similar project by viewing ex-slave and free Black writers, who Ira Berlin names as "slaves without masters," as participants in African American nation building and as agents to choose to embrace or not embrace non-U.S. Blacks as part of that nation. Ira Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South* (New York: New Press, 1974).

29. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993). Positive reviews appeared in several major literary journals; see Peter Erickson, *African American Review* 31, 3 (1997): 506–8; Louis Chude-Sokei, "The Black Atlantic Paradigm: Paul Gilroy and the Fractured Landscape of 'Race'," *American Quarterly* 48, 4 (1996): 740–45; Alasdair Pettinger, "Enduring Fortresses," *Research in African Literatures* 29, 4 (1998): 142–47; Dwight McBride, *Modern Fiction Studies* 41, 2 (1995): 388–91. A significantly less positive review, one that centers on the lack of depth and concern with the material in Gilroy's work, is Joan Dayan, "Paul Gilroy's Slaves, Ships, and Routes: The Middle Passage as Metaphor," *Research in African Literatures* 27, 4 (1996): 7–14.

30. See, for example, Price, *Maroon Societies*; Herbert S. Klein, *Slavery in the Americas: A Comparative Study of Virginia and Cuba* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967); Klein, *African Slavery in Latin America and the Caribbean* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Klein, *The Middle Passage: Comparative Studies in the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978); Alfred N. Hunt, *Haiti's Influence on Antebellum America* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988); David Barry Gaspar and Darlene Clark Hine, eds., *More Than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery in the Americas* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996); and John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400–1680* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

31. Morrison tracks the persistence of what she calls "American Africanism"—White American writers' use of the African in their construction of Americanness—and criticizes critical approaches that have ignored this presence for impoverishing the literature, for

robbing it of its ideas. Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark* (New York: Vintage, 1993). Sundquist rereads the American Renaissance in particular and American identity in general as being foundationally about Black revolution, about the right to freedom. He calls into question the imagining of American literature and culture as purely "Anglo-European" and of African American literature as a marginal stepchild. Sundquist's text stands out in its positioning of Delany and Melville's Americas/New World interest as also constitutive of American literature. In suggesting a completely new paradigm upon which American literary genealogies should be based, this work posits one way in which the Americas can be read within the U.S. critical discourse and paves the way for work like mine. Eric Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1993). Nelson explores the functioning of the concept of "race" in colonial and early American literary texts. She is specifically concerned with the ways in which the strategies for dealing with race shaped both texts and society. She delineates the intervention of racial (and often racist) ideology in texts that purport to be supporting the racial other as well as highlighting how both the racially othered and the self-critical (de)racialized self have talked back. My approach to reading inter-American engagements in both outward reaching and locally fixated Black Americas writing mirrors Nelson's in terms of going beyond simply noting the appearance of the othernational Black (the racialized other in Nelson's work), and into what these modes of engagement say about developing social ideology. Dana D. Nelson, *The Word in Black and White: Reading "Race" in American Literature, 1638–1867* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

32. Chambers speaks to the ways in which the "return of the native," that is the migration of Blacks to England, forces the White English "us" to reconsider who we think we are, to recognize that the stranger is also within us, exposing "the fiction of identity." He extrapolates what is happening in the English context, arguing that migrancy itself puts the presumed identificatory determinism of modernity into question. Caribbean American writers such as Paule Marshall and Edwidge Danticat, if accorded sufficient critical attention, as well as "celebrities" like Colin Powell and Busta Rhymes, will have a similar impact on African American conception of "we." Iain Chambers,*Migrancy, Culture, Identity* (London: Routledge, 1994). In "The Local and the Global," and "Old Identities, New Ethnicities," for example, Hall argues that the old logic of English identity has been put into question by the presence of the Black British and the loss of English world power due to globalization. The approach to English identity that he terms the Thatcherite notion of Englishness has become even more narrow and reactionary in response to this perceived threat. I suggest that a similar turtle response is part of what has ensured continuing tensions between African Americans and Caribbean people. Stuart Hall, "The Local and the Global," in *Culture, Globalization, and the World-System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity*, ed. Anthony D. King (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

33. Baker calls attention to the (de)formation of modernism and mastery imbricated in seminal texts of the Black intellectual tradition. Through readings of a wide variety of

literary, political, and artistic texts including works by W. E. B. Du Bois, Booker T.Washington, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and Charles Chesnutt, Baker posits a theory of Black Modernism based on the revision of (White) forms and the invocation of uniquely Black figures and figurations. He avows not only that Black Modernism exists, but also that it is American. Henry Louis Gates's argument in *Signifying Monkey* recalls Baker's in its emphasis on the intertextual talking back of Black writers and texts. My project is more interested, however, in relations between Black texts across national borders than in how texts within one nation talk either to the dominant discourses in that one nation or to each other. Houston A. Baker, *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

34. Spillers's introduction to *Comparative American Identities*, "Who Cuts the Border," argues that the analyses of the calibanesque attributes of the U.S. should be included in the discourse interrogating the "made up" European construction called America. She puts this into action through a reading of Our Americanness (to use Marti's term) of Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom*. Hortense Spillers, ed., *Comparative American Identities: Race, Sex, and Nationality in the Modern Text* (New York: Routledge,1991), 1–25. Clark argues for the development of Diaspora literacy—the wherewithal to read texts from various diasporan points from an "indigenous" perspective and "marasa consciousness"—going beyond privileging the binaries in critical analysis and reading intertextual dialogues. Significantly, she locates the beginning of both Diaspora literacy and marasa consciousness in the rise of what she terms the "new letters," in the Americas of the 1920s and 1930s, also known as the Harlem Renaissance, Negrismo, the Trinidad Awakening, and Negritude. Vévé Clark, "Developing Diaspora Literacy and Marasa Consciousness," in Spillers, *Comparative American Identities*, 40–61. Saldivar calls for and enacts a "trans-geographical" American literary analysis that highlights cross currents rather than fixating on national ideologies. Contained within this collection on various texts that would traditionally be classified as Latin American or Latino is his reading of the magical realism of Ntozake Shange's *Sassafrass, Cypress, & Indigo*. He calls attention to the implicit and explicit links Shange has and makes to Afro-Caribbean and Latin American literary models, and criticizes the critical reduction of her work to one national site. José David Saldivar, *The Dialectics of Our America: Genealogy, Cultural Critique, and Literary History* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1991).

35. Griffin provides a marvelous, detailed, integrated analysis of the literary, musical, and photographic representations and reflections of African American migration to the North. She delineates the negotiations of space and identity, past and present that shape the migrant's experiences in these migration narratives. Farah Jasmine Griffin, *"Who Set You Flowin'": The African American Migration Narrative* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

36. Gilroy analyzes Du Bois's and Wright's creation of an African American theory of modernity by using and reworking European theoretical models such as those created by Marx and Nietzsche. He argues that narrow readings have ignored the European dimensions of these African American men's thought and writing. He criticizes Cornel

West's all-American centered reading of Du Bois and specifically what he sees as West's downplaying of Du Bois's European influences and encounters. He also similarly decries the intellectually impoverishing pigeonholing of Wright that negates his resistance to African American essentialism.

37. Brent Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003); James DeJongh, *Vicious Modernism: Black Harlem and the Literary Imagination* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

38. George Handley, *Postslavery Literatures in the Americas: Family Portraits in Black and White* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000).

39. J.Martin Favor, *Authentic Blackness: The Folk in the New Negro Renaissance* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999), 3; Hazel V. Carby, *Race Men* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), 5.

40. Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora"; Davies, *Black Women, Writing and Identity*; Myriam Chancy, *Searching for Safe Spaces: Afro-Caribbean Women in Exile* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997).

41. Franklin Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba During the Nineteenth Century* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970); Richard Jackson, *The Black Image in Latin American Literature* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1976); Marvin Lewis, *Afro-American Discourse: Another Dimension of the Black Diaspora* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1995); Caroll Mills Young, "The Unmasking of Virginia Brindis de Salas: Minority Discourse of Afro-Uruguay," in *Daughters of the Diaspora: Afra-Hispanic Writers*, ed. Miriam DeCosta Willis (Kingston: Ian Randle, 2003), 11–24; Laurence Prescott, *Without Hatreds or Fears: Jorge Artel and the Struggle for Black Literary Expression in Colombia* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000).

42. Edouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 17.

43. Edwards, *Practice of Diaspora*, 14.

44. Houston Baker's discussion of Douglass's realization of his humanity through the writing of his narrative suggests this, but does not reach the point of explicitly characterizing the slave narrative as an encounter with modernity. The link is evident both in the language of Baker's reading of Douglass (extracting "being from existence," "the slave narrator must accomplish the almost unthinkable . . . task of transmuting an authentic, unwritten self—a self that exists outside the conventional literary discourse structures of a White reading public—into a literary representation") and in Baker's contextualization of his reading of Douglass with the engagement with self undertaken by other American writers of the period. Baker does not, however, discuss the relevance of Douglass's encounters with the world beyond the U.S. to that process of finding and

articulating a self. Houston Baker, *The Journey Back: Issues in Black Literature and Criticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 39.

45. Frederick Douglass, "Haiti and the Haitian People: An Address Delivered in Chicago, Illinois, on 2 January 1893," in *The Frederick Douglass Papers*, vol. 5, *1881–95*, ed. John W. Blassingame and John R. McKivigan (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1992), 523.

46. Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire, and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).