READING, SPEAKING, & WRITING LIBERATION:
African-American and Irish Discourse

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for Greg

In a pine tree,
A few yards away from my window sill,
A brilliant blue jay is springing up and down, up and
    down,
On a branch.
I laugh, as I see him abandon himself
To entire delight, for he knows as well as I do
That the branch will not break.

- James Wright

Abstract

There have been many commercial, cultural, and literary endeavors which have examined connections between African Americans and the Irish. Irish musicians as diverse as De Dannan, U2, and Van Morrison have all voiced their debt to the African-American traditions of gospel, rhythm and blues, and jazz. Popular mediums, such as newspaper cartoons and columns, as well as a recent spate of Irish films (The Commitments, The Crying Game, and In the Name of the Father) have characterized the experience of the Irish as colonized subjects, wholly parallel with the experience of disenfranchised African Americans. In a literary context, most examples link the Harlem Renaissance with the Celtic Revival, relying upon instances when James Weldon Johnson, Alain Locke and others connected the two. Often, however, such comparisons have been made at the expense of racial and cultural differences.

Relying upon Frederick Douglass's affiliation with the Irish, my dissertation works to uphold racial and cultural differences between African Americans and the Irish in order to assert that it is precisely because of their distinctions that both communities have been useful to each other in the articuation of powerful discourses of liberation. I employ a methodology that simultaneously engages the terms of culture, race, gender, and history, and, in so doing, I engage a more precise mode of analysis that acknowledges the

importance of interracial and intercultural exchanges, yet does not insist that differing entities be collapsed into one another in order to achieve understanding of their inter-relationship. I contend that the association between African Americans and the Irish is valuable because they have fashioned a formidable language of liberation out of difference. Furthermore, I contribute a new dimension to African-American literary studies which have suggested that the dialectic between the literary and the political springs from a self-contained Black tradition. In my contention that the Irish cannot be discounted when chronicling an African-American ideology of freedom, I lay to rest claims of African-American exceptionalism as well as notions that literature works out of self-contained entities that are separated by stringent national borders.

Résumé

De nombreuses oeuvres commerciales, culturelles ou littéraires ont tenté d'examiner les rapports entre les Américains d'origine africaine et les Irlandais. Des musiciens aussi différents que De Dennan, U2 et Van Morrison reconnaissent leur dette envers les traditions afro-américaines du gospel, du blues et du jazz. Les médias populaires tels que les bandes dessinées et les articles de journaux ainsi qu'une série de films irlandais (*The Commitments*, *The Crying Game*, *In the Name of the Father*) comparent la colonisation des Irlandais à la servitude des Afro-Américains. Dans le domaine de la littérature, on a souvent fait le lien entre la Renaissance d'Harlem et le "Celtic Revival", en s'appuyant sur les recherches de James Weldon Johnson, d'Alian Locke et d'autres. Cependant, ces tentatives de comparaison passent sous silence les différences raciales et culturelles.

Nous fondant sur les liens de Frederick Douglass avec les Irlandais, nous soutenons dans notre thèse que c'est précisément grâce à ces distinctions que les deux communautés ont pu se rendre service et qu'elles ont finalement réussi à créer un puissant discours de libération. Nous avons utilisé une méthodologie basée simultanément sur la culture, la race, le sexe et l'histoire pour arriver à un mode d'analyse plus exact qui reconnaît l'importance des échanges interraciaux et interculturels sans insister toutefois sur la nécessité de fondre l'une

dans l'autre ces entités divergentes pour parvenir à la compréhension. Nous soutenons que l'association entre Afro-Américains et Irlandais a été fructueuse parce qu'ils ont faconné ensemble, à partir de leurs différences, un redoutable langage émancipateur. De plus, nous contribuons à ouvrir une nouvelle voie dans les études littéraires afro-américaines qui ont jusqu'ici suggéré que la dialectique entre le littéraire et le politique a ses origines dans une tradition noire indépendante. Tout en affirmant que l'on ne peut pas ignorer l'influence des Irlandais en faisant la chronique d'une idéologie afro-américaine ainsi que la proposition que la littérature est le produit d'entités indépendantes séparées par des frontières strictement nationales.

I want to disturb the clamor at the border with a sentence.

-Toni Morrison[1]

[1] The epigraph was part of a speech delivered by Toni Morrison at George Mason University, 31 October 1995, Center for the Arts, Fairfax, Virginia.

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Introduction

Introduction

> I guess before long you'll call us nigger-lovers, too. Maybe you want to know next how I would like it if my sister married a nigger? . . . I wasn't always a nigger-lover. I fought in every strike to keep Black labor off the dock. I fought until in the white-supremacy strike your white-supremacy governor sent his white-supremacy militia and shot us white-supremacy strikers full of holes. You talk about us conspiring with niggers. . . . But let me tell you and your gang, there was a time when I wouldn't even work beside a nigger. . . . You made me work with niggers, eat with niggers, sleep with niggers, drink out of the same water bucket with niggers, and finally got me to the point where if one of them . . . blubbers something about more pay, I say, `Come on, nigger, let's go after the white bastards.'
>
> Dan Scully (1907)[1]

While reading Frederick Douglass's Narrative in graduate school, I was enrolled in an Irish Literature survey course.[2] As a result, I studied Douglass's recitations on the injustices of slavery within the context of lectures on Maria Edgeworth and the Irish famine, W.B. Yeats and the Celtic Revival, and Seamus Heaney and the troubles in Northern Ireland. Douglass's repeated

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[1] The epigraph is from Oscar Ameringer, If You Don't Weaken (Norman, Okla., 1983) 218-219, qtd. in David Roediger, Toward the Abolition of Whiteness (New York: Verso, 1994) 26. Paraphrasing from Ameringer, Roediger writes that Scully was head of the longshoremen's union in Louisiana and testified before the state's legislature during a 1907 strike. Scully was Irish American.

[2] Unless otherwise stated, all quotations and paraphrasing of The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, My Bondage and My Freedom, and the Life and Times of Frederick Douglass are taken from the Library of America edition.

references to Irish immigrants, political personalities, and events in Irish history, which on previous readings seemed inconsequential, suddenly became curious entities within the text. However, I was initially hesitant to think that Douglass's interaction with the Irish could be of any great significance. My uncertainty was caused by the popular reputation that relations between African Americans and the Irish held more rancor than goodwill, a characterization partly mitigated by the historic enmity of newly-immigrated Irish who, during the 19th-century, initiated inscription riots, refusing to fight for slavery's abolition. Likewise, their forbearers in the South were slaveholders who tried to buy off one of the most influential Irish legislators from supporting anti-slavery efforts. And, after the war, the Irish battled over African-American voting rights and generally resisted Reconstruction efforts for full emancipation. Given that Douglass witnessed such hostility first-hand, I wondered how he could derive anything beneficial from his own dealings with the Irish.

On a personal level, my doubts were sharpened by circumstances involving race relations in the city where I grew up. In Boston, during the 1970's, a federal judge's order to desegregate the public schools was met with violent opposition from Irish Americans when it was learned that black students would attend predominantly white schools in South Boston while white students would go to predominantly

black schools in Roxbury.[3] Consequently, my understanding of the relationship between the two became mired in memories of angry, white, Irish-American mobs shouting racial slurs and stoning busses carrying black students from Roxbury when they arrived in South Boston. My own father had human feces thrown on him when he and others held placards in support of the court order. Such behavior strengthened my perceptions that association between African Americans and the Irish was usually contentious.

By reading Douglass's Narrative in a new context, however, even one that seemed accidental, or oddly fortuitous, I became sensitive to the possibility that constructive relations between African Americans and the Irish did exist yet were never accorded the intellectual and popular scrutiny given more discordant interactions. Henry

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[3] In a suit initiated by the N.A.A.C.P., Federal District Judge W. Arthur Garrity found on June 21, 1974 that Boston's schools were racially segregated and provided an inferior education to black students. He ordered some 20,000 of the city's 94,000 students to be bussed from one district to another to improve the quality of learning (Reinhold 1). As opening day drew closer, tensions increased throughout the city. Senator Edward M. Kennedy, usually well-respected among his Irish-American constituents, was struck by tomatoes and eggs and eventually chased from a crowd of South Boston residents when he tried to calm anxieties. One woman even shouted that he "should be shot," invoking memories of his brothers' assassinations (Kifner, "Kennedy," 1, 30). When the schools finally opened, most of the violence occurred in "Southie," the nickname for the city's Irish-American neighborhood, where the mayor subsequently ordered that groups of no more than three people would be allowed to gather on South Boston streets and those found near the school without proper identification would be arrested (Kifner, "Violence," 16).

Giroux has written of the ways that "dominant cultures create borders" between and within those it positions as "different" as a means to maintain power (209). Given that both African Americans and the Irish have extensive histories of alienation from Anglo-American concerns, I became convinced during the course of my research that academic and conventional emphasis on their hostile relationship was a manifestation of Giroux's sentiments regarding the ways that a hierarchical society, and ultimately a less democratic one, is preserved. As one might predict then, examples of more harmonious interaction have been ignored and forgotten.

Bolstering my hunch that there was more to the relationship between African Americans and the Irish than derision, were many instances of commercial, cultural, and literary exchange that I became aware of as I specifically investigated Douglass. While examining the circumstances surrounding him at the time he wrote the Narrative as well as following its publication, I came across anthologies of early American music which demonstrate the ways that Irish jigs and reels became woven within the step tunes and cake walks performed by black slaves. Conversely, it is not uncommon to hear remnants of freedom songs such as "I'll Fly Away" and "Run, Run Mourner Run" performed during traditional Irish music sessions by groups as distinct as the "Joyful Mysteries," an a capella quartet of Irish women.

Likewise, more renowned Irish musicians as diverse as De Dannan, U2, and Van Morrison have all voiced their debt to the African-American traditions of gospel, rhythm and blues, and jazz. Additional popular mediums, such as newspaper cartoons and columns, as well as a recent spate of Irish films (The Commitments, The Crying Game, and In the Name of the Father) have extended parallels between the experience of the Irish as colonized subjects with that of disenfranchised African Americans. When looked at in total, exchanges between both communities become more commonplace than the popular contention which holds that harmonious interchange has been the exception rather than the rule.

In a literary context, most considerations of African-American and Irish interaction link the Harlem Renaissance with the Celtic Revival, relying upon instances when James Weldon Johnson, Alain Locke and others connected the two.[4]

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[4] In associating the Harlem Renaissance with the Celtic Revival, James Weldon Johnson's Book of American Negro Poetry and Alain Locke's The New Negro are significant. Both drew upon the fashioning of a national literature in Ireland to articulate what they sought for African Americans. Johnson wrote, "What the colored poet in the United States needs to do is something like what [J.M.] Synge did for the Irish [. . .--] find a form that will express the racial spirit by symbols from within rather than by symbols from without [. . .]" (41). Although Locke did not align the Harlem Renaissance exclusively with the Celtic Revival, when he wrote of the "unusual outburst of creative expression" occurring in New York in 1925, he never failed to equate it with similar "flowerings" happening in Ireland where "movements of folk-expression and self-determination" were "galvanizing" a "resurgence of a people" (xvii). Locke believed that Harlem had the same role to play for the "New Negro" as "Dublin has had for the New Ireland [. . .]" (7). When Locke referred to the "New Ireland" he was speaking of

In fact, scholarly attention devoted to a black/Irish connection has almost exclusively focused on the relationship between each community's literary accomplishments during the 1920's and 1930's.[5] More recently, comparisons have been made between Lorraine Hansberry and Sean O'Casey, prompted by Hansberry's own acknowledgement of the inspiration she derived from the Irish playwright.

Receiving less recognition but no less important are the essays of Finley Peter Dunne who, at the close of the

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the nation formed by the Anglo-Irish treaty negotiated in 1921 that gave independence to 26 counties of Ireland. Because most of the province of Ulster was not included in the arrangement, the island was partitioned and Civil War broke out. With majority support for the treaty, the free state was eventually established.

[5] Brian Gallagher has charted the ways that African-American writers of the Harlem Renaissance compare with those of the Celtic Revival. He finds that Johnson's use of the spoken and oral traditions of blacks is similar to Yeats' and Lady Gregory's recreation of the cadences and speech of the Irish. Zora Neale Hurston's stories, according to Gallagher, can also be linked to the Irish. He contends that the southern folkways she evokes resemble Sean O'Casey's treatment of life in Dublin tenements. Gallagher also finds that because the dominant white and English societies that both African Americans and the Irish resided within failed to recognize their distinct culture, both communities also romanticized a past existence, whether it was Africa before slavery or Ireland before British invasion. In a more extended study which focuses on drama, Tracy Mishkin finds that both the Harlem Renaissance and Celtic Revival were responses against stereotypes projecting the ignorance of both communities. William Shipley also examines connections between both periods but through poetry and as precursors to more revolutionary periods that followed, during the 1920's in Ireland and the 1960's in the United States, igniting work that sought to inspire change within both communities.

19th-century through the fictionalized persona of Martin Dooley, criticized attitudes and legislation which hampered the advancement of the American underclass which largely included African and Irish Americans.[6] For instance, in the essay the "Servant Girl Problem," Dunne sarcastically lamented the plight of the upper class who contended with the aspirations of those who wanted more from life than to be the hired help of the rich. The Irish are sardonically figured as "th' worst" servants while African Americans are called "coons" and are criticized for serving food in "rag time" (Philosophy 31). In "The Negro Problem," Dunne directly addressed the hypocrisy of those who were willing to free slaves but were unwilling to employ blacks once they were free (Philosophy 217-222). Along with the important sentiments that the essay expresses, it is doubly significant because of the way the injustices of racism are

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[6] Finley Peter Dunne was born in 1867 to Irish immigrants in Chicago. While working as an editor for the city's Evening Press, Dunne created Martin Dooley, otherwise known as Mr. Dooley, who was figured in a weekly newspaper column as a working class barman in the Chicago neighborhood of Bridgeport. With an emphasis on immigrant culture and customs portrayed in the voice of a 60 year old man, Fanning contends that Mr. Dooley transcended the stereotypes of "stage-Irish ethnic humor" and lent an air of dignity to those living in urban, immigrant communities. The columns portraying Mr. Dooley's viewpoints, on issues as diverse as American imperialism and Andrew Carnagie's advocacy of public libraries, averaged 750 words in length and were eventually syndicated throughout the country. Until World War I, Mr. Dooley was the most popular figure in American journalism (Fanning 845-846).

figured through an Irish voice.[7] Renowned for his thick Irish accent, Mr. Dooley at once brought popular awareness to a crucial issue as well as confounded those who portrayed the Irish as wholly unsympathetic to the problems facing black America.

Douglass's interaction with the Irish presents another significant association for reasons relative to his personal situation as well as because it contributes to contemporary discussions regarding difference in a nation striving for equality. In relation to circumstances which had a direct impact on Douglass, it is important to note that the Irish are often introduced in his writing during crucial moments when he sought his own freedom as well as an end to slavery throughout the United States. For instance, when the Irish first appear in the Narrative, they are instrumental in prompting some of his early desires to escape bondage. While working at the Durgin and Bailey shipyard in Baltimore for his master, Hugh Auld, Douglass describes how he noticed "two Irishmen" unloading a "a scow of stone" one day and offered his help. While they worked, one of the men asked, "Are ye a slave for life?" When Douglass replied that he

[7] Coincidently, in a second-hand book shop in rural Virginia, I came across two volumes of Mr. Dooley's essays which had been confused as representative of black American dialect. Such a mix-up, I was to learn, harkened back to the 19th-century when African Americans and the Irish were often equated with one another in speech, appearance, and manner, however, the similitude drawn at that time was an attempt to condemn both groups.

was, the "good Irishman seemed [. . .] deeply affected" by his response while the other said "it was a pity [. . .]." Both advised him to run north and said he would find friends there and be free (43-44). Although Douglass partially distrusted their advice, it is one of the first times where he resolved "from that time to run away" (44).[8] The Irish laborers provided him with important inspiration to flee slavery.

Almost simultaneous with Douglass's direct contact with the two men on the wharf, another experience occurred which equally influenced his yearning for freedom and similarly involved the Irish. While he secretly practiced to read in the Auld's attic after his workday in the shipyard, he came upon a speech in the Columbian Orator on Catholic emancipation in Ireland which was delivered by Arthur O'Connor in the Irish House of Commons.[9] Douglass was

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[8] Douglass's apprehension was not caused by the fact that the two men were Irish. Instead, he explains white men would often encourage slaves to escape and then "catch them and return them to their masters" in order to get the reward (44). For this reason, Douglass pretended to ignore their unsolicited advice to flee.

[9] In his Narrative, Douglass credits Sheridan as the author of the speeches that he read in the Columbian Orator which addressed Catholic emancipation in Ireland. However, the piece from Sheridan (Richard Brinsley Sheridan, 1751-1816) bears little resemblance to that which Douglass writes of in his Narrative. Instead, a portion of a speech by Arthur O'Connor in "favour of the Bill for Emancipating the Roman Catholics," dated 1795, seems closer in subject matter to the text which Douglass recollects. Indeed, Albert E. Stone writes that "memory has played [Douglass] slightly false." He confirms that the speech which Douglass refers to is not by Sheridan but rather by O'Connor (71).

impressed by the speech's sentiment as he read O'Connor's proclamations that he would "risk everything dear to [him] on earth" for Ireland's independence. Douglass wrote that O'Connor provided him with a powerful vocabulary to voice beliefs within his "own soul" which "boldly" vindicated human rights and "enabled" Douglass "to utter thoughts, and to meet the arguments brought forward to sustain slavery" (42). O'Connor demonstrated to Douglass the powerful way that language can provoke a nation toward change.[10]

In addition to the way that contact with the Irish profited Douglass during his formative years, an abolitionist speaking tour through Ireland later in his life gave him first-hand experience with the indigenous Irish and also rejuvenated his sense of the valuable contribution that

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[10] Mary Ann Elliot writes that O'Connor (1763-1852) was born in Bandon, County Cork, and was known for his "loquaciousness and oratorical abilities" (100). As a member of the Society of United Irishmen, formed in 1791, O'Connor believed Ireland should be a republic, free from English rule. The speech, reprinted in the Columbian Orator, pulled him from obscurity and fueled the momentum of the United Irishmen, which was headed by Theobald Wolfe Tone. O'Connor, himself, said that when he delivered the address he raised his fellow house members from their habitual afternoon naps during session. He subsequently had it published as a pamphlet for popular audiences. Although O'Connor lost his seat in parliament because of the speech, he became a "darling of Irish and English reformers" who were "infatuated with the fast-talking Irishman" (100). In 1798 a rising, instigated by the United Irishmen, broke out in parts of Leinster, Ulster, and Connacht. Wolfe Tone was captured and convicted of treason in Dublin. Rather than be hung by the British, however, he committed suicide. O'Connor was imprisoned and not released until 1803. He exiled himself in France where Napoleon appointed him a general. He died in 1852.

rhetoric, in the classical sense, can make to larger political transformation. Douglass was particularly taken with the oratory skills of Daniel O'Connell, a lawyer who had effectively mobilized masses of poor Catholics into a political force which called for the repeal of Ireland's union with England. In Life and Times, the third version of his autobiography, Douglass recalled that prior to his own first-hand experience witnessing O'Connell speak, he thought his power was "greatly exaggerated" (682). However, when O'Connell invited Douglass to Conciliation Hall in Dublin, Douglass wrote, "his eloquence came down upon the vast assembly like a summer thunder-shower upon a dusty road" (682). He especially marveled at the way O'Connell's delivery captivated his audience and influenced its actions. Douglass wrote, "[O'Connell] held Ireland within the grasp of his strong hand, and [he] could lead it whithersoever he would [. . .]" (682). It was an example worth emulating.[11]

Beyond the incidental moments described in his

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[11] Like Douglass, Charles Lenox Remond was also astonished at O'Connell's rhetorical authority. He heard him speak at a meeting of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society in London in June of 1840. So moved was Remond by the address, that in a letter to his friend, Charles B. Ray, he said he was not an abolitionist until he witnessed O'Connell. "I listened to the scorching rebukes of the fearless O'Connell [. . .]," wrote Remond, "when before that vast assemblage, he quoted from American publications, and alluded to the American declaration, and contrasted the theory with the practice; then I was moved to think, and feel, and speak; and from his soul-stirring eloquence and burning sarcasm would every fibre of my heart contract in abominating the worse than Spanish Inquisition system in my own" (Ripley 73).

autobiographies, Douglass's letters and speeches indicate that throughout his life his association with the Irish functioned as a critical component to his own liberation. Furthermore, his relationship with members of the Hibernian Anti-Slavery Society, considered the most ardent abolitionists in Europe, and his contact with ordinary Irish citizenry in Ireland, who for the most part were heartily receptive to him and his mission, assisted his capacity to write of his own experiences in slavery. Their impact on his life becomes especially evident in a variant edition of his Narrative published in Dublin. Prior to my dissertation, significant scholarship on Douglass has only briefly alluded to the text's existence and never in a way that connects it with its Irish origins. Through archival research undertaken in both Ireland and Boston, as well as through copious scrutiny of Douglass's letters, I address how his association with the Irish resulted in a new preface and appendix to the Narrative which ultimately demonstrate a shift in the author's sense of self that bespeaks his emerging position as a world champion of human rights.

In many ways, however, the Dublin text functions only as a jumping off point when considering the implications of Douglass's contact with the Irish. As important as the edition is in charting his evolvement into a formidable statesperson, Douglass's travels in Ireland and the very timing of the trip allowed him to witness and contemplate

dynamics of oppression in a different way than the understanding he acquired from life in the United States. While he had long realized that skin color was a primary operative of discrimination, Douglass's tour of Ireland during the famine enabled him to see how religion, culture, and the indigenous Irish language were used as tools of subjugation by the British. As a result, he became attuned to the subjective nature of oppression which can manifest itself in a variety of ways depending on the particular conditions in which it takes place.

As I examine how Douglass discerned the ways that the Irish were exploited, I also consider how his ability to read and write figured into his awareness and subsequently the doctrines of liberation that he advanced. Literacy, as he both acquired it and utilized it, was much more than application of the conventional alphabet to attain and communicate knowledge. Additionally, Douglass discovered that at work at any given moment, race, religion, and culture, could be used as a means to disseminate information. In short, as he traveled the Irish countryside and lodged in Irish cities, Douglass quickly ascertained that certain cultural particularities pertaining to the Irish were accorded inferior meaning and ultimately rendered them powerless. Yet he also realized that the understanding given most linguistic signs was not fixed. Just as Douglass worked to redefine those attributes of his identity which

others deprecated, he advocated that the Irish take those elements of themselves which were judged inferior and instill them with more honorific qualities.

Such latitude in determining a sign's meaning also demonstrated for Douglass, among other things, the problems as well as the power of rhetoric and of interpretation. He found that when a sign's meaning is explained, issues of accuracy had to be considered. As Douglass crisscrossed Ireland, such concerns became evident in his initial reluctance to speak against injustices that were not directly targeted at him. He feared his opinions on matters that did not involve personal experience could be faulty not to mention misunderstood. Eventually, Douglass found a way to address the discrimination that he observed in Ireland, realizing that one could be knowledgeable about a situation even if its experiential impact was indirect. However, in speaking and writing about circumstances that did not have personal implications for Douglass, he was always mindful of the ways that one's interpretation of a situation could influence understanding by others. As a result, Douglass tried to be vigilant with regard to his observations when he engaged in the practice of writing and speaking about oppression.

In addition to the ways that Douglass's relationship with the Irish embodies an enlarged and complex conception of language, it also poses crucial implications to

contemporary discussions regarding difference in a democratic political practice. Henry Giroux writes about the importance of investigating examples, such as the relationship I explore between African Americans and the Irish, where there has been interaction between people of distinct racial and cultural backgrounds. According to Giroux, such exchanges usually have a bearing on how we have come to understand "the relationship between the center and margins of power" whereby whites and blacks have consistently and respectively been configured as the powerful and the powerless (209). As an African American, Douglass's interaction with the Irish, a population whose racial make-up is predominantly white, undermines such depictions. However, I argue that what makes this interaction extraordinarily unique is that although Douglass recognized common ground between African Americans and the Irish, he did not collapse their experiences into something synonymous. Instead, he advanced an association where the real value of the relationship could be found in their paradoxical racial and cultural distinctions.

At once to find similarity and uphold difference defies much of current rhetoric regarding "cultural diversity." As Giroux explains, race is often figured today as merely one example of many cultural particulars that are found in a country like the United States (207). Such reasoning ultimately flattens "difference" into realms of relativity

which eclipse "history." People's lives are blurred into one another to the extent that what has been experienced is surrendered. As a result, the "history of racism" is lost (207). In contrast, Douglass sought to establish an alliance between African Americans and the Irish that acknowledged their mutual disenfranchisement but also took into account individual narratives which maintained significant distinctions. Furthermore, his recognition of African-American/Irish commonality did not diminish his interrogation of Irish complicity in the very prejudices which worked against their own and others' advancement. I argue that because Douglass valued the incongruous elements of the relationship as much as he valued its compatible character, his vision of liberation is a particularly viable political force, achieving its potency through the convolutions of identity rather than a negation of it.

When Douglass's interaction with the Irish is examined within the broader context in which it took place, it also becomes exemplary of African-American/Irish relations which prevailed on a number of fronts during the 19th-century. To be certain, economic, social and political factors mitigated conditions that caused this relationship, at times, to be volatile, with the Irish aggressively pursuing positions of dominance. Yet, in addition to my research on Douglass, I have unearthed pictorial and rhetorical evidence which bespeaks the fact that African Americans and the Irish most

often shared the same social status and negotiated similar political obstacles. By bringing such evidence to light, I demonstrate that the nuanced understanding of African-American and Irish relations that Douglass advanced reflects the society he lived within where the two populations were as intertwined with one another as they were alienated.

Finally, in a "Coda" to the dissertation, I extend the relationship between African Americans and the Irish into the 20th-century, demonstrating that their interaction with one another has been on-going in concrete ways beyond the social and political particularities of life in the United States during the 19th-century. By concentrating on Irish poet Eavan Boland's essay "A Kind of Scar," I argue that the discourse of liberation between African Americans and the Irish has also influenced contemporary democratic efforts in Ireland, especially in relation to achieving equal rights for women. In her essay, Boland situates invisibility, as drawn from Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man, within the context of Ireland to emphasize how Irish women go "unexplored" and "unseen." Just as Douglass's association with the Irish helped instill within him the sense of authority necessary to ignite and lead the American abolitionist movement, Boland's refiguring of race within the African-American experience so that it speaks to the position of Irish women, provided her with an important means not only to understand but also to untangle the ways that Irish women are silenced.

By demonstrating the important intersections between African Americans and the Irish, I ultimately contribute a new dimension to African-American literary studies which have suggested that the dialectic between the literary and political springs from a self-contained black tradition. In my contention that the Irish cannot be discounted when chronicling the ideology of freedom, I help lay to rest claims of African-American exceptionalism as well as notions that literature works out of self-contained entities that are separated by stringent national borders. Moreover, my dissertation breaks ground in establishing the ways that black voices have reached beyond black communities and influenced the liberatory objectives on a global scale in advance of the postwar explosion of decolonization projects initiated and advocated by writers and social commentators such as Frantz Fanon, Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o, Wole Soyinka and others.

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I

"I have really got out of my place; . . . ."
The Second Dublin Edition of the
Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass

Illustrations and Ephemera

A. "The Ignorant Vote--Honors are Easy" by Thomas Nast originally appeared in Harper's Weekly Journal of Civilization (Vol.20 (1041) December 9, 1876): 1. Reproduced as illustration number 155 in Morton Keller's The Art and Politics of Thomas Nast (New York: Oxford UP, 1968).

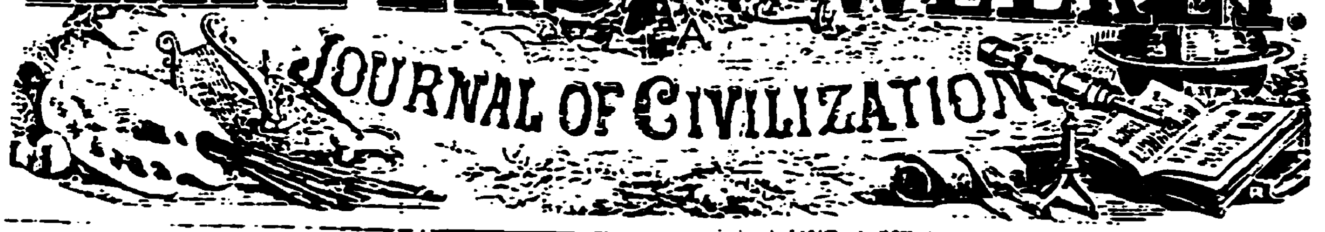
B. "Irish Iberian, Anglo-Teutonic, Negro" reproduced in Ken Livingstone's Nothing But the Same Old Story: The Roots of Anti-Irish Racism (London: Information on Ireland, 1985) 55. No date given for publication in Harper's Weekly.

C. "The Irishmen and the Watermelon" originally appeared in the Southern Workman (Vol.28(6), May 1899). Reproduced in Donald J. Water's Strange Ways and Sweet Dreams Afro-American Folklore from the Hampton Institute (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1983): 337.

"Moran and Mack" in Anthony Slide's The Vaudevillians A Dictionary of Vaudeville Performers (Westport, Ct.: Arlington House, 1981): 105-106.

"Judgment Day" from A.M. Bacon and E.C. Parsons' "Folk-Lore from Elizabeth City County, Va.," Journal of American Folk-Lore (Vol.35 (137), July-September 1922): 305.

D. "Jim Crow" (illustration) from the sheet music cover (New York: E. Riley, n.d.[thirties]) reproduced in Hans Nathan's Dan Emmett and the Rise of Early Negro Minstrelsy (Norman, Oklahoma: U of Oklahoma P, 1962) 51--(musical score) Hans Nathan, 171--(lyrics) reproduced in Eric Lott's Love and Theft Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class (New York: Oxford UP, 1993) 23-24.



Vol. XX.—No. 1011.] NEW YORK, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1876. [WITH A SUPPLEMENT. PRICE TEN CENTS.

SOUTH NORTH

BLACK WHITE

THE IGNORANT VOTE—HONORS ARE EASY

IRISH IBERIAN.

ANGLO-TEUTONIC.

NEGRO.

The Iberians are believed to have been originally an African race, who thousands of years ago spread themselves through Spain over Western Europe. Their remains are found in the barrows, or burying places, in sundry parts of these countries. The skulls are of low, prognathous type. They came to Ireland, and mixed with the natives of the South and West, who themselves are supposed to have been of low type and descendants of savages of the Stone Age, who, in consequence of isolation from the rest of the world, had never been out-competed in the healthy struggle of life, and thus made way, according to the laws of nature, for superior races.

Two Irishmen were walking along one day, and they came across a wagonload of watermelons. Neither one had ever seen a watermelon before, and they inquired of some negroes, who were working near by, what they were, and what they were good for. The negroes answered their questions very politely, and then, as it was their dinner hours, sat down in the shade to eat. The Irishmen concluded to buy a melon and see how they liked it. They went a little distance and cut the melon, but, taking pity on the poor negroes, decided to share it with them. "Faith!" they said, "guts is good enough for naygurs." So they cut the heart out of the melon and gave it away, and ate the rind themselves.

Lelia Gilbert, Informant
--Southern Workman (1899)

Moran: Man, is it hot.
Mack: Sho, nuff. Wish I had an ice-cold watermelon.
Moran: Oh, lawdy. Me, too.
Mack: Wish I had a hundred ice-cold watermelons.
Moran: Hm, huh.
Mack: Wish I had a thousand ice-cold watermelons.
Moran: Glory be. I bet if you had a thousand ice-cold watermelons you'd give me one.
Mack: Oh, naw! No siree. If you are too lazy to wish for your own watermelons, you ain't gonna get none of mine.

--"The Rock Pile" (1927)
George Moran and Charles Mack

Uncle Sam and Pat were out hunting one night, when, about twelve o'clock, there came up a terrible storm. It grew worse, and there came a crack of lightning. Pat got up in the tree; but Uncle Sam thought the day of judgment was surely coming, and he knelt down and began to pray. He wanted Pat to pray, too; but Pat didn't believe in the day of judgment, and wouldn't. Then there came another crack of lightning, which made Pat drop out of the tree; and he fell down on his knees, too, and began to pray, "O Lord! if judgment day is coming, save my soul, if I've got one!

W.T. Anderson, Informant
--Journal of American Folklore (1922)

Jim Crow

(E. Riley, @1830)

Come listen all you galls and boys
I'se jist from Tuckyhoe,
I'm gwin to sing a little song,
My name 's Jim Crow.

Weel about and turn about
And do jis so,
Eb'ry time I weel about
And jump Jim Crow.

Oh I'm a roarer on de fiddle
And down in old Virginny,
They say I play de skyentific
Like Massa Pagannini.

Weel about and turn about
And do jis so,
Eb'ry time I weel about
And jump Jim Crow.

I'm a full blooded nigger,
Ob de real old stock,
And wid my head and shoulder
I can split a horse block.

Weel about and turn about
And do jis so,
Eb'ry time I weel about
And jump Jim Crow.

De great Nullification,
And fuss in de South,
Is now before Congress,
To be tried by word ob mouth.

Weel about and turn about
And do jis so,
Eb'ry time I weel about
And jump Jim Crow.

Dey hab had no blows yet,
And I hope dey neber will,
For its berry cruel in bredren,
One anoders blood to spill.

Weel about and turn about
And do jis so,
Eb'ry time I weel about
And jump Jim Crow.

Should dey get to fighting,
Perhaps de blacks will rise,
For deir wish for freedom,
Is shining in deir eyes.

Weel about and turn about
And do jis so,
Eb'ry time I weel about
And jump Jim Crow.

An if de blacks should get free,
I guess dey'll fee some bigger,
An I shall consider it,
A bold stroke for de nigger.

Weel about and turn about
And do jis so,
Eb'ry time I weel about
And jump Jim Crow.

An I caution all white dandies,
Not to come in my way,
For if dey insult me,
Dey'll in de gutter lay.

Weel about and turn about
And do jis so,
Eb'ry time I weel about
And jump Jim Crow.

Come lis - ten all you galls and boys. I'm
just from Tu - cky - hoe; I'm
goin to sing a lee - tle song. My name's Jim Crow.
Weel a - bout, and turn a - bout, And do jis so;
Eb' - ry time I weel a - bout, I jump Jim Crow.

I

"I have really got out of my place": The Second Dublin Edition of the Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass

> . . . a book's `borders'--its packaging, format, and the contexts in which it is read and published--are inseparable from its more apparent content. Not only was an author more a part of the text than I had imagined, but so were its editors and readers. . . . every book, every reading, is laced and surrounded with circumstances worth considering, border crossings within the text as well as at its edges.
>
> Diane P. Freedman[12]

1.) `The Chattel Becomes a Man'

The year 1845 was a pivotal year for Frederick Douglass. With urging from friends in the Anti-Slavery Society, he published his autobiography--The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass.[13] Although already recognized as the pre-eminent anti-slavery authority on the abolitionist lecture circuit, when Douglass issued his life

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[12] The epigraph is from Diane P. Freedman, An Alchemy of Genres Cross-Genre Writing by American Feminist Poet-Critics (31) which was also quoted in Mae Henderson's Borders, Boundaries, and Frames Cultural Criticism and Cultural Studies (1).

[13] Unless specifically referring to the second Dublin variant of Douglass's Narrative, all quotations and paraphrasing of The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, My Bondage and My Freedom, and the Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, are taken from the Library of America edition.

story as a book, he gave it a measure of lasting influence. William S. McFeely writes that with the Narrative Douglass reached readers who had not had an opportunity to hear him speak. Moreover, the written record "reinforce[d] the picture in the mind's eye, the sonorous sound still in the ear" of those who had witnessed Douglass lecture (115). As with his message from the speaker's podium, the Narrative won Douglass praise almost from its very first day of availability. During the initial months following publication, 4,500 copies were sold. Such success was in step with Douglass's ambition to make a fundamental contribution to the nation. Toward this desire, his autobiography boldly demanded that the inalienable rights described in the United States Constitution be extended to African Americans.

Even with his aspirations for social change and the hope that his Narrative would assist him with such endeavors, Douglass's capacity to be a leader was hard won. McFeely provides details surrounding the time of his autobiography's issuance that suggest that Douglass was embroiled within circumstances mitigated by both pro-slavery and anti-slavery proponents which hampered his ability to move the nation in the direction he envisioned. Immediately prior to the time he took to write his autobiography, Douglass fell victim to a particularly brutal mob attack in Pendleton, Indiana where he and other abolitionists were

scheduled to speak. A group of more than 30 men circled the anti-slavery meeting and began fighting with clubs, threatening to "`kill the nigger, kill the damn nigger'" (109-110). Although Douglass and the others fought back and the attackers eventually fled on horseback, he suffered a broken hand which was improperly set and bothered him for the rest of his life (112). In addition to such physical entanglements, racist attitudes within the governance of the American Anti-Slavery Society were having an impact on Douglass's self-esteem and self-confidence. McFeely writes that even though black campaigners within the movement such as Douglass and Charles Lenox Remond carried out just as much work as their white counterparts, and in most instances received more notoriety, they were not accorded or even eligible for positions of leadership. Moreover, they were not paid as much as white workers and were criticized if they challenged official decisions (104-108).

Underlying both the violence of racist citizenry and the unjust organizational practices of the Anti-Slavery Society which had an obvious impact on Douglass's effectiveness, were fugitive slave laws which pervaded the nation. Such statutes instigated as well as codified behavior and beliefs and further limited his ability to enable change. In legislation enacted from south to north blacks were reduced to the status of animals. When they fled the barbarous life of a slave, they could be

apprehended as one would trap a fox or a beaver. From South Carolina to New Jersey, runaways were branded with the letter "R" and their captors were rewarded with gifts of lumber, cloth, and tobacco not to mention handsome monetary compensation (McDougall 3, 7-8). In most instances, all a master had to produce was a certificate of ownership in order to transport a runaway back to a plantation while a slave's word protesting characterization as "property" was legally stripped of any significance. The suffering experienced by African Americans which justified their flight was inconsequential. Only the "inconvenience and expense" endured by the master in retrieving what was considered rightfully his was important (7). And because fugitive slave laws had been in existence since the establishment of the colonies, the weight of history contributed to their particular edge of inhumanity which categorically denied blacks control over their own destiny.[14]

[14] Marion Gleason McDougall details the origins of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, beginning with legislation passed by the early colonial settlements. In 1629, ten years after slavery was instituted in North America, the first stipulation was enacted that would return "slaves or colonists fleeing from service" to their masters (2). McDougall writes that as slavery became more and more pervasive, fugitive laws were passed, especially in the South, which provided "most minutely for all possible cases" (3). For instance, one law in Virginia regulated that if a black and a white servant fled together, the white person was responsible for serving the sentence of both since the black person was enslaved for life (3). When the Articles of Confederation were passed in 1781, treaties were arranged with Native American tribes guaranteeing that fugitives would not be protected in individual states (12). Likewise, with the acquisition of the Northwest Territory in 1787,

The fact that Douglass himself was a fugitive cannot be forgotten as well as the very real possibility that his master, Thomas Auld, could try and remand him back to Maryland, especially when his whereabouts were ascertained as a result of his Narrative's publication. Indeed, McDougall describes several celebrated fugitive slave trials that occurred in Boston, where Douglass resided, which ultimately demonstrate that he had reason to be fearful. One of the most infamous involved a runaway named George Latimer who in 1842 was captured but freed by the city jailer once bail was met. Petitions were organized calling upon Congress to pass legislation which would outlaw the use of public jails to harbor fugitive slaves as well as forbid public officials from participating in the capture of runaways. However, "violent opposition" erupted in Congress, according to McDougall, and both the House and the Senate tabled the bills (39-40). Moreover, instead of the Latimer case working to soften fugitive slave laws, the

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Congress enacted the first formal legislation that ensured that anyone who escaped had to be returned. This statute coincided with the division of the nation into areas that allowed and did not allow slavery (13). Eventually, when the Constitution was ratified, Southern states required that provisions relating to fugitive slaves be confirmed within the document. In 1793 portions of the sixth article became the first Fugitive Slave Act (16). McDougall writes that such demands met with little disagreement from legislators in the North who realized that a significant percentage of the population in the South would not join a Republic without protecting their right to own slaves. More severe legislation was eventually adopted in 1850 which further protected the rights of slave holders. (30-31).

circumstances involved helped to provoke tougher legislation eventually passed in 1850 which, in part, mandated that those who executed the justice system, such as judges, sheriffs, and jailers, were responsible for asserting the law and if it was not obeyed they would be held accountable (30-31). Such statutes and the tenor of the time which enabled their passage made the issuance of Douglass's autobiography a moment that certainly held as much trepidation as it did joy.

Eventually the reality of Douglass's life would require him to leave the United States if he was to continue to work for the abolition of slavery. If Douglass stayed, his fugitive status and the general temperament of the nation would severely restrict any contribution that he was capable of making. Evidence suggests that the physical attacks he sometimes received from members of the public who were hostile to his mission, the distrust he endured from those not wholly committed to anti-slavery convictions, and the chronic slights from members of the Anti-Slavery Society, when combined, were all beginning to limit Douglass's effectiveness. Moreover, the hostile environment that he lived within was beginning to take a toll on his morale.

In one of his first letters to William Lloyd Garrison from abroad, Douglass specifically alludes to his state of emotional distress as well as his hope that in leaving the United States he would achieve the liberation necessary to

lead the nation toward change. He wrote, "You know one of my objects in coming [to Europe] was to get a little repose, that I might return home refreshed and strengthened, ready to be able to join you vigorously in the prosecution of our holy cause" (Foner, Vol.1, 120). Douglass alluded to his hope that when he was beyond the reach of slavery's grasp, his voice and what he had to say would gain the credibility and influence denied him in the United States. If Douglass could help win Europeans over to the abolitionist cause in greater numbers, perhaps they, in turn, could exert an influence on American domestic policy which permitted slavery. Earlier, England's decision to curtail the import of slaves into the country had contributed to legislation across the Atlantic which followed suit. Moreover, Douglass believed interaction with Europeans who were committed to anti-slavery objectives would improve his own outlook, lifting his spirits with regard to human values and replenishing his energy so he could eventually return home to continue the fight.

Although it is common knowledge that with the publication of his Narrative Douglass departed for Europe, what is less recognized, until now, is that his first port-of-call, outside of a night spent in England, was Ireland. Indeed, he stayed for nearly six months and found supporters who were more than willing to encourage him and his mission in constructive ways. As hoped for, such interest

ultimately instilled within Douglass the assurance that would enable him to formulate and articulate a democratic vision for the United States. McFeely claims that the public respect Douglass was given while he was abroad gave his self-confidence an enormous boost (145). He himself named Ireland as the place where a crucial change in his demeanor took place.

Specifically, in a letter to William Lloyd Garrison, which was subsequently reproduced in My Bondage and My Freedom, Douglass wrote about the impact of Ireland on his morale as he detailed his journey through the country. While recounting his experiences as he traveled from Cape Clear in Munster to the Giant's Causeway in Ulster, Douglass said he had spent some of the "happiest moments" of his life. "I seem to have undergone a transformation," he explained. "I have a new life" (373). These words would be reproduced almost verbatim by Douglass in the edition of his Narrative published in Dublin where he credited his "new life" as the reason he was so fearless. Although from a young age he possessed the inclination to be a leader, Ireland was the site where this trait blossomed, free of the concern of retribution.

From the outset, when Douglass accepted the invitation of leaders from the Hibernian Anti-Slavery Society to visit their country, the treatment he was given by everyday Irish men and women as well as the receptions he received during

his lectures was a welcome change. Even on the "Cambria," which Douglass sailed aboard to Europe, there was evidence that his reception in Ireland would be different from the manner to which he was accustomed in the United States. When an unruly mob threatened to throw him overboard for speaking against slavery, "a noble-spirited Irish gentleman" stepped up to Douglass's defense and said "that two could play at that game" (Foner, Vol.1, 118).[15] Later, in another letter to Garrison, reprinted in My Bondage and My Freedom, he wrote that with the passing of "eleven days and a half" and the crossing of "three thousand miles of the perilous deep," he went from being "shut out from the cabins

[15] In a speech delivered in Limerick on November 10, 1845, Douglass would recount the incident aboard the "Cambria" in more detail. The Limerick Reporter transcribed the speech in the November 11th edition, where Douglass identified the Irish man a Mr. Gough from Dublin who "was so tall" that Douglass had to look up to him. In a digression intended, it seems, to endear his audience to him through his compliment of them, Douglass said that none of the mob on the "Cambria" wished him to travel to Ireland because "they knew that I would get fair play there." The audience reacted with cheers and Douglass went on to say that after Mr. Gough stepped up to assist him, Douglass "called for three cheers for old Ireland" to which the Limerick audience again reacted with "enthusiastic cheering" (Blassingame, Vol. 2, 83-84). Interestingly, Charles Lenox Remond experienced similar difficulties in securing passage on trans-Atlantic steamers. C. Peter Ripley reports that in May of 1840 Remond was refused a ticket for travel aboard the "Columbus" until William Adams, "a white abolitionist," agreed to share a room (76). The two were traveling to the World's Anti-Slavery Convention in London. Like Douglass, Remond continued to be harassed on route. The second mate "refused to allow [him] to associate with white passengers" and insisted he sleep in steerage rather than in the berth he and Adams paid to share. When the two protested, they were forced to sleep "at the bottom of the gangway in the open air" and were taunted by the crew (77).

on steamboats" and "refused admission to respectable hotels," to sharing cabs with white people and eating at the same dinner table (374). No longer did Douglass have to enter establishments through the back door or wait in back rooms.

In another letter to Garrison, he said that one of the most "pleasing features" of his visit to Ireland was that there was "a total absence of all manifestations of prejudice against me, on account of my color" (Foner, Vol.1, 120). As he traveled the country he wrote that no matter where he went there was not "the slightest manifestation of that hateful and vulgar feeling against me" (120). He also had no problems finding churches that would admit black worshipers. And within his first days in Ireland, he toured the city of Dublin without incident and had dinner with the mayor. In the letter to Garrison reprinted in My Bondage and My Freedom he wrote, "No delicate nose grows deformed in my presence" (374). The people of Ireland, he said "measure and esteem men according to their moral and intellectual worth, and not according to the color of their skin" (375). He also told Garrison that in Ireland he was "not treated as a *color*, but as a *man*--not as a thing, but as a child of the common Father of us all (Foner, Vol.1, 120). Although Douglass was obviously taunting his fellow countrymen and women back in the United States, the way he was received in Ireland sharply contrasted with treatment he usually endured

at home.

McFeely writes that several of the people that Douglass spent the most time with while in Ireland also contributed to his profitable experiences there. While in Cork, he stayed with Thomas and Ann Jennings and their eight children for a month. Because the family belonged to the Church of Ireland and Cork was largely Roman Catholic, McFeely explains that Douglass took comfort in the fact that the Jenningses knew what it felt like to be different (119). He was also impressed by their lack of insecurity regarding their difference and the way they carried on as if "everyone else was out of step" (119). Because of the size of the family, there was also no time to treat Douglass with any particular favoritism. He spent evenings in their company, gossiping, arguing about reform, and enjoying music (119). He welcomed the honesty of the Jenningses especially when compared with the sometimes disingenuous behavior of American abolitionists. After leaving Ireland, Douglass and Isabel Jennings corresponded with one another for the rest of their lives.

In addition to the Jenningses, Douglass's association with his Irish publisher, Richard D. Webb, was another crucial relationship that he established while in Ireland. More than other members of the Hibernian Anti-Slavery Society, Webb was responsible for organizing and scheduling Douglass's speaking engagements. As in his relationship

with the Jenningses, Douglass valued Webb for his frank honesty. According to McFeely, Douglass was accustomed to the way abolitionists often concealed their disagreements with blacks for fear that they would seem racist. Webb, on the other hand, was extremely candid with Douglass, to the point that the two often had heated arguments with each other. Race was of no consequence. "[Webb] was one of the few," McFeely says, "who did not prefer to smile benignly and then do [his] undercutting offstage. [He] was brave enough to disagree with Douglass to his face" (122). Such open and sincere interaction between people was a refreshing change for Douglass and worked to instill within him a more precise vision of attitudes and behavior that he hoped could be replicated in the United States when slavery was outlawed.

Interestingly, four years earlier, Charles Lenox Remond had also written about the special warmth that he encountered while on an abolition lecture tour in Ireland. In a letter to Richard Allen, secretary of the Hibernian Anti-Slavery Society, Remond said that never in his life had he seen "deeper interest Exhibited [sic] in proportion as the Irish people become Enlightened [sic]" (Ripley 97). Because of the enthusiasm demonstrated by the Irish, Remond wrote that he expected Ireland to exert "an influence more direct & important[,] more open & important, than thousands of intelligent persons have been wont to imagine" (Ripley

97). If the Irish condemnation of slavery was not crucial enough, perhaps Remond's prophecy came true in the important way the Irish uplifted Douglass's spirits while he toured the country. In his letter to Garrison, Douglass, himself, said, "Instead of the bright, blue sky of America, I am covered with the soft, grey fog of the Emerald Isle. I breath, and lo! the chattel becomes a man" (374). Douglass left Ireland for Scotland and England with his sense of self-confidence restored. Moreover, Douglass's experiences in Ireland ultimately contributed to the revitalization of his energy, enabling his return to the United States and his ability to fight for slavery's end at home.

2.) Without Supervision or Control

Since the printing of the Boston text, Douglass's Narrative has held a special place in American literature. Abolitionist minister Ephraim Peabody is credited as the first critic to give it serious attention. In his Christian Examiner and Religious Miscellany of July 1849, he wrote that it was one of the "most remarkable productions of the age [. . .] remarkable as being pictures of slavery by the slave [. . .]" (Stone 62). Likewise, in 1863, William Wells Brown, himself a former slave who had also written a narrative, singled out Douglass's text as exemplary of the genre (62). By the time Peabody wrote his critique, the Narrative had been re-printed seven times and translated into French, Dutch, and German. Benjamin Quarles has estimated that five years after its initial publication 30,000 copies had been bought in both the United States and abroad (xiii). That number would only be surpassed by Josiah Henson's narrative, the popularity of which is credited to the belief that it was the basis for Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin, which still ranks as one of the most widely-read texts advocating slavery's end (Stone 63).

Money raised from the sales of Douglass's autobiography helped support him and his family. Slave narratives on average were sold for 25 or 50 cents in paper and $1.50 for

more "elegant" editions. When Douglass's Narrative was first printed in Boston it sold for 50 cents a copy. In order to further defray his financial burdens during his first trip to Europe, from August 16, 1845 to April 4, 1847, Richard D. Webb, the abolitionist printer from Dublin, agreed to publish additional quantities of the Narrative, supplying Douglass with paper and binding materials at "`cut prices'." Local production also made it easier for Douglass to readily obtain copies so they could be sold at various speaking engagements throughout Ireland, Scotland, and England.

As with the Boston edition, the Dublin variants sold exceptionally well. An initial run of 2,000 copies in 1845 was quickly bought up. European newspapers, such as Chambers's Edinburgh Journal, praised it for containing "`native eloquence' and a capacity to `disseminate correct ideas respecting slavery and its attendant evils.'" Reviewers for the Bristol Mercury similarly wrote, "A more deeply interesting Narrative than Douglass's can hardly be conceived." In a letter to Webb, Douglass, himself, expressed delight over his book's success and the pace of its sales. After a speech in Belfast during December of 1845, he wrote that all the copies he had on hand were bought "at one blow." He told Webb, "I want more. I want more." In a letter to Maria Weston Chapman, Webb reported that Douglass earned $750 from sales of the first Dublin

edition. When the version sold out, Webb began production of 2,000 more copies for the 1846 edition.[16]

The Irish printer, however, did not have a free hand in publishing the text. Correspondence between Webb and Douglass suggests that Douglass was intimately involved in the Narrative's printing, an involvement which was not unusual when one considers his character. Quarles writes that Douglass was a "careful editor" who insisted on "high standards" (viii-ix). On at least two occasions during the publication of the Dublin editions Douglass is known to have invoked his authority directly in the printing process. The first involved Douglass's dissatisfaction with a portrait of himself which was used on the frontispiece of the text. He had directed an engraver to make it "shorter," yet after viewing it was still unhappy. Nonetheless, he told Webb to use it, feeling nothing more could be done (Foner, Vol.5, 22). The second instance was a bit more contentious and involved direct confrontation with Webb who disagreed with Douglass over the inclusion of endorsements in the second variant by Thomas Drew and Isaac Nelson, two Presbyterian ministers from Belfast. Apparently, Webb objected because

[16] Printing and sales information for the variants is compiled from the texts themselves as well as from Houston A. Baker, Jr.'s introduction to the Narrative (9, 19, 21); John W. Blassingame's The Frederick Douglass Papers (Vol.1 291-292); Philip S. Foner's The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass (Vol.1, 431, & Vol.5, 14); Richard S. Harrison's Richard Davis Webb: Dublin Quaker Printer (50); and Clare Taylor's British and American Abolitionists.

he thought they would frame the Narrative within a "sectarian" bias. Douglass, however, believed to leave the ministers' endorsements out because they were clergy "would be to show oneself as much and more sectarian than themselves" (Foner, Vol.1, 66). In fairness to Webb, his objections were the result of his acute sensitivity to Douglass's Irish audience whose strident religious sentiments could obfuscate his anti-slavery message.[17] Douglass, however, was unwilling to bend and by the time the text went to print the two clerical endorsements followed eight others by newspapers such as the New York Tribune and the London Atlas.

Douglass's involvement in the production of his Narrative in Dublin, especially the 1846 text, is also important for reasons which reach beyond the cosmetic and marketing concerns that he had in relation to the volume. In particular, the second Irish version contains a new preface and appendix that were not part of the Boston printing and demonstrate an attitude of self-confidence and self-possession that was not apparent or even available for Douglass to invoke before his stay in Ireland. Although he

[17] According to Richard S. Harrison, Webb was never comfortable with the way that Irish society divided itself along "sectarian lines." As a Quaker, he did not interpret "religious or political affairs" in the same way as Daniel O'Connell or other Catholics or as "conventional Orange or Protestant factions." Eventually Webb resigned from the Quaker community, unable to reconcile even their "viewpoints" with his own (2-3).

often expressed his belief that he had a right to have a say in decisions that directly related to and reflected upon his life, his status as a slave negated opportunities to act on such convictions. In Ireland, however, where he was free to behave and speak as he desired, his capacity to manage his own affairs flourished. Because the amendments to the second Dublin edition of his Narrative are so significant, the text is one of the first material manifestations of the control he relentlessly sought in staking out a place for himself in the world.

In addition to the way the Dublin variant signifies Douglass's personal aspirations, the text is also inextricably linked to his anti-slavery objectives, objectives which would have an impact on the entire United States. Waldo E. Martin, Jr. explains that Douglass often advocated and, given the opportunity, desired to live by a code which valued the Emersonian tenets of self-reliance (255-257). One of Douglass's standard lectures was on "Self-Made Men" where he espoused his belief that, "Personal independence is the soul out of which comes the sturdiest manhood" (257). Douglass viewed individual human will and action as the primary agents of social change (257). And because the two were so intimately related, one had continually to assess whether one's actions benefited the greater population. According to Martin, the "self" could not exist apart from its "social context" (257).

Consequently, the right to control his own destiny was as much a part of Douglass's democratic vision for the entire United States as it was a personal conviction. In turn, the new preface and appendix in the second Dublin edition of his Narrative are emblematic of the political and social changes which he sought to engender throughout the United States.

In particular, Douglass's utilization of specific discursive methodologies in the Dublin text tacitly demonstrate his assertion of command over his own destiny. Part of the preface and the entire appendix is devoted to an exchange between Douglass and A.C.C. Thompson[18] which initially occurred in the form of letters made public through national newspapers.[19] The rhetorical technique which Douglass employed by creating a dialogue out of the

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[18] Although he initially misspells Thompson's name as "Thomson," Blassingame explains that his full name was Absalom Christopher Columbus Americus Vespucious Thompson. When he wrote the letter to the Delaware Republican in 1845, Thompson was living in Wilmington. He had, however, lived on this father's farm, Dr. Absalom C. Thompson, at the same time that Douglass worked on a "neighboring farm which Edward Covey was renting" (201-202).

[19] Blassingame documents that the "refutation" of Douglass's Narrative was reprinted in the Liberator (12 December 1845) as well as the National Anti-Slavery Standard (25 November 1845). Douglass replied first in a letter to William Lloyd Garrison (27 January 1846) which Garrison then reprinted in the Liberator (27 February 1846). Thompson once again sought to discredit Douglass's story in a letter to the Albany Patriot which included statements from other citizens of Saint Michael's which verified Thompson's original version. This letter was also reprinted in the Liberator (20 February 1846) (201-202). Douglass's first letter to Garrison is also available in The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass, edited by Philip S. Foner (Vol. 1. 129-134).

letters with Thompson fundamentally speaks to his desire to seize and manage his own affairs. It was a strategy that Douglass had been acquainted with since he first learned to read and secretly obtained a copy of the Columbian Orator, edited by Caleb Bingham, which included a "Dialogue Between a Master and a Slave."

What impressed Douglass the most about the Orator's dialogue was it resulted in the "voluntary emancipation of the slave on the part of the master" (Narrative 42). Although the exchange between himself and Thompson carried with it no such guarantee, the format alone provided Douglass's abolitionist platform with a powerful tool. Shelley Fisher Fishkin and Carla L. Peterson argue that what made the technique so potent was that it carried with it the implicit acknowledgement that slaves were human beings. The dynamics of the exchange illustrate pro-slavery advocates, such as Thompson, "address[ing]" a slave and therefore providing him or her with a license to respond. Because the process constituted a "speaking and writing subject," Fisher Fishkin and Peterson maintain the slave, in turn, could take "full advantage of this admission [. . .] in order to press home his points [. . .] that liberty and full exercise of free will are what are most precious to him" (191, 192). In effect, the form secured "evidence" of a slave's "manhood" (193). This is not to say that prior to Thompson's initial letter, Douglass did not conceive of himself a man. Indeed,

much of his Narrative is devoted to such an assertion. The value of the dialogue between Thompson and Douglass was that through it, Thompson, a supporter of slavery, unwittingly corroborated such an admission. When it came time for the second Dublin variant to be published, Douglass could not resist the chance to expose such evidence to the world. The technique allowed him to assert his own humanity; it served to heighten the fact that the very premise upon which slavery was based--the dehumanization of the slave--was faulty.

The profound lucidity Douglass exemplified in the Irish text also proved effective beyond the customary function of a slave narrative which was, in part, to condemn slavery's supporters. In this edition, he exposed the hypocrisy among his more liberal-minded country men and women, including abolitionists. Prior to Douglass's trip to Ireland, he was surrounded by racist circumstances that were a consequence of accepted ways of life, modes of behavior, and manners of speech in the everyday American world. Not surprising to any who read the literature of African Americans, the northern half of the country proved to be the breeding ground of such custom. For instance, William S. McFeely points out that the enforcement of Jim Crow practices on boats and trains and in churches from New York to New Hampshire as well as racist jokes, cold handshakes, slips of the tongue, and spurious side-comments accompanied Douglass

as he traversed the country to speak of his experiences as a slave (92-94).[20]

Abolitionists, themselves, were not immune from promulgating such indecorous behavior, although their conduct was usually accompanied by patronizing elements and notions of paternalism. In Douglass's correspondence, an experience with Maria Weston Chapman of the Boston Anti-Slavery Society illustrates such tendencies. Prior to Douglass's arrival in Ireland, Chapman wrote a letter to Richard D. Webb, the publisher, warning him to "keep an eye" on Douglass, afraid that he would be "won over" by those in the English anti-slavery movement who did not support William Lloyd Garrison. Her comments suggest that Douglass, even with all of his expertise, was incapable of thinking for himself and would be unable to maintain the "proper" course of action advanced by the American Anti-Slavery Society without the constant guardianship of white people involved in the movement. Webb, subsequently, showed the letter to Douglass, who, in turn, became "furious" with Chapman and said that her "suspicions stuck in [his] crop"

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[20] Charles Lenox Remond called the behavior of the north "slavery's grand handmaid." In the states that were not slave-holding, Remond wrote that *prejudice* "acts the part to slavery of second king of arms, and exercises its authority by assisting in kidnapping the innocent and free at the capitol, disfranchises the citizens of Pennsylvania, proscribes the colored man in Rhode Island, abuses and gives no resting place to a man in New Hampshire, which murders in Illinois, cries out amalgamation in Maine, mobs him in New York, and stones him in Connecticut" (Ripley 73).

and that he could not "get [them] `down' no how." He wrote Chapman a "sharp" reply saying that he would not "tolerate any efforts to supervise and control his activities" (Foner, Vol.1, 65, 142-144, 431). The exchange demonstrates the insipid ways that abolitionists, at times, could impose themselves upon former slaves. Likewise, it indicates the lengths which Douglass was willing to go in order to assert a sense of himself on his own terms.

According to McFeely, the lecture circuit also gave Douglass plenty of opportunity to rebuke those who felt themselves removed from the affects of slavery. Given the Jim Crow climate of the free states, McFeely writes that Douglass "seldom allowed his audiences the comfort of thinking their region was innocent." One of his lectures reveals that Douglass, himself, said, "Prejudice against color is stronger north than south; it hangs around my neck like a heavy weight. [. . .] I have met it at every step the three years I have been out of southern slavery [. . .]" (94). Even though Douglass was abroad when he learned of Chapman's letter, it reminded him of the ways that racism pervaded the United States in both slave holders as well as their adversaries.

The production of the second Dublin variant provided Douglass with another opportunity to challenge the less blatant practitioners of discrimination. Moreover, putting his sentiments in writing allowed them a permanence and

larger audience than he had garnered from speaking engagements and private correspondence. Again, Douglass's skill with the rhetorical conventions of the day infused his chastisement with his particular brand of tenacity. In addition to using the artifice of a dialogue, which had been so effective with Thompson, he exploited the habit of prefacing a slave narrative with guarantees of its credibility, a task traditionally reserved for white people.

The practice of adding supporting documents, like a preface or appendix, evolved from the inferior status granted to African Americans, a status maintained even by abolitionists, who deemed blacks unsuitable authors in their own right. To remedy--as well as reinforce--such beliefs, white voices, such as those by Garrison and Wendell Phillips in Douglass's text, functioned "as seals of white approval" (Stone 67). Even though it was desirable for ex-slaves to write their stories, dominant racist doctrine still mandated that a subject/object relationship be established, whereby whites functioned as those who sanctioned black voices.

Prior to the publication of the second Dublin variant, there is evidence of Douglass's displeasure with the practice of including the words of white people solely to establish a narrative's credibility. Moreover, it is also possible to see that Douglass possessed the effective ability to subvert such practices. In fact, many scholars have accorded his <u>Narrative</u> distinction, without reference

to the second Dublin variant, because of the way he undermines, to use Linda Alcoff's distinction, the "discursive authority" granted to particular speakers because of their place in the social hierarchy (3). With the Boston edition, however, scholars had to ferret out the way that Douglass's eloquence intrinsically eclipses the endorsements of his white champions.[21] In the Dublin variant, Douglass himself boldly draws attention to the practice of privileging one speaker's words over another's and mocks the power accorded specific social markers such as race. The prefatory documents in the Boston text resemble assurances by whites which were commonplace in slave narratives. Although Garrison and Phillips lend formidable voices to Douglass's text, their inclusion merely represents an adherence to the conventional format of a narrative's assembly. The incorporation of the new preface and appendix in the second Dublin variant, however, was different. To position Thompson's words alongside his own was entirely

[21] Robert B. Stepto, in particular, has long argued that Douglass's text is unusual because his powerful voice dominates the preface by Garrison and the letter by Phillips, in spite of their social as well as self-imposed superiority. According to Stepto, before the publication of Douglass's text former slaves often assumed a "deferential posture" toward the writers of "appended documents" (26). In contrast, Douglass's voice overpowered Garrison's and Phillips' to the extent that the two wrote in "awe" and ultimately relinquished their role as his "authenticators." Douglass, alone, writes Stepto, assures the credibility of his Narrative, and in so doing creates a text of "a very special order" (28). Stepto, however, limits his position to the Boston edition, excluding the way the ancillary texts contained in the Irish variant also work as distinguishing factors.

Douglass's decision and signified his heightened sense of self-determination. At the end of the preface, Douglass, himself, boldly proclaims, "I am an American slave, who has given my tyrant the slip. I am in a land of liberty, with no man to make me afraid" (vi). No longer literally shackled by slavery and the de facto bonds of fugitive slave laws, Douglass was able to dictate his own actions and speak for himself.

The way that Douglass manipulates what we have come to call the concept of "discursive authority" in the Dublin text also indicates his acute sense of control. In the appendix, he sarcastically praises Thompson for doing "a piece of anti-slavery work, which no anti-slavery man could do." Because abolitionists are believed to be "fanatical, and apt to see everything through a distorted medium," Douglass chides that "cautious and truth-loving people in New England" do not believe their testimony. On the other hand, "slaveholders, or their apologists," such as Thompson, are believable because they are somehow credited with being "impartial, dispassionate, and disinterested witnesses" (cxxvi). Douglass also demonstrates his profound sense of irony as he credits Thompson's whiteness, even though it is bathed in the treachery of slavery, as a force which lends the new appendix authority.

Douglass's relentless scoffing ultimately renders Thompson's undeserved privilege, as well as that of Garrison

and Phillips, impotent alongside his own more commanding deftness. As Fisher Fishkin and Peterson have pointed out, Douglass's "legitimacy" is gained not so much from the invention of a new discourse but from a proficiency with the established "dominant discourse" (191-192). Douglass usurps Thompson's words and manipulates the rhetorical conventions such as dialogues and ancillary texts to his own advantage. These tactics allowed Douglass even more room to speak for himself, wresting authority from those who sought to deny his right to define his own situation. Fishkin and Peterson make it clear that Douglass's ability to act as a speaking/writing subject was tantamount to his transformation from a "piece of property" to a man (189,192). Acting as a definer rather than the defined, Douglass asserted blacks were capable of thinking and acting on their own behalf.

3.) A Matter of Truth

Because the first printing of Douglass's Narrative in Boston by the Anti-Slavery Office in May of 1845 has continually been credited as the authoritative version, interest in the second Dublin edition has been minimal despite its significance.[22] Respected reproductions of the Narrative by Benjamin Quarles (Harvard, 1960), Houston A. Baker, Jr. (Penguin, 1982), David W. Blight (St. Martins, 1993), and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Library of America, 1994) reveal that the editors have ignored those aspects of the second Dublin variant which truly distinguish it. Although Quarles charts the publishing history in his introduction, he treats the Irish text as if it were simply just a copy of the Boston edition without any amendments. Baker is a bit more generous, in that he gives a partial synopsis of the Dublin variant's contents. However, he fails to say that such information was part of an Irish reproduction of the text. Instead it appears as if the matters of which Baker speaks can only be found in the corpus of Douglass's

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[22] In the introduction to the Penguin edition of the Narrative, Houston A. Baker, Jr. explains that the work of anti-slavery societies often included booking abolitionist lecture tours, organizing regional and national anti-slavery campaigns and conventions, lobbying against proslavery legislation, and orchestrating "vociferous public protest" against slavery. Such activity was complemented by the publishing of "accounts of bondage" written by fugitive slaves. The Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society was one of the more powerful chapters whose membership included Douglass as well as William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Charles Lenox Remond, and William Wells Brown (29-30).

unpublished papers rather than an edition of his Narrative. Blight makes no mention of any of the variant editions even though he annotated the Narrative, carefully revealing Douglass's journey from slavery to freedom in all of its potent detail. Gates, at least, mentions the existence of the variants, giving publisher and place of publication, but curiously he writes that the only revisions made by Douglass were changes in punctuation and spelling to accommodate British usage and "at least one instance of bowdlerization" (1079). He does state that a new preface was added to the second Dublin edition, but only to the extent that Douglass used it as an opportunity to report that his Narrative had sold 4,500 copies in its first five months of availability in the United States (1079).

Given the insignificant amount of attention paid to the Irish text over the last 150 years, it would seem as though it were little more than a footnote in Douglass's literary accomplishments. Yet the author himself revered the edition as a deliberate component to the accounting of his life. Beyond stylistic changes and detailing the number of copies sold, the new preface in the second Dublin variant is crucial because Douglass makes explicit the reasons why he left the United States, offering proof of the way that fugitive slave laws were limiting his ability to remain free and to help end slavery. He tells his readers that with the publication of his Narrative in Boston, his "*owner*"

[sic] could find out where Douglass resided and return him to "his `patriarchal care'" (iii). He writes that although "it may not be generally known in Europe, [. . .] a slave who escapes from his master is liable, by the Constitution of the United States, to be dragged back into bondage [. . .]" (iii). By fleeing overseas, he explained that he avoided being remanded back to his master, Thomas Auld.

The Dublin variant is also significant because of the way it assisted Douglass in broadening the influence of the anti-slavery mission in Europe which ultimately strengthened the American movement. Despite the danger in which fugitive slave laws placed Douglass within, he was becoming an acclaimed speaker on the abolition platform and the leadership of the American Anti-Slavery Society felt he could have an important international influence. Newspaper accounts, business records, and personal correspondence reveal that Douglass's tour of Ireland, as well as Scotland and England, proved particularly vital in enlisting overseas backing for the abolitionist cause. John W. Blassingame documents the ways that Douglass's visit had a direct impact upon the American Anti-Slavery Society as an organization. Subscriptions to the Liberator from abroad increased; more women from overseas contributed items to sell at the annual Boston Anti-Slavery Bazaar;[23] and the Garrisonian

[23] Blassingame explains that the Bazaar was "largely the work of Maria Weston Chapman and members of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society." It ran during the Christmas

abolitionists received a much needed publicity boost (lvi).

In addition to the ways that Douglass's tour benefited the campaign back home, he also had an impact on European anti-slavery organizations in and of themselves. Richard D. Webb, who helped found the Hibernian Anti-Slavery Society and published the Irish editions of the Narrative, wrote about the positive influence of Douglass on those in Ireland who were initially reluctant to condemn slavery. In a letter to the Liberator, Webb said that Douglass had "occasioned deep interest in the anti-slavery cause, and many who never thought on the subject at all, are now convinced that it is a sin to neglect" (lvii). Isabel Jennings, of the Jennings family of Cork with whom Douglass was a house guest of for a month, confirmed Webb's observations. In a letter to Maria Weston Chapman, she wrote that Douglass's work resulted in contributions from the Church of England whose clergy had previously remained "silent" when appealed to by abolitionists. "They have got our old anti-slavery papers and are determined to understand the subject," she said (lv). Because of the ministry's relationship with the larger Irish masses, their support lent Douglass's tour particular far-reaching influence.

Even without the church's encouragement, however,

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holidays, from 1834 to 1857, and was one of the most important means of financial support for Garrisonian abolitionists. Featuring the handcrafts of American, British, and Irish women, its "receipts rose from $300 in 1834 [. . .] to $5250 in 1856" (70).

Douglass's impact in Europe was profound. "Never before have I known anyone who has excited such general interest as Frederick," wrote Jane Jennings, sister of Isabel. Likewise, Blassingame notes, "Working men contributed their labor to prepare halls in which Douglass spoke, attended his lectures in significant numbers, sent antislavery petitions to the United States, and sang ballads about him" (lvii). Moreover, in the second Dublin variant of his Narrative, Douglass appealed to the aid of those who thronged to hear him on the European lecture circuit. While recounting the tenets of fugitive slave laws in the edition's preface, he entreated his Irish readership to "co-operate with the noble band of American abolitionists" and work for "the overthrow of the meanest, hugest, and most dastardly system of iniquity that ever disgraced any country" (iv). The written plea was integral to abolitionist efforts to gain wide-spread foreign support to end American slavery.

In addition to the way the variant's new preface reinforced Douglass's verbal message, the Irish text's new appendix had implications which were of a personal nature. Unlike the preface, no serious mention of it is made in the edition edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. for the Library of America or any other reproduction. In order to fully understand the appendix's significance, it is important to consider the very circumstances which led Douglass to write his Narrative in the first place. His decision to do so lay

mainly in a desire to convince people that he told the truth when he related his experiences while still in bondage.

Despite the acclaim that Douglass garnered as an orator for the American Anti-Slavery Society, evidence suggests that he largely spoke to an audience that more-often-than-not did not hear him and also distrusted what he had to say, sometimes to the point where he was denied the very capacity to speak. Marion Wilson Starling has written extensively about the ways that the testimony of ex-slaves was often dismissed by the American public. During open forums where African Americans provided first-hand accounts of the cruelty of slavery, they were endlessly scrutinized during question and answer periods, sometimes for hours at a time, about the accuracy of their descriptions (233). More damaging, however, than the public's skepticism was the way their doubt ignored, impeded and outrightly silenced the voices of African Americans in their fight to secure freedom.

Even though Douglass's notoriety gave him certain advantages, he was not excused from those who questioned, condemned, and disregarded the word of a black person. In My Bondage and My Freedom, the second installment of his autobiography, he described how when he delivered speeches about his experiences as a slave at anti-slavery rallies he was continually suspect because he never provided his audience with details that would allow them to identify him-

-details which he ultimately feared would enable Thomas Auld to track him down. Some of the particulars which Douglass withheld included the name of Frederick Bailey given him at birth, Auld's name, and the name of the state and county from which he fled. Moreover, he never disclosed the particulars of his escape. In light of the strictures of fugitive slave laws and the national debate surrounding fugitive slaves, it is obvious why Douglass would want to withhold such information. The publication of his Narrative, however, signifies the instance when Douglass finally acquiesced and gave the "names of persons, places, and dates" (368) in order to prove that what he had to say was true. If such information was not enough, a preface written by William Lloyd Garrison as well as a letter by Wendell Phillips, two of the country's most respected abolitionists, were also included in all of the printings in the hopes of satisfying any speculations of deception.

However, in as much as the testimony by Garrison and Phillips added to the distinction of Douglass's Narrative, their inclusion, along with Douglass's own disclosure of specifics surrounding his enslavement, still did not guarantee that he would be believed. Although he hoped the publication of the Boston version would satisfy skeptics, only with the second Dublin variant did he conclusively demonstrate that his story was true. In short, the appendix, along with the preface, provided him with the rare

opportunity to prove his Narrative's credibility within the same pages as the text. Douglass, himself, credited the Dublin variant as the version which put to rest all doubt as to the reliability of his claims.

It was A.C.C. Thompson's letters which provided Douglass with the chance to prove his story. Ironically, Thompson first wrote to the Delaware Republican in an attempt to discredit Douglass. He claimed his own status as a "citizen" of Saint Michael's, Maryland, the same region from which Douglass came, gave him the necessary authority to tell the truth. He went on to claim that the Narrative was written by "evil-designed" persons who pieced together the statements of a "runaway slave" into a "catalog of lies" (cxxiii). He based his "refutation" on his assertion that the name of the runaway slave was Frederick Baily [sic] not Frederick Douglass. Thompson also contended that the "gentlemen" portrayed in the Narrative (Edward Lloyd, Captain Anthony, Austin Gore, Thomas Lamdin, Giles Hicks, Thomas Auld, and Edward Covey) are "charitable, feeling men" who could never "murder human beings, with as little remorse of conscience" as the Narrative illustrated (cxxiv). Thompson closed the letter with confidence that he provided the public with "a true representation" of the "facts."

Since Thompson emphasizes that his version of the truth was rooted in first-hand experience, one initially might be surprised that Douglass reacted to his letter with delight.

After all, using abolitionist logic, it follows that Thompson's rebuttal of Douglass could be credible because it, like Douglass's Narrative, was based on empirical evidence.[24] Douglass's pleasure with Thompson's letter, however, was derived not so much from Thompson's interpretation of the facts, which Douglass knew could always be debated, but rather that Thompson verified, albeit backhandedly, that specific details contained in the Narrative were indeed true. He wrote that he knew Frederick Baily as well as everyone else from Saint Michael's that Douglass mentioned. Although intended to have the opposite effect, Thompson's letter ultimately vindicated Douglass.[25]

To underscore the importance of such corroboration, Douglass, in his reply to Thompson, noted the significance of forever documenting the Narrative's credibility within the same pages as the text, itself. Since the second Dublin variant was being readied for publication, he took the

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[24] Abolitionists prized slave testimony because it was believed far more credible than second-hand revelation. Indeed, William Lloyd Garrison states in his preface to Douglass's Narrative that the text is important because Douglass wrote it, "in his own style, and according to the best of his ability, rather than to employ some one else" (7). For the same reason, it was important to include in the title of Douglass's text that it was "written by himself."

[25] For a complete accounting of those mentioned in Douglass's Narrative, based on the records of the Maryland Historical Society and Talbot County, the family papers of Colonel Edward Lloyd, and the Baltimore city directories, see Benjamin Quarles' introduction to the Harvard edition of The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass (xxi-xxiii).

opportunity to include Thompson's accusations. On the page following the traditional end of the text, he introduced the new material, under the inconspicuous heading "Appendix," unabashedly stating that the allegations had first appeared in the Delaware Republican, a newspaper published very near to where Douglass spent his "early days" (G2). Douglass also said, with characteristic irony, that he took "great pleasure" in including the text for his readers because it invaluably confirmed "the main facts of [his] Narrative" (G2). Thompson's claims follow with the heading "Falsehood Refuted" in bold, upper case letters, while Douglass's response is next, titled simply "Reply to Mr. A.C.C. Thompson," also in bold, upper case letters.

Even though Douglass was obviously delighted with the new evidence, scholars have ignored the fact that he used the second Dublin variant to follow through with his intentions to publish it alongside his own story. In fact, Starling writes that as far as she has "been able to discover" Douglass never did so (254). Likewise, both Blassingame and Philip S. Foner excluded the existence of the new preface and appendix in their collections of Douglass's papers. And Albert E. Stone identified the variant as "English" (66). Moreover, since all subsequent editions of the Narrative have left out any appreciable reference to the Dublin volume, it seems as if it has all but been erased from the textual history. For Douglass,

however, the Irish variant functioned as the edition which forever vindicated his story.

Such an unforeseen result was not the only mistake that Thompson made in his attempt to discredit Douglass. He also used Douglass's rhetorical acumen exhibited in the Narrative to further prove that Douglass's testimony was false. Thompson wrote that the Frederick Baily he knew was "unlearned" and therefore incapable of writing. Only an "educated man," said Thompson, "who had some knowledge of the rules of grammar, could write so correctly" (cxxiv). Indeed, skepticism based on Douglass's eloquence was not uncommon. According to a Philadelphia correspondent for the Liberator, Douglass's fluency with language often caused doubt. Paraphrasing audience reaction to a lecture in 1844, the reporter questioned how a man "only six years out of bondage, and who had never gone to school a day in his life" could speak "with such eloquence--with such precision of language and power of thought [. . .]" (Foner, Vol.5, 510). The testimony of an ex-slave was supposed to be anything but straightforward and articulate.

Douglass, himself, was familiar with misconceptions which commonly espoused the ignorance of former slaves. Ironically, in My Bondage and My Freedom, he describes the ways abolitionists, including Garrison, appealed to him to tone down his linguistic agility in order to give his story credibility. He was especially bothered by requests to

infuse his speaking voice with mannerisms which typecast black speech as ignorant. Rather than allowing him to talk the way he wanted to, anti-slavery leaders implored him to leave "a *little* [sic] of the plantation manner of speech" in his rhetoric in order to prove his authenticity (367). If Douglass talked more "black" or "plantation" it followed that he would sound backward, and therefore be believable. Although Douglass tried to appease those who sought to constrict him within stereotypes, he also tirelessly struggled to retain his human dignity.

By the time Thompson wrote his letter, Douglass, who was now in Ireland, was no longer obligated to accommodate anyone who equated blackness with ignorance. Therefore, the letter gave him an opportunity to respond with all of his linguistic eloquence. Douglass explained that, "Frederick the Freeman is a very different person than Frederick the Slave" (cxxvii). When Thompson knew him, Douglass contended he was a "mere wreck," living under the "unfavourable circumstances" of Mr. Covey, "the negro breaker, [. . .] who had beaten and bruised me so much, that my spirit was broken" (cxxvii). Since that time, however, Douglass writes, "I have really got out of my place; that is, I have got out of slavery, which you know is `the place' for negroes in Christian America" (cxxvii). Accordingly, "freedom," writes Douglass, "has given me a new life." He goes so far as to say that if Thompson were to meet him as a

free man, he probably would not recognize him. "I feel myself a new man," wrote Douglass (cxxvii). As a free man, Douglass could articulate his story, using his own voice, which he always possessed but was never allowed to fully utilize as a fugitive slave. He also emphasizes that one could not be a man in slavery, only a wreck--pointing to both the physical and spiritual effects.

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II

To Define and Determine Oneself

Illustrations and Ephemera

A. "Greatest of American Intimidators North and South. Practical Politician. `Vote as I dictate!'" by Thomas Nast in Harper's Weekly Journal of Civilization (Vol. 29 (1507) November 7, 1885): 725. Reproduced as illustration number 239 in Morton Keller's The Art and Politics of Thomas Nast (New York: Oxford UP, 1968).

B. "Arriving in New York" from Mathew Carey's American Jest Book (Philadelphia: John Wyeth, 1933): 17-18. Reprinted in Robert Secor's "Ethnic Humor in Early American Jest Books" in Frank Shuffelton's A Mixed Race Ethnicity in Early America (New York: Oxford UP, 1993) 178.

"Irishman and a Negro go to Hell" from Arthur Huff Fauset's "Tales and Riddles Collected in Philadelphia," Journal of American Folk-Lore (Vol.41 (162), October-December 1928): 550.

"The Virginia Judge" by Walter Kelly appeared in Anthony Slide's Selected Vaudeville Criticism (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1988) 119.

C. "The Virginia Judge" by Walter Kelly appeared in Anthony Slide's Encyclopedia of Vaudeville (Westport, Ct.: Greenwood, 1994): 288.

"Mare's Eggs" from Arthur Huff Fauset's "Negro Folk Tales from the South," Journal of American Folk-Lore (Vol.50 (157), July-September 1927): 268.

D. "Zip Coon" (illustration) from the sheet music cover (New York: Atwill's Music Saloon, 1834) reproduced in Hans Nathan's Dan Emmett and the Rise of Early Negro Minstrelsy. (Norman, Oklahoma: U of Oklahoma P, 1962): 58 -- (musical score) Hans Nathan, 167--(lyrics) reproduced in Eric Lott's Love and Theft Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class (New York: Oxford UP, 1993) 178-179.

November 7, 1885

The Greatest Of American Intimidators North And South.

Practical Politician. "Vote as I dictate!"

It is but little known in the United States, that in the island of St. Thomas the Irish language is a good deal spoken, even amongst blacks. A passenger vessel having arrived at New York, at a time when the weather was excessively hot, happened to moor next to a schooner from that island; and one day, when a sturdy Hibernian was landing with his family, he was not a little surprised to hear his native Gaelic spoken fluently by some man standing on the wharf, whose complexion was none of the fairest, and whose hands were rather more lanigerous than he had been accustomed to in the Emerald Isle--"Arrah," says Paddy, to the man next him, "how long are you in the country, friend?" (supposing him to be from the land of potatoes, like himself)--"Only three days," replied the negro; "we reached this port on Monday last"--"Holy virgin!" exclaimed the affrightened emigrant, looking pitifully at his wife and children--"Only three days in the country, Judy, and turned as black as my hat! Och! that we were safe in oulde Ireland again!

Informant Unidentified
--American Jest Book (1833)

An Irishman and a Negro go to Hell during the terrible cold winter of 1917. Old Satan say to his angels, "Stoke the fires high, we've got some mighty bad fellows this time." The Irishman is first in to the furnance. Up goes the thermometer. "My!" says Satan, "he certainly was a bad one." Next the Negro. "Stoke it up high," says Satan, "I know he has been a bad one." Up, up goes the thermometer. Finally the thermometer bursts. They open the door to see what the trouble is. The Negro calls out, "She dat do', man, don't you know I can't stand no drafts."

Earle L. Huff, Informant
--Journal of American Folklore (1928)

A colored man, pleading against a charge of stealing chickens, says, "Judge the Lord may strike me dead if I stole." "Stand over there for five minutes," replies the Judge, "and if you are still living I'll give you 90 days."

Walter C. Kelly (1909)

"The jailer, echoing the clerk, called out the name of William Gaylor, first prisoner. As the heavy barred door creaked back, a very black and stupid little darky emerged from the pack and pranced up to the prisoner's dock. He stood there helplessly while the judge, without looking up from the docket, mumbled:

"`Willie Gaylor, where is he?'"

"`Yessuh, Mistuh Judge--Willie Gaylor, thass me," drawled the darkie.'"

"`Ten days, Willie. . . . That's me!' snapped the judge as he rapped for the next case."

--Walter C. Kelly (c.1909)

So dere was two Irishmen travellin' th'oo de woods once, went to a country house an' there was lots of pumpkins on the galley; an' they had never seed a pumpkin before. So dey asked de colored man what was they, an' he tol' the Irishmen dey was mare's eggs. The Irishmen said, "Faith m jedders, sell me one." The man said he wouldn't sell, an' "if I sell you one it would be too high, you couldn't pay for it." Ol' Irishman said, "Faith m'jedders, I'll pay you anything you want for it. I never seen a mare's egg before." So he sold it to him for two hundred dollars,--one pumpkin. Then he said, "Faith m'jedders, when he gonna hatch, this pony?" Told him when he git out in de woods an' see the dogs smellin' aroun' a hollow stump just th'ow the pumpkin against the stump an' the pony would run out. So whn he hit the stump a rabbit jumped out. An' he run up on the rabbit an' said, "Ky-up, pony, ky-up; yea, mammy!" But he never get de rabbit.

Informant Unidentified
--Journal of American Folklore (1927)

Zip Coon

(George Willig, Jr., 1834)

I went down to San__dy hook, tader arter__noon;
I went down to Sandy hook, tader arter__noon;
I went down to Sandy hook, tader arter__noon;
And de fust man I met dere was old Zip Coon.

Old Zip Coon is a very larned scholar,
Old Zip Coon is a very larned scholar,
Old Zip Coon is a very larned scholar,
He plays on the Ban_jo Cooney in de holler.

Did you ever see de wild goose sail upon de ocean,
O de wild goose motion is a very pretty notion
For when de wild goose winks he beckon to de swallor,
An den de wild goose holler, google, google, goller.

Old Suke Blueskin fell in love wid me,
She bite me to her house for to take a cup of tea,
What do you think Old Suke had for de supper!
Dere was chicken foot sparrow grass & apple sauce butter.

O my ole mistress is very mad wid me,
Because I wouldn't go wid her and live in Tennessee;
Massa built a barn dere and put all de fodder
Dere was dis ting and dat ting and one ting an oder.

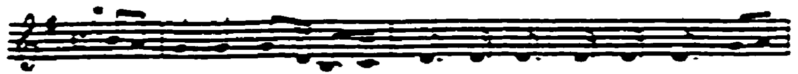
As I was a going down a new cut road,
I met a little Tarrapin a looking at a Toad;
an jist at evry time de toad begin to jump,
De Tarrapin he hide himself behind a burnt stump.

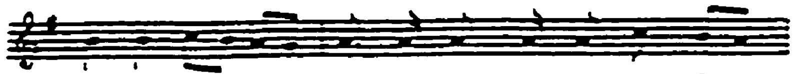
Dat tarnal critter Crocket, he never say his prayers,
He kill all de wild cats de Coons and de Bears,
An den he go to Washington to help to make de laws
An dere he find de Congress men sucking of deir paws.

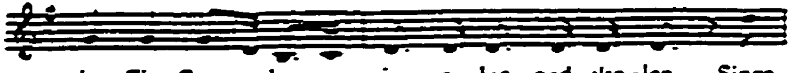
If I was de President of dese United States,
I'd suck lasses candy and swing upon de gates,
An dose I didn't like I'd block em off de docket,
An de way I'd block em off would be a sin to Crocket.

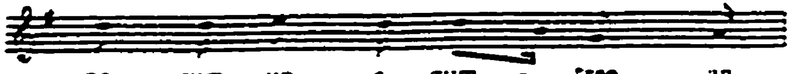
I tell you what's a going to happen now very soon,
De United States bank will be blown to de moon,
Den al de oder bank notes will be mighty plenty,
An one silver dollar will be worth ten or twenty.

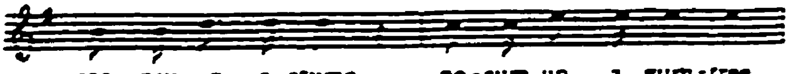
O glory be to Jackson, fo he blow up de Banks,
An glory be to Jackson, for he many funny pranks,
An glory be to Jackson, for de battle of Orleans,
For dere he gib de enemy de hot butter beans.

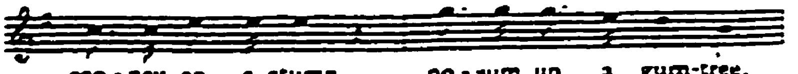


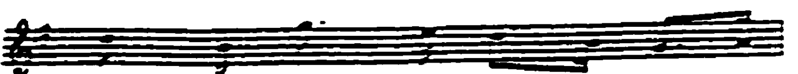












II

To Define and Determine Oneself

> . . . race signifies something quite precise about power, how one group seizes and sustains an unbeatable edge over others. When the race wild card is played, beware, the fix is in. Particularly if the word appears in a setting where some competition is occurring--a bargain, a contract, a ball game, courtroom, treaty, romance. Race is a clue, a sign the outcome is being rigged. Various unsavory, unfair maneuvers can be expected. Race in its function as wild card is both a sign and an enabler of these shady transactions in a game only one player, the inventor of race, can win. He always holds the winning cards because he can choose when he plays them and names their value.
>
> John Edgar Wideman[26]

1.) The "inappropriateness of names"

As a slave at Durgin and Bailey's shipyard in Baltimore, Frederick Douglass learned to read and write by observing that the lumber used for boat building was initialed, indicating where it should go. In his Narrative, he writes about the process, explaining that if wood was needed for the starboard aft it was marked "S.A." (44). "I soon learned the names of these letters," wrote Douglass, "and for what they were intended when placed upon a piece of timber in the ship-yard" (44). He went about copying the marks in his writing tablet. Later, when sent on errands

[26] The epigraph is from John Edgar Wideman, Fatheralong (New York: Random House, 1994) xvi.

for the Auld's, Douglass continued to increase his familiarity with the alphabet as well as to strengthen his vocabulary, beyond the letters and words that he learned from boat parts in the shipyard. In My Bondage and My Freedom, he describes bribing poor white children with bread to teach him how to spell (224). As he became more and more literate, he grasped that each letter was infused with a certain value which helped to sustain and reproduce a certain order.

Woven within Douglass's reminiscences of how he learned to read and write, is his gradual reckoning of the way race is used to organize cultures into social hierarchies. In short, he comprehended the basis which dictated why he was a slave and Hugh Auld a master. His skin color, like the alphabet, functioned as a sign in a cultural language system, which, like a letter, was infused with meaning by slave holders and their advocates, as well as racist practices and modes of behavior that were less obvious and less systematized. Using terminology that has become primarily literary, Douglass even characterizes his "*master*" [sic] as the "author" of his "situation" (227). His blackness, as it was defined by his oppressors, stripped him of his humanity and perpetuated the system that enslaved him.

Eventually, literacy, in all of its manifestations became a cornerstone of Douglass's vision of liberation.

More importantly, given the subjective way that meaning is attached to signs such as race, Douglass worked hard to assure his own and others' right to interpret and affect, if not effect, meaning. Analysis of his three autobiographies demonstrates that as Douglass learned to read and write he continually modified and manipulated the meaning of conventional and unconventional discursive signs to achieve emancipation from the forces which oppressed African Americans. As he grew older and became a world-recognized advocate of human rights, Douglass also enlarged his beliefs to include the ways that the terms of gender, religion, nationality, culture, and class, as well as race, work as discursive symbols and subsequently as political operatives. In fact, once he gained his freedom, he devoted the rest of his life to helping those from a range of backgrounds to achieve the right to define and determine their own fate.

Douglass's understanding of the way language could reach beyond a conventional meaning of letters and words was obtained, in part, by his keen observation of his captors' behavior. The control that slave holders wielded was sustained by their development of finely-tuned examination practices which enabled them to discern the meaning of a slave's countenance and body movements, looking for any signs of subversion. Again, using terminology that usually connotes the literary, Douglass wrote, "They watch [. . .] with skilled and practiced eyes, and have learned to read,

with great accuracy, the state of mind and heart of the slave through his sable face" (307). Ironically, as his master learned to "read" him, Douglass, in turn, surreptitiously learned to "read" his master, and, to a certain extent, nullified the potency of a literacy when only one party is supposed to be able to read.

One of the first realities that Douglass had to contend with was the way that his owners and others interpreted the meaning of his skin color. Linda Alcoff has called this phenomenon "the problem of speaking for others" and even though her premise does not include Douglass's particular situation, Alcoff facilitates understanding of how his predicament functions within the larger dynamics of oppression. According to Alcoff, when a member of one group "speaks on behalf of or about" a member of another group, a kind of representation occurs. "In speaking for myself," she writes, "I (momentarily) create my self--just as much as when I speak for others I create their selves [. . .]" (10). Difficulties ensue because representations are based on "interpretations" rather than facts. Subsequently, the accuracy of any claims regarding another's "needs, goals, situation, and in fact, who they are," according to Alcoff, can be unreliable and misrepresented (10). Moreover, because speech is a public act, speaking on behalf of or about another can have formidable consequences, ultimately affecting more than the "self" and the "other" directly

involved, influencing a whole culture's perceptions. When Douglass wrote of the way his blackness was imbued with a pejorative connotation by his master, he demonstrated, not only the value accorded whiteness, but also the way that understanding or knowledge, via race, is reproduced and multiplied.

Douglass referred to the imposed interpretation of his skin color as his "unutterable anguish," placing him in a "wretched condition" under which he "writh[ed]." (42). Although, in the process of learning others' perceptions, Douglass, himself, gained the ability to read a sign's meaning, he was powerless. Consequently, he initially called his literacy "a curse rather than a blessing" (42). "It had opened my eyes to the horrible pit," he wrote, "but to no ladder upon which to get out" (42). He particularly feared that as a slave he would never be in a position to rewrite his existence into something other than what his persecutors prescribed. After a botched escape attempt, with the threat of being sold further south hanging over him, Douglass, in Life and Times, wrote, "The possibility of ever becoming anything but an abject slave, a mere machine in the hands of an owner, had now fled, and it seemed to me it had fled forever" (622). It was a terrifying reality.

Gradually, as Douglass's literacy improved, he realized that the truth or value of any representation is not based solely on the fact that it has been uttered. Alcoff writes

that in addition to "what is being said," the authority given to understanding or knowledge is particularly incumbent upon who says what and to whom. She is especially sensitive to the ways that a speaker's and a listener's cultural and social locations, mitigated by variables such as race, class, gender, sexual desires, and religion, further shape the act of speech, influencing what is spoken, what is heard, and ultimately what is classified as worthwhile.

Douglass's own understanding of the more enigmatic nature of knowledge, and its correlation to race, is evidenced by conversations in Sophia and Hugh Auld's house where he would occasionally "hear something about abolitionists" (43). Although he was uncertain what the word meant, it held a special curiosity because it was usually uttered at the same time the Auld's spoke about an escaped slave. Inevitably, Douglass made the connection between "abolition" and "slavery," however, along with gaining an understanding of the word, he also surmised it signified something different for him than it did for the Auld's. "I did not dare to ask any one about its meaning," he wrote. "I was satisfied that it was something they wanted me to know very little about" (43). Douglass intuitively gleaned that the Auld's understanding of "abolition" differed from his own because at that time his blackness and their whiteness were poised to oppose one

another.

About 135 years later, Malcolm X would reach the same conclusion that Douglass had regarding the way that meaning could be advanced through a person's skin color. Moreover, like Douglass, he also realized that the interpretation of a sign, such as race, was not a fixed or static classification. With change in context or circumstances, meaning could be altered or transformed completely, depending not only on who did the interpreting and of whom but where and when such interpretations occurred. While Douglass's understanding came about through the way that "blackness" was inscribed with certain values, Malcolm X's realization was sparked when he noted a difference between the behavior of whites in Saudi Arabia and the United States. During his trip to Mecca, when it was doubtful that he would be allowed to make a pilgrimage, he sought the help of Omar Azzam, son of Abd ar-Rahman Azzam--an influential Saudi and author of The Eternal Message of Muhammad.

Almost of equal significance to the actual help the Azzams gave Malcolm X, was the fact that they were white. Yet they did not exhibit any of the traits of domination that blacks were usually subjected to when the two races interacted in the United States. Through the course of events, Abd ar-Rahman Azzam loaned Malcolm X his hotel suite until he could get to Mecca. In his Autobiography he recounts that because of the generosity of the Azzams, who

had nothing to gain from their association with him, he "began to reappraise the `white man'" (333). Instead of race meaning complexion, Malcolm X began to perceive it as something with more flexibility than biology allowed. He wrote, "In America `white man' meant specific attitudes and actions toward the black man, and toward all other non-white men. But in the Muslim world [. . .] men with white complexions were more genuinely brotherly than anyone else had ever been" (333-334). The way that meaning was constituted through race, as with other signs, depended upon a complex system of variables are socially and politically driven.

As Douglass matured, a fundamental ingredient to his own liberation, as well as to his democratic vision for the United States, was his cognizance of the power accorded the position of "speaker." Changing his own circumstances, as well as the larger institutional mechanisms which propagated slavery, would, in part, require that he gain the ability to assert his own formulations of himself. Again, reading and writing became critical to Douglass's liberation strategy. In fact, in My Bondage and My Freedom, he links the two stating, that if he could write, he could pen his own pass to travel north. Although he speaks with an immediate purpose in mind, he metaphorically alludes to the primacy he placed on literacy as a means of empowerment, especially in an environment in which if one could not read one had no

power. Afterall, blacks were thought of as animals. Conversely, reading and writing gave Douglass "not only [. . .] the hope of freedom, but a foreshadowing of the means by which [he] might, some day, gain that inestimable boon" (234). As Douglass understood and utilized the ability to read and write, it could help end slavery as well as contribute to a larger model of freedom that spoke to all of the oppressed.

Douglass recognized that his place in the social order was a humanly constructed designation and the ability to write his own story was a key emancipatory ingredient. Gaining the capacity to speak for oneself has been described as a process of transformation, where one moves from a place of being defined by others, an "object," into a position of definer, a "subject." Borrowing from the liberationist work of Paulo Freire, bell hooks explains that a "dimension of the oppressor/oppressed, exploiter/exploited relationship is that those who dominate are seen as subjects and those who are dominated objects" (42). Consequently, as is the case with Douglass, resistance requires the oppressed to "identify themselves as subjects, define their reality, shape their new identity, name their history, tell their story" (43). Because the ability to speak for oneself is so crucial to meaningful liberation, one might understand why Douglass not only wrote his autobiography three times but also why, despite his initial pain, he repeatedly makes his

longings for freedom contiguous with his yearnings for literacy.

Interestingly, when Douglass taught others to read and write he associated the ability with liberation. While working as a hired-out slave for William Freeland, after returning to his owner's plantation from Baltimore, he began a "Sabbath school" in order to give his fellow slaves spelling lessons. Along with the Sunday sessions, he would travel to his students' individual slave quarters three evenings a week to practice with them. In the Narrative, he estimated that at one time he had over 40 pupils (71). Teaching for Douglass, however, was more than simply helping another to decipher the meaning of words upon a page. "I taught them," he writes, "because it was the delight of my soul to be doing something that looked like bettering the condition of my race" (71-72). He even says that "through" his "agency" at least one of his former students attained freedom (72). He deeply believed that his own liberation would be without reward unless he helped others gain theirs. Moreover, given the fact that slavery was supported by custom as well as economic and political policies that were entrenched throughout the country, in the north and south, a popular demand for its cessation was necessary. The Sabbath school became a means to prepare blacks to advance the cause, increasing in sheer numbers those who could work for abolition.

Along with the way the act of teaching played into Douglass's overall objectives, the very lessons that he passed on to others were steeped in a kind of liberatory doctrine which revealed, just as his own reading lessons had, the prejudicial way meaning is ascribed to race. While he instructed his students in the fundamentals of the alphabet, he writes that he "ascertain[ed] their views and feelings in regard to their condition" as slaves (73). While retrieving them from, what Douglass called, the "mental darkness," he began to "imbue their minds with thoughts of freedom [. . .]" and "on all fitting occasions, to impress them with the gross fraud and inhumanity of slavery" (71,73). A true education necessitated understanding of how they were enslaved in the first place.

In as much as Douglass explained the belief system which fostered slavery, he also sought to instill within his students the conviction to change the circumstances surrounding their lives which held them in bondage. As a means to galvanize their energies, he began to recite passages from the Columbian Orator, the text which had been essential to his own revelations regarding the inalienable rights of man. In My Bondage and My Freedom he describes how its "eloquent orations and spicy dialogues, denouncing oppression and slavery--telling of what had been dared, done and suffered by men, to obtain liberty [. . .]," supported all that he believed regarding his own and subsequently his

students' mission for justice (306). They were not alone in their beliefs. Furthermore, as Douglass began to raise the consciousness of his students, he also practiced delivering the message he would one day promote while on the abolitionist lecture circuit, advocating an end to racist attitudes and actions throughout the nation.

Simultaneous with the establishment of the Sabbath school, Douglass, in the Narrative, writes of how he and his students planned an escape. They conspired to take a canoe, which belonged to one of the plantation masters, and "paddle directly up the Chesapeake Bay" toward Baltimore. Once they were 70 or 80 miles from Saint Michael's, they would set the canoe adrift and continue on land, following the north star on foot until they were beyond the Maryland border and into Pennsylvania (74). In addition to devising the route, Douglass wrote several passes which read as if he and his friends had permission to travel. The practical benefits of literacy were never far from the theoretical advantages. By giving the passes the "appearance" of legitimacy, Douglass expended his earlier realization regarding the arbitrary and ambiguous nature of language which could mean something different to him than it did to his master.

With all of their careful planning, however, one of their fellow slaves informed his master of the imminent escape and Douglass and some of his students were brought to the local jail. Inside their prison cells, they heard the

bartering of slave traders and potential buyers outside and although they feared being sold, they were eventually returned to their respective plantations in Saint Michael's. Douglass, however, was sent back to Baltimore, once again under the guardianship of Hugh Auld, where within two years, he plotted another escape.

In both the Narrative and My Bondage and My Freedom, Douglass gives no specific details of how he managed to successfully get from Baltimore to New Bedford, Massachusetts. Only in Life and Times, published 55 years after his escape, in 1893, did he reveal that he once again utilized the malleable nature of symbols and signs in order to secure his freedom. He explained that in Maryland free blacks were required to carry free papers which contained the "name, age, color, height and form of the free man" as well as "any scars or other marks" which could "assist in his identification" (643). Relying on the multiple connotations that discursive signifiers can suggest, Douglass borrowed a set of free papers from a free sailor, wore clothing which matched the profession, and acted the part on the trains which carried him north. Given his prior practice of escaping, Douglass was well able to manipulate meaning in the hopes of achieving a desirable purpose.

Although his rhetorical gifts would manifest themselves in different ways throughout Douglass's life, no matter the many positions of leadership which he assumed, the

principles upholding the slippery ways that meaning is attached to knowledge, which he learned as a student and advanced as a young reading and writing teacher, continually guided his life. When the publication of his Narrative put his safety in jeopardy, the complex, and sometimes illogical, nature of meaning, promoted by language, evidenced itself again in Douglass's having to leave the United States, a constitutional republic, in order to secure his freedom. He traveled to Europe and his first port-of-call was Ireland, where he led an abolitionist lecture tour for about four months.

The absurdity of the situation was not lost on Douglass. In an essay titled "Thoughts and Recollections of a Tour in Ireland," using his characteristic sense of irony, he chided his countrymen and women for supporting an institution which mandated that he leave his own nation for another in order to "find [the] liberty and shelter denied [him] at home" (139). The scenario was made all the more uncanny, given Ireland's position as a colonized nation under English rule. It was a "striking commentary upon the institutions of both countries", he wrote, that a man had to leave a "republic" for a "monarchy" in order to attain freedom (139). Yet Douglass reduced the lunacy of his predicament to the paradoxical way that meaning is proliferated, writing that there was a certain "inappropriateness of names as signifying things" (139). It

was a maxim that harkened back to the way his blackness was characterized in such a way that it negated his humanity. In effect, Douglass had been mis-named and was forced to endure consequences which justified his enslavement.

2.) For the Whole of Human Brotherhood

The obvious and practical benefits of Douglass's Irish tour were in the trip's ability to provide him with a sanctuary that was free from the clutches of slavery plaguing the United States. In the forementioned essay that Douglass wrote regarding his experiences in Ireland he lamented that he did not travel as a "gentleman and a scholar" in order to gain "pleasure" or to learn about "people's countries, and civilizations older than our own" (139). Instead, Douglass told his audience that he went to Ireland as a "slave--a fugitive slave, and neither the American flag nor the American eagle could protect [him]" (139). Throughout his life, Douglass seldom missed an opportunity to remind his readers that he was not a free citizen even though he was born in a country founded upon the promise of liberty for all people. As with many African-American writers, the rhetorical capacity to be ironic allowed Douglass to point out the hypocritical behavior of his fellow country men and women who denied inalienable rights to blacks.

Along with the pragmatic advantages of his departure, however, Douglass also acknowledged that he benefited from his trip to Ireland in ways that reached beyond the urgent reality which necessitated it. In the essay, he writes that there is perhaps "no agency more potent and effective

[. . .] than the knowledge attained and attainable by travellers who make themselves acquainted with the peoples and institutions other than their own" (136). Indeed, the very timing of the journey to Ireland as well as the circumstances that the country was embroiled within would serve Douglass throughout his career as an advocate for human rights. When he and James Buffum, a fellow abolitionist, disembarked from the boat which brought them to Dublin, they set foot on Irish soil during the "Great Potato Famine," perhaps the single-most cataclysmic event in Irish history.

Whereas slavery put Douglass in the position to experience firsthand the way that race is used as an operative of oppression, the Irish famine provided him with the opportunity to witness firsthand the fact that oppression can be predicated by factors in addition to race and is not restricted to any particular community. Using reading abilities, which were well-honed by the time Douglass traveled the Irish countryside, he observed the ways that religious affiliation, in this case Catholic, and additional cultural signifiers, such as the Irish language, as well as class distinctions could be perverted and manipulated to subjugate a specific population. Typically, examination of Douglass's association with the Irish has been restricted to characterizations of his fractious relationship with newly-emigrated Irish Americans and the

ways they hampered African-American efforts for equality for more than 100 years. Douglass's relationship with the indigenous Irish, however, makes an important distinction between the two communities. At the same time, it unfolds as an important ingredient to his evolving role as a freedom fighter in a variety of social contexts.

The Great Famine epitomized the extent of abuse which was being levied upon the indigenous Irish, particularly in the southern and western areas of the country. Historical analysis provides a more comprehensive and intricate account of the causes of mass starvation than the one I provide here. However, it is widely held that the absence of a diversified economy, made up of both industry and agriculture, was a major contributing factor. Also, in the years leading up to the famine the population continually increased without a corollary extension of the means of financial support.[27] With limited employment options, the majority of the underclass were forced to survive as tenant

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[27] Quoting from available census data at 10 year intervals, D. George Boyce documents that in 1821 there were 7.2 million people in Ireland, 7.9 million in 1831, and 8.4 million in 1841 (100). Colm Kerrigan writes that the population increase in Ireland during the early part of the 19th-century can be explained by a number of factors, including a low death rate as well as increases in the number of marriages and births. Regardless of the explanation, however, Kerrigan says the wide-spread use of the potato was crucial. It "facilitated early marriage" because it prompted sub-division of land on which people could live and harvest a crop of potatoes. It also provided nourishment at an affordable price, thus reducing mortality while at the same time increasing fertility (Father Mathew, 9).

farmers or farm laborers under a system which exploited land resources and exacted an extensive human toll on the working poor.

Under the Irish system, portions of property were rented out by landlords to farmers who, in turn, divided their holdings among those willing to work in exchange for shelter and food. Although such custom made it possible for those with the least amount of economic mobility to eke out a living, the transaction perpetuated abuses where the economy was supported by rental agreements rather than by agricultural means. The situation was made worse by the absence of laws protecting tenants from sub-standard conditions or landlord abuses. If a tenant was charged an unfair rent or evicted there was no legal recourse. Or, if a tenant made property improvements there were no guarantees of monetary compensation during occupancy or upon eviction (104-105). Furthermore, Catholics endured restricted property rights so that discord between tenants and landlords, from the outset, had a sectarian edge. Disputes were continually arising which fostered an environment without trust or incentive to care for the land. Consequently, most people survived at a subsistence level, eating potatoes because they were easy to grow and cheap. "There was simply no alternatives for the people," writes Boyce, "except the precarious existence available to them from their subsistence on their simple diet and their small

patches of land" (106). Given the already fragile economy and the absence of governmental responsibility, resources, including the very ability of land to be agriculturally productive, were increasingly burdened.

During the years of 1845 and 1846, the fungus *phytophthora infestans*, or potato blight, first appeared on crops across the country. According to D. George Boyce, Ireland's moist climate was particularly suitable for the germination of the disease whose infectious spores were transferred to other plants by wind, rain, and insects (106). For nearly four consecutive years it was all but impossible to harvest a successful crop. Because the potato was nearly the only food source in the Irish diet, the effects were disastrous. Although England was the richest nation in world and Ireland was part of the United Kingdom, the Whig government adopted a *laissez faire* policy, offering the Irish only a limited amount of economic and social welfare relief (Killeen 50-51). Incompetent bureaucrats made conditions worse by their failure to adequately systematize the paltry assistance efforts and landlords evicted their tenants, who had no income for rent, from housing which even before the famine was considered squalid.

Prejudicial attitudes also stereotyped the Irish as "irresponsible" and impeded a greater sense of charitable responsibility. Rather than providing humanitarian aid, the British policy punished the Irish, insisting they were in a

"situation of their own making" (Killeen 51). It is estimated that a million people died of starvation while another million emigrated mostly to the United States, Canada, England, and Australia, fleeing hunger as well as typhus, called the "famine fever," dysentery, and scurvy (Killeen 50-54). While tens of thousands of people roamed the countryside, without food or shelter, countless others barricaded themselves in their homes to die. Reminders of the famine survive across Ireland today in the form of abandoned shed-sized buildings made of stone called "famine houses" which were actually the dwelling places of many who died.

As Douglass, himself, toured Ireland he too noted that the "lack of prosperity in the South" was caused by "the absence of other means of livelihood" which "compelled" people to pay "high rents" and live in "enforced poverty" on small farms, with large families, who were "obliged to raise and live on potatoes" (AME Church Review 144). Even with such insight, however, Douglass, at first, was hesitant to condemn the British for all of Ireland's "misfortunes." His apprehension was the result of his belief that the country, to a certain extent, existed in a state of self-imposed isolation. For Douglass, this was especially the case in the south where the population was least affected by foreign influences with regard to their way of life. Although isolation was advantageous in that it preserved unique

aspects of Celtic culture such as the Irish language, Douglass also believed seclusion made the population more vulnerable because it existed without the benefit of contact with "other races and varieties of men," except for the invasive forces of the British.

Douglass was particularly wary of the fact that the majority of the population in the south belonged to a single religious affiliation. Even though he recognized that the Catholic church was one signifier of the country's distinction from the British, Douglass ultimately believed it to be destructive.[28] "Uniform religious opinion," he wrote, "brings mental quiet, and mental quiet brings mental stagnation, and mental stagnation brings death to human progress" (144). Although Douglass held great respect for

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[28] Douglass's apprehension regarding the Catholic church perhaps can be explained by his alliance with members of the Hibernian Anti-Slavery Society. The group was largely composed of those with affiliations to the Society of Friends, however, their adherence to the Quaker faith was not blind. Some, like Richard D. Webb, left the church when he felt he could no longer openly express his views as a member (see Chapter I, note 10). Others, such as James Haughton, were brought up to follow the "system of worship" and "general conduct" of the church but were not formal members. According to Samuel Haughton, James' son, the Quaker "opinion on discipline" was one of the chief sources of dissention (1). Both Webb and Haughton had lived through the Irish rebellion of 1798 where massive sectarian slaughters occurred which no doubt added to their convictions against dogmatic religious belief (see Chapter I, note 16). Whereas the country during the 19th-century continued to be organized largely along sectarian lines, the Quakers were important for "maintaining a humanitarian and philanthropic middle-ground in Irish life" (Harrison 2). Webb, himself, stressed the importance of efforts to "remove the `distorting glasses of sectarian prejudice'"(2).

the "land of Burke and Sheridan, of Gratton and Curran, of O'Connell and Father Matthew; a land renowned in song and story for its statesmen, orators, patriots, and heroes" (136), he also feared for its survival given the country's insularity.

When Douglass first went to Ireland he was also extremely reluctant to voice any opinion about what he witnessed there with regard to the suffering. Before he left for Scotland in January of 1846 he wrote a letter to William Lloyd Garrison, which was eventually reproduced in Life and Times, explaining that he had "purposely refrained" from expressing any "views, feelings, and opinions [. . .] respecting the character and people of this land" (687-688). Douglass was hesitant because he said he wanted to speak "advisedly" and would need "experience" so that his opinions would have "an intelligent maturity" (687). Although he went on to write about the "character and condition of the people" which had "thrilled [him] with pleasure," he refused to offer any perspectives on those aspects of Irish life which "filled [him] with pain" (688). It is evident through additional letters that Douglass's reluctance stemmed from an initial lack of confidence over whether his insights on experiences not directly related to his own situation would be accurate as well as valid. Given the way that inaccurate perceptions of the black experience in the United States had denied human rights to African Americans, it is no wonder he

would be reluctant to offer opinions of others. Douglass was well aware of the capacity of interpretation, whereby the truth of a story could be corrupted if it was told to or heard by someone who was not sympathetic.

Such hesitancy is in line with the ethics of speech which Linda Alcoff discusses when writing about the ways that we often retreat from speaking of another's situation. She suggests, as was the case with Douglass, that reticence allows one "to avoid errors" (22). Alcoff, however, argues that engagement in another's experience and needs, especially with regard to political struggle, is necessary if "a new historical narrative" is to be produced (22-23). In short, advocacy on behalf of another opens up questions and puts a focus on things that might otherwise disappear. Even if "errors" are made, Alcoff writes that they often make "contributions" because the mere act of engagement fosters an environment of "constant interrogation and critical reflection" (22). Moreover, Alcoff claims that the belief that one occupies a "single" location, which is in some way "entire" is a fallacy. She writes that it is impossible to "disentangle oneself from the implicating networks between one's discursive practices and others' locations, situations, and practices" (20). For Alcoff "there is no neutral place to stand free and clear" or "decisively demarcate a boundary between one's location and all others" (20). Such thinking is even dangerous because

it allows a "current discourse" which is potentially destructive to dominate.

Eventually, Douglass, himself, would come to realize that his observations and thoughts with regard to the situation in Ireland were important and even necessary. Within a month after he expressed his initial hesitancy, he again wrote to Garrison (on February 26, 1846), feeling more comfortable about his ability to communicate reliable opinions on the less-than-favorable aspects of the Irish predicament. From what he has written, it is evident that Douglass's change of heart regarding what subjects he could publicly discuss came from a reconception of how he viewed himself. In effect, in order to speak for the Irish, he once again utilized the ability to define his own reality and shape his own place in the world. Rather than relegating his black experience solely to the condition of the American slave, he reconfigured his racial identity so that it was also part of the larger human condition. From such a position, it was possible for Douglass to express concern on a wider range of issues in addition to the injustices of slavery.

Specifically, Douglass wrote that just because he was "more closely connected and identified with one class of outraged, oppressed and enslaved people," his particular connection did not prevent him from being "insensible to the wrongs and sufferings of any part of the great family of

man" (Foner, Vol.1, 138). In fact, Douglass wrote that it was his duty, as a man, to use his "powers for the welfare of the whole human brotherhood" (138). Using rhetoric that connotes Douglass's profound sense of discursive authority, he said that he was not traveling through Ireland with his "eyes shut, ears stopped, or heart stealed" (138). The "wrongs" that he witnessed there were part of the "wrongs of the whole human family" (139). "He who really and truly feels for the American slave," Douglass wrote, "cannot steel his heart to the woes of others; and he who thinks himself an abolitionist, yet cannot enter into the wrongs of others, has yet to find a true foundation for his anti-slavery faith" (141).

In the same vein, Douglass demanded that his Irish audience be concerned about slavery, because they too were men. In a speech delivered in Cork (on October 23, 1845), he said that the responsibility to end slavery belonged to Americans as well as the Irish "not because they [were] Irish, *but because they [were] MEN* (sic). Slavery is so gigantic," Douglass asserted, "that it cannot be coped with by one nation (Blassingame, Vol.1, 60). Moreover, relying upon his understanding of the power of the speaker to assist liberation, Douglass felt that the sooner the plight of the Irish as well as his own people was made known to the world, "the sooner those wrongs [could] be reached" (Foner, Vol.1, 139). He increasingly came to believe it was necessary for

him to tell about what he had witnessed in Ireland just as he articulated what he experienced in the United States.

In the letter to Garrison, when he begins to make known the suffering of the Irish, Douglass acknowledges that Garrison, himself, utilized the Liberator as a means to denounce oppression in a variety of social arenas. Even though the paper was "established for the overthrow of the accursed slave system," wrote Douglass, "it is not insensible to the other evils that afflict and blast the happiness of mankind" (138). Likewise, during a speech on the temperance platform in Cork, Douglass, himself, told his audience that "All great reforms go together" (Blassingame, Vol.2, 58). His role as an abolitionist did not preclude him from speaking out against wrongs on many fronts.

In addition to Garrison, Douglass's associations with members of anti-slavery associations in Europe, as well as outspoken clergy, played a role in his growing confidence in the power and responsibility of his voice across a broader spectrum of injustice. While touring Ireland, Scotland, and England, Douglass established a rapport with William and Mary Howitt who devoted their lives to a number of social causes, ranging from the cessation of the slave trade to the removal of civil restrictions on Catholics. Philip S. Foner writes that Mary Howitt became one of Douglass's "closest English friends" and encouraged him to begin publishing the North Star when he returned to the United States (Vol.1,

76). And William Howitt was one of several of Douglass's admirers who delivered testimony in his honor at a "lavish soirée" held the night he left Europe for North America (Blassingame, Vol.2, 19).[29]

Like Garrison, the Howitts used the publication which they founded, Howitt's Journal of Literature and Popular Progress, to denounce frequently a variety of social ills around the world.[30] More than with other concerns,

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[29] Robert Woodman Wadsworth reports that Mary (Botham) Howitt (1799-1888) was best known for her series of children's tales and translations of the Swedish novels of Frederika Bremer and the stories of Hans Anderson. William (1792-1879), although trained to be a chemist, spent more time traveling and learning of other cultures and customs. He taught himself Latin, French, and Italian.

[30] Amice Lee explains that Howitt's Journal was prompted by the thousands of starving Irish who flocked to England and the United States "fever-stricken and half-naked--crying for bread" (175). Likewise, in the industrial towns of England there was high unemployment and economic deprivation. William, who traveled around the country, believed that ignorance caused of most of the misery. Through the periodical, the Howitt's hoped to alleviate some of the despondency. In their debut edition, William and Mary wrote that for years they had been resolved to organize a periodical for the "entertainment, the good, and advancement of the public" (1). Central to their mission, was their conviction to "advocate for just rights" and to explain to the public "their genuine duties" toward such (1). They vowed to support "the generous efforts" of those already involved in campaigns which they believed would lead to a better world, including "the cause of Peace, of Temperance, of Sanatory [sic] reform, of School for every class,--to all the efforts of Free Trade, free opinion, to abolition of obstructive Monopolies, and the recognition of those great rights which belong to every individual [. . .]" (1-2). Despite such noble ideals, the Howitts could not make them sell. Within two years, the journal went under. A friend, Ebenezer Elliot, described by Lee as a "working man's poet from Sheffield," remarked that given the destitute times, people would be more willing to pay for "amusement" then they would "instruction." In a letter to

however, the Journal consistently devoted space to the condemnation of slavery as well as the Irish famine. Such castigations appeared in a variety of forms. Portraits of prominent abolitionists and written profiles of fugitive slaves were printed along with illustrations and descriptions of the starving Irish. The Howitts, themselves, as well as other activists, such as James Haughton of the Hibernian Anti-Slavery Society, wrote opinion pieces decrying slavery at the same time that they appealed for more assistance to feed the hungry Irish. Even poetry, paying homage to figures such as William Lloyd Garrison was published alongside ballads and sonnets such as one describing an Irish funeral where before the body was interred in the ground it had the appearance of a "skeleton".[31] Such efforts positioned slavery as well as

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the Howitts, Elliot wrote, "They woo laughter to unscare them, that they may forget their perils, their wrongs, and their oppressions and play at undespair" (176). With the journal's failure, the Howitts nearly went bankrupt.

[31] In the first volume of Howitt's Journal, there appeared a series of exchanges denouncing the treatment of Frederick Douglass aboard the "Cambria" on his crossing of the Atlantic to Europe. The first writer took particular umbrage over the fact that the ship was English and that behavior on the part of a "few silly Americans" had sullied the English name ("Outrage," No.16, 31). A subsequent entry called for donations to buy Douglass's freedom so that he could "devote his whole life and energies to the Anti-Slavery cause" ("Frederick Douglass," No.17, 33). A poem to Douglass, written by an "M.C." from Bristol was also published in the first volume. Titled "Farewell to Frederick Douglass," it commemorates the day he left Europe to return to the United States--April 4, 1847, Easter Sunday (M.C., No.16, 222).

the conditions in Ireland within broader 19th-century appeals for a more humanitarian civilization. Douglass began to involve himself explicitly in such a vision.

In addition to the influence of the Howitt's, Douglass also became familiar with the writing of Reverend Sydney Smith, founder and editor of the Edinburgh Review. Smith played a crucial role in documenting the "hardships" imposed on the Irish by the British because of their allegiance to the Catholic church.[32] For Douglass, such evidence was crucial in his own reckoning of the correlation between race and religion as tools of subjugation. Smith chronicled the statutes from the 18th-century which prohibited Catholics from educating their children, marrying Protestants, owning land, holding public office as well as a host of additional interdictions (Smith, 180-183). Such laws, no doubt,

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[32] In his biography of Smith (1771-1845), Sheldon Halpern writes that the clergyman was known for his advocacy of unpopular causes including the abolition of slavery and the use of boys as chimney sweeps. Smith, however, was most known for championing the civil rights of Catholics. In 1808 he anonymously authored the Letters of Peter Plymley which advocated Catholic emancipation in Ireland. The book was one of Smith's first attacks on religious persecution by the British. He also wrote articles in the Edinburgh Review, a publication which he founded along with Henry Brougham and Francis Jeffrey, and repeatedly argued from the pulpit for repeal of restrictive laws against Catholics (65-66). Halpern notes that although Smith zealously fought for religious equality throughout the United Kingdom, he did not sympathize with "Catholic theology, liturgy, or opinion" (66). When Daniel O'Connell, at a public meeting, once introduced Smith as the "`ancient and amusing defender of our faith'", Smith interrupted and said, "`Of your *cause*, if you please; *not* of your faith'" (66). Over the years, Smith's efforts for Catholic emancipation cost him promotion within the church by the Tory government.

reminded Douglass of the slave codes in the United States which he often referred to in his lectures around Ireland.[33]

Quoting Smith at length in his own writing, Douglass brought the full weight of blame on the English for their oppressive treatment of the Catholic Irish. He believed that the Catholic population had a "terrible indictment to bring against England" which would require "ages" before freedom could be achieved "from their baneful effects" (AME Church Review 144). Just as he realized the way interpretations of blackness intruded upon and restricted his civil liberties, he also recognized the ways that the oppressive forces of the British distorted Catholicism in

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[33] The slave codes, according to Leslie H. Fishel, Jr. and Benjamin Quarles were adopted in Colonial America in order to "control" the "presumably inferior" population of black Americans. In 1712, South Carolina passed laws which became the "model for slave codes in the South" until the end of slavery (21). Like the penal laws against Irish Catholics, the slave codes, among additional prohibitions, forbid travel, schooling, church attendance, land ownership, and inter-marriage. In Ireland, Douglass often described how blacks were believed to be "inferior," yet were outlawed from bettering themselves. He related that one could be punished by death in South Carolina, Georgia, Virginia, and Louisiana if caught teaching a slave to read and write. Blassingame documents that in his Irish speeches, Douglass summarized the slave codes as they appeared in George M. Stroud, A Sketch of the Laws Relating to Slavery in the Several States of the United States of America (Philadelphia, 1827), 88-89. After recounting the codes, Douglass prodded his audience to consider the barbarity of America--"a Christian country, a democratic, a republican country, the land of the free, the home of the brave"--which waged a seven year revolution in order to declare that "all men are born free and equal" but at the same time punished someone with death if caught teaching a slave the alphabet (Vol.1, 61).

order to restrict the equality of the Irish. Given that the obstacles which prevented the Irish from achieving self-actualization largely resembled impediments facing African Americans, it is no wonder that Douglass supported "home rule" efforts in Ireland during the latter half of the 19th-century.[34] In both the essay for the AME Church Review as well as an earlier piece published in the New National Era, Douglass expressed his belief that reform in Ireland's governance would, in some measure, allow the Irish citizenry to define their own destiny and thus enable them to assert an identity much different from that advanced by the British. His opinions on Ireland were consistent with his efforts to secure a voice for African Americans so they too could contribute to the affairs of nation as well as advance more tenable portrayals of the black experience.

In the essay for the New National Era without making

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[34] The movement to establish control over domestic affairs in Ireland, began in 1870 under the leadership of Isaac Butt. Eventually, the more charismatic Charles Stewart Parnell replaced Butt and formally organized and established those in support of home rule into the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP). As the IPP grew into an influential legislative bloc, Parnell extended its popular appeal by becoming an ally of Michael Davitt, co-founder of the Irish National Land League. Although home rule legislation would fail in 1886 in the British House of Commons, the powerful association between Parnell and Davitt would lead to the 1881 Land Act, which established arbitration courts, enabling the protection of tenant's interests, as well as the 1885 and 1903 Land Acts which allowed tenants to buy land on more liberal terms. During this period, Celtic culture was revived, whereby interest in the Irish language, literature, and Gaelic athletics were kindled (Killeen 56-61).

reference to the home rule movement, which was still in its infancy, Douglass wrote that the right to elect one's governmental representatives was "one of the principle rights of people" (267). The piece was prompted when the royal family visited Dublin and were greeted with hisses. Douglass questioned how any other reaction could be possible given that British royalty had "never done the least thing" to deserve the "joy," "affection," and "sympathies" of the Irish (266). On the contrary, the history of British rule, Douglass argued, above "all countries" advanced "the most illiberal, selfish, and treacherous governments" which enforced "unjust" laws with "merciless rigor" (267). Irish Catholics, he wrote, were made the "Pariahs of society" and were subject to "horrid laws" which were conceived in the "spirit of cruelty, bigotry, and religious persecution" (269). Later, when home rule legislation was gaining momentum, Douglass would advance his support in the AME Church Review.[35] Compatible with ideology that he

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[35] Andrew J. Chambers, a minister in the AME Church, also advocated home rule for Ireland in the AME Church Review. In part, he felt that the absence of self-governance in Ireland was unwarranted given the contributions of the Irish to civilization. Of particular relevance to Chambers was Ireland's role in the preservation of Christianity during the 5th and 6th centuries. "Ireland illumined the world with the hope of a revival of letters at a period pregnant with elements of their destruction," he wrote, "and long before the star of England flamed in the firmament of nations" (215). Like Douglass, Chambers also believed that, ultimately, the Irish, like all other peoples had a "God-given right to govern themselves without England's let or hindrance" (218).

formulated earlier in terms of his own right to speak for himself, Douglass said, "I am for fair play for the Irishman [sic], the negro, the Chinaman, and for all men of whatever country or clime, and for allowing them to work out their own destiny without outside interference (145). For Douglass, there was no right greater than the power to define and determine one's own fate.

3. Telling the Half that Had Not Been Told

Alcoholism compounded the social deterioration in Ireland caused by the famine. For example, a published report in the Cork Constitution in 1846 demonstrated that the number of those arrested in Cork city alone for drunkenness increased three-fold over the famine years. In 1841, 2,087 persons were incarcerated in the city jail while in 1846 the total jumped to 6,622 by April (Kerrigan, Father Mathew, 169). In seeking to explain the sharp surge, Colm Kerrigan writes that the growing devastation caused by crop failure demanded that more time and energy be devoted to food relief efforts rather than the temperance campaign which had been one of the more significant reform movements in Ireland prior to the potato blight. Even Father Theobald Mathew, known throughout Ireland as the "Apostle of Temperance," had to spend more and more time finding ways to feed the hungry as conditions worsened.[36] At one stage, he

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[36] Blassingame writes that Father Mathew (1790-1856) was born in County Tipperary and became a Franciscan friar of the Capuchin Order. After his ordination he was "assigned to a mission in Cork" where he founded the "Total Abstinence Society" and was popular because of his "charitable activities in behalf of the Catholic poor." It is believed Father Mathew "converted six million" people to "teetotalism" (55). Despite such success, Elizabeth Malcolm reports that the Irish Catholic church did not "whole-heartedly" support Father Matthew's campaign. Demonstrating the sectarian nature of Irish society, Malcolm writes that part of the church's disapproval came from the "involvement of protestants" in the temperance movement. Additional reasons include the fact that Father Mathew's pledge was a life-long commitment, he bought and sold "temperance medals"

even "turned his own home into a soup kitchen" and tried to establish a "public bakery" (171). Despite such initiatives, mortality rates caused by hunger continued to rise as did the numbers of those who turned to whiskey for relief from their misery.

When Douglass arrived in Ireland, he too noticed the affects of alcoholism on the country. In a letter to Garrison (of February 26, 1846), he wrote that one of the most "*immediate*" [sic] causes of extreme poverty endured by the Irish was "the fact" that most "beggars" drank whiskey. He described that within three days of his arrival in Dublin, he came upon a man whose nose and part of his face had been torn off when a hog attacked him while he lay in a gutter in a drunken stupor (Foner, Vol.1, 141). Given his experiences as a slave, Douglass needed little explanation of the relationship between alcohol and oppression. In his Narrative he recounts how slave holders would often "make bets on their slaves, as to who [could] drink the most whiskey without getting drunk" (67). Through such a game, the slave holder succeeded in "getting whole multitudes to drink in excess" (67). The slave holder would then convince his slaves that it was better to be held in bondage by a man than by "rum." When the slave would awaken from a night of drunken debauchery he would gladly "march to the field" to

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as well as often ignored directives from the church hierarchy (1).

work, "rather glad to go [. . .] back to the arms of slavery" (67). The alcohol abuse which Douglass witnessed among African Americans allowed him to quickly recognize the analogous circumstances afflicting the Irish when he arrived in Ireland.[37]

Another demonstration of the way that Douglass saw the two cultures intersecting occurred when he heard the songs and music of the Irish. In My Bondage and My Freedom he

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[37] Douglass's awareness of the problems with drink in Ireland can also be explained by the friendship he established during his tour of Ireland with Father Theobald Mathew. The two often shared the speaker's podium and during such occasions, it was custom for the priest to administer "the pledge" to members of the audience who vowed to abstain from drinking. To give an idea of the size of Father Mathew's following, Douglass wrote to Garrison that half of Cork city's population of 100 thousand, had taken the pledge (Foner, Vol. 5, 9). So enamored was Douglass by the priest that on October 22, 1845 he allowed Father Mathew to administer the pledge to him. The act did as much to solidify their friendship as it did to position Douglass within the company of the ordinary Irish citizen. It is important to note that although Douglass had little problem seeing the relationship between temperance, slavery, and the Irish famine, the same cannot be said of Father Mathew. While on a visit to the United States in 1849 to thank Americans for their assistance during the famine, the priest refused an invitation from William Lloyd Garrison to travel to Worcester, Massachusetts for a commemoration of the end of slavery in the West Indies. In fact, according to Colm Kerrigan, Father Mathew told Garrison that although he did not support slavery, "he did not know if there was anything in the scripture against it" (106). When Douglass learned of Father Mathew's remarks as well as his refusal to condemn slavery, he said he felt "`grieved, humbled and mortified'" that the priest had "`deserted [his] principles, abandoned the cause and linked [himself] with the oppressors and haters of liberty, finding it much easier to sail with the breeze, than to maintain [his] integrity'" (111). Douglass later wrote that it was his "`duty to expose and denounce'" Father Mathew (111).

recollected that the "wailing notes" of Ireland resembled the "plaintive" sounds of his own people whose music was of the "grief and sorrow" they endured as slaves. "I have never heard any songs like those anywhere," wrote Douglass, "except when in Ireland" (184). Later in Life and Times he would expand his sentiments to read, "Nowhere outside of dear old Ireland, in the days of want and famine, have I heard sounds so mournful" (502). Because of slavery as well as what he saw in Ireland, Douglass maintained throughout his life that music and song were not as necessarily indicative of happiness as often believed. For the oppressed, they could be signifiers of the ways they were dehumanized and exploited.

More than with any other population, Douglass often equated the circumstances surrounding the indigenous Irish with those that he experienced as an African American. In the essay for the AME Church Review, he wrote, "Men learn what is wisest and best by comparison of one thing with another [. . .] (136). By acknowledging the similarities between African Americans and the Irish, however, Douglass did not dismiss their national, cultural, and racial differences. Instead, he used the similarities as well as distinctions as a means to give further legitimacy and power to their individual emancipatory interests. Douglass's writing about Ireland is also remarkable because it provides moving first-hand testimony of the catastrophic toll that

the famine had on the Irish poor.

In one of his first letters to Garrison about conditions in Ireland, he mentions that prior to seeing the country for himself he believed that the accounts of "misery and wretchedness of the Irish people," reported in American newspapers, were exaggerated. Yet, on arriving in Ireland, and witnessing the "painful exhibitions of human misery, which meet the eye of a stranger almost at every step," he was convinced that "the half [had] not been told" (Foner, Vol.1, 139). Most sobering for Douglass was his visit to the "huts" near Dublin where a great number of the poor lived. He described the occasion in careful detail, writing:

> [. . .] of all places to witness human misery, ignorance, degradation, filth and wretchedness, an Irish hut is pre-eminent. It seems to be constructed to promote the very reverse of every thing like domestic comfort. [. . .] Four mud walls about six feet high, occupying a space of ground about ten feet square, covered or thatched with straw--a mud chimney at one end, reaching about a foot above the roof--without apartments or divisions of any kind--without floor, without windows, and sometimes without a chimney--a piece of pine board laid on the top of a box or an old chest--a pile of straw covered with dirty

> garments, which it would puzzle any one to determine the original part of any one of them--a picture representing the crucifixion of Christ, pasted on the most conspicuous place on the wall--a few broken dishes stuck up in a corner--an iron pot, or the half of an iron pot, in one corner of the chimney--a little peat in the fireplace, aggravating one occasionally with a glimpse of fire, but sending out very little heat--a man and his wife and five children, and a pig. In front of the door-way, and within a step of it, is a hole three or four feet deep, and ten or twelve feet in circumference; into this hole all the filth and dirt of the hut are put, for careful preservation. This is frequently covered with a green scum, which at times stands in bubbles, as decomposition goes on. Here you have an Irish hut or cabin, such as millions of the people of Ireland live in. And some live in worse than these. Men and women, married and single, old and young, lie down together, in much the same degradation as the American slaves. (140-141)

Of the nearly 16 months that Douglass spent in Europe, his descriptions of Ireland represent the rare occasions where he deviated, in lasting, public rhetorical modes, from his immediate agenda advocating the end of slavery. On

several occasions he even expressed the difficulty he felt advancing the abolition cause given that the circumstances in Ireland were so extremely destitute. In the AME Church Review Douglass said that he found "so much misery" in Ireland that he wondered how he could ask his audiences there "who have so many wrongs to redress, and so much suffering to relieve at home, to look after wrongs and oppressions" in the United States (140). He wrote to Garrison that of the six weeks he spent in Dublin, he often dreaded to leave the house because the exhibitions of "human misery" were so painful (Foner, Vol.1, 139). Douglass then described what he frequently witnessed as he walked about the city.

> The Streets were almost literally alive with beggars, displaying the greatest wretchedness--some of them mere stumps of men, without feet, without legs, without hands, without arms--and others still more horribly deformed, with crooked limbs, down upon their hands and knees, their feet lapped around each other, and laid upon their backs, pressing their way through the muddy streets and merciless crowd, casting sad looks to the right and left, in the hope of catching the eye of a passing stranger--the citizens generally having set their faces against giving to beggars. I have had more than a dozen around me at one

> time, men, women, and children, all telling a tale of woe which would move any but a heart of iron. Women, barefooted and bareheaded, and only covered by rags which seemed to be held together by the very dirt and filth with which they were covered--many of these had infants in their arms, whose emaciated forms, sunken eyes and pallid cheeks, told too plainly that they had nursed till they had nursed in vain. (139-140).

Perhaps more poignant than the descriptions, themselves, was how much of the world that he visited in Ireland reminded him of the world he left behind in the United States. The day he landed in Dublin, Douglass addressed a crowd of "more than 5,000 common people of Ireland." When he recalled the moment nine years later, in a commencement address delivered as Western Reserve College, he said, "Never did human faces tell a sadder tale" (Blassingame, Vol.2, 520-521). What struck Douglass was how oppression manifested itself in the way the Irish carried themselves. He explained:

> The open, uneducated mouth--the long, gaunt arm--the badly formed foot and ankle--the shuffling gait--the retreating forehead and vacant expression--and their petty quarrels and fights--all reminded me of the plantation, and my own cruelly abused people. (521)

The similarity was so strong, Douglass felt all the Irish lacked was "a black skin and wooly hair, to complete their likeness to the plantation Negro" (521). He did not make such comparisons lightly nor did he compress the experience of the Irish and African American into a totally unified composite. By drawing connections between the two populations, Douglass cast a wide net, demonstrating the variety of ways that oppression can exist.

In contrast, when others would try to make a thorough parallelism between the subjugation of the Irish and that of African Americans, Douglass would often call for a more rigorous analysis which allowed for differences between the populations to be maintained. During one such occasion in Belfast, when his audience told him that the Irish were slaves just as his "countrymen" were in America, he specifically asked for more consideration to be given to the reality of slavery. "If people here are tyrannized over, they ought to be relieved from oppression," he said, "but let us inquire what slavery really is and see if you are in that state" (Blassingame, Vol.1, 93). Douglass then went on to catalog the particular conditions which evoked a more precise understanding of slavery. It is not that which "took away any one right or property in man" (93). Instead, Douglass said slavery "unmans man, takes him from himself, dooms him as a degraded thing [. . .] to be [. . .] sold at the will of his master" (93). He then asked his audience,

"Had they anything like this in Ireland?" Within seconds, Douglass, himself, replied, "Ah, no!" while at the same time he thanked God that he was not a slave there (93-94). With "loud cries of `Hear, hear'" and "long-continued applause," the audience obviously agreed with his wishes that the conditions in Ireland be described with more accuracy, which allowed for the condemnation of oppression, yet did not reduce "slavery" to a universal designation, describing all forms of injustice carried out in a variety of social contexts.

Douglass's cautionary advice to his Irish audience and its receptive response exemplifies what Linda Alcoff describes as the constructive ways that the "ritual of speaking" can transpire. Central to the productivity of a conversation is the ability of the participants to "remain open to criticism and to attempt actively, attentively, and sensitively to `hear' (understand) the criticism" (26). She encourages participants to be mindful of the context and location from which they speak or listen as well as the words and language they use. The discourse, in other words, becomes meaningful because all of the factors which are utilized to carry it out are interrogated and engaged. When Douglass asked his audience to think about what slavery really meant, he advanced a plane of speech that was much more animated and significant than what conventionally transpired from the speaker's podium.

Douglass was also particularly wary of the way that comparisons between African Americans and the Irish could be appropriated to serve purposes that were counter-productive to liberation. In one of his first letters to Garrison from Ireland, he balked at Americans who negated assistance to African Americans, claiming instead they were aiding the Irish who were more needy. After witnessing the rampant poverty in Ireland, Douglass realized that such assertions were not true and were made out of a lack of responsibility to justice. He wrote that "many have harped upon the wrongs of Irishmen, while in truth they care no more about Irishmen, or the wrongs of Irishmen, than they care about the whipped, gagged and thumb-screwed slave" (Foner, Vol.1, 139). Douglass was convinced that given half a chance, Americans would "willingly sell on the auction-block an Irishman, if it were popular to do so, as an African" (139). Rather than behaving out of any sense of moral duty, false claims of benevolence were made from indifference.

Slave holders in the United States also placed the suffering of the Irish in a kind of competitive one-ups-man-ship against African Americans in order to secure their own racist interests. In My Bondage and My Freedom, Douglass scolds those who sought to justify slavery by measuring pain. He wrote:

> Far be it from me to underrate the sufferings of the Irish people. They have been long oppressed;

> and the same heart that prompts me to plead the cause of the American bondman, makes it impossible for me not to sympathize with the oppressed of all lands. Yet I must say that there is no analogy between the two cases. The Irishman is poor, but he is not a slave. He may be in rags, but he is not a slave. He is still the master of his own body, [. . .] . The Irishman has not only the liberty to emigrate from his country, but he has liberty at home. He can write, and speak, and cooperate for the attainment of his rights and the redress of his wrongs. (422-423)

As usual, Douglass always took into account the speaker and the purpose of a statement before he granted it any credence. Under no circumstances did slavery's advocates ever hold any weight with him.

Just because Douglass did not see the conditions of African Americans and the Irish as totally alike, did not mean that he dismissed the connections they did possess with one another. In some ways, however, differences between the two communities were more valuable to his abolition agenda than were similarities because they demonstrated that oppression could permeate a population regardless of its race, nationality, or culture. Therefore, many more were vulnerable to the forces of oppression and thus were potential allies of the enslaved. The distinctions between

African Americans and the Irish demonstrated that oppression could manifest itself in a number of ways, depending on what factors were available to usurp and corrupt. Thus, Douglass worked hard to establish alliances between those who were different from him such as the Irish. Diversity among those willing to fight against injustice, could only lead to a more profound realization of freedom. Given that the Irish were mostly white and African Americans were black, they illustrated that oppression was not restricted to specific races. By combining forces to combat the ways they were condemned, more of the means which were used to subjugate could be addressed.

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III

"Smoked Irish" and "Not-Yet Whites"

Illustrations and Ephemera

A. "This is a White Man's Government" by Thomas Nast in Harper's Weekly Journal of Civilization (n.v (n.n.), September 5, 1868): 1. Reproduced as illustration number 27 in Morton Keller's The Art and Politics of Thomas Nast (New York: Oxford UP, 1968).

"Which Color is to be Tabooed Next" by Thomas Nast in Harper's Weekly Journal of Civilization (n.v.(n.n.), March 25, 1872): Reproduced as illustration number 144 in Morton Keller's The Art and Politics of Thomas Nast (New York: Oxford UP, 1968).

B. "Pat and Mike, the Jew, the Negro," originally appeared in the Southern Workman (Vol.28 (6), May 1899). Reproduced in Arthur Huff Fauset's "Negro Tales from the South," Journal of American Folklore (Vol.40 (157) July-September 1927): 267.

"Mike and Pat" in "The Double Irish Act" from Joe Laurie, Jr's. Vaudeville: From the Honkey Tonks to the Palace (Port Washington, N.Y: Kennikat, 1952): 452.

"The Toad Frog" from A.M. Bacon and E.C. Parsons' "Folk-Lore from Elizabeth City County, Va." Journal of American Folk-Lore (Vol.35 (137) July-September 1922): 305.

C. Pat Rooney (photograph) reproduced from the Billy Rose Theatre Collection, New York Public Library at Lincoln Center, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations in Robert W. Snyder's The Voice of the City Vaudeville and Popular Culture in New York (New York: Oxford UP, 1989): n.p.

Joseph Weber and Louis Fields (photograph) reproduced from the Billy Rose Theatre Collection, New York Public Library at Lincoln Center, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations in Robert W. Snyder's The Voice of the City Vaudeville and Popular Culture in New York (New York: Oxford UP, 1989): n.p.

"Old Dan Tucker" (illustration) from the sheet music cover (New York: J.F. Atwill, 1848) reproduced in Robert L. Wright's Irish Emigrant Ballads and Songs (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green UP, 1975) 653-- (lyrics and score) from Hans Nathan's Dan Emmett and the Rise of Early Negro Minstrelsy (Norman, Oklahoma: U of Oklahoma P, 1962): 454-456.

September 5, 1868

"This Is a White Man's Government."

"We regard the Reconstruction Acts (so called) of Congress as usurpations, and unconstitutional, revolutionary, and void."—*Democratic Platform.*

March 25, 1872

Which Color Is To Be Tabooed Next?

FRITZ (to Pat). "If the Yankee Congress can keep the *yellow* man out, what is to hinder them from calling us *green* and keeping us out too?"

Pat an' Mike seen a man with a shotgun on his shoulder in the woods, an' they asked him what was that he had. He told' em dat was a gun. So the Irishman said, "A gun I think you say gun, didn't you? I never have heard of a gun. What do you do with it?" So de colored man said, " I shoot game wid it." The Irishman say, "Faith, Mike, what do you call game?" He said, "Birds or anything like that." So de colored man shot a bird an' showed what he was talking about, an' den dey wanted to buy de gun. Pat said, "How much you want fo' de gun?" De colored man said, "One hundred dollars." So each one paid fifty dollars apiece an' got it. So one taken de gun an' de other one walk behind huntin' the game. So dey got wha' some grasshoppers flew on his chest. Mike said, "I would shoot dem off," but he beckoned to Pat wid his fingers. Mike said, "Pat, I'm gonna shoot." So Mike shot an' killed de grasshopper an' Pat too. But he found de thigh of de grasshopper an' hung him on his shoulder an' left, an' I left too.

Informant Unidentified
--Journal of American Folklore (1927)

Now I'm a man can shatand a joak, but whin I go into a barbershop on a Sunday mornin and the Nagur barber pins a newspaper under my chin an hands me a towel to read, it's goin a little too fur.

"Mike and Pat"
--"The Double Irish Act"

An Irishman was going along the road, and he met a colored man. The colored man asked him had he ever seen a snake. "Faith, I saw one just now coming along the road," said the Irishman; "but it was hopping so fast, and it didn't have any tail." It was only a toad-frog he had seen.

W.T. Anderson, Informant
--Journal of American Folklore (1922)

Old Dan Tucker

(Dan D. Emmit, 1843)

Come to town de udder night,
I hear de noise dan saw de fight.
De watchman was a runnin roun,
Cryin Old Dan Tucker's come to town.

So get out de way!
Get out de way!
Get out de way! Old Dan Tucker,
Your too late to come to supper.

Tucker is a nice old man,
He use to ride our darby ram;
He sent him whizzen down de hill,
If he hadn't got up he'd lay dar still.

So get out de way!
Get out de way!
Get out de way! Old Dan Tucker,
Your too late to come to supper.

Here's my razor in good order
Magnum bonum__jis hab bought 'er;
Sheep shell oats, Tucker shell de corn,
I'll shave you soon as de water get warm.

So get out de way!
Get out de way!
Get out de way! Old Dan Tucker,
Your too late to come to supper.

Ole Dan Tucker an I got drunk,
He fell in de fire an kick up a chunk,
De charcoal got inside he shoe
Lor bless you honey how de ashes flew.

So get out de way!
Get out de way!
Get out de way! Old Dan Tucker,
Your too late to come to supper.

Down de road foremost de stump,
Massa make me work de pump!
I pump so har I broke de sucker,
Dar was work for old Dan Tucker.

So get out de way!
Get out de way!
Get out de way! Old Dan Tucker,
Your too late to come to supper.

I went to town to buy some goods
I lost myself in a piece of woods,
De night was dark I had to suffer,
It froze de heel of Daniel Tucker.

So get out de way!
Get out de way!
Get out de way! Old Dan Tucker.
Your too late to come to supper.

Tucker was a hardened sinner,
He never said his grace at dinner;
De old sow squeal, de pig did squall
He 'hole hog wid de tail and all.

So get out de way!
Get out de way!
Get out de way! Old Dan Tucker.
Your too late to come to supper.

OLD DAN TUCKER.

WRITTEN AND ARRANGED
FOR THE
PIANO FORTE
BY
DAN. TUCKER, Jr.

Dan Tucker Jr.

NEW YORK.

Published at ATWILL'S. 201 Broadway.
New Orleans CHARLES HORST 18 St. Charles Street

Price 25 Cts nett.

Old Dan Tucker[1]

8va

[Fine]

I Come to town de ud-der night, I hear de noise an saw de fight. De watch-man was a run-nin roun, cry-in

Gran' Chorus

Old Dan Tuck-er's come to town. So get out de way! get out de way! get out de way!

Old Dan Tuck-er your too late to come to sup-per.

repeat from 𝄋

III

"Smoked Irish" and "Not-Yet Whites"[38]

> I have often been tauntingly asked, `Why do you not labour for the slaves of your own country?' I answer, `I have done so, and it was a strong inducement to bring me to Ireland. I saw that most of your nation who land upon our shores are not only destitute, but ignorant of letters, and crouching and servile till they get power, and in all these lineaments bear a good comparison with our slaves. And I could not but ask, What but oppression could produce this similitude? And painful as is the fact, yet it must be told of the Irish in America, that too many strengthen the hands of the avaricious oppressor, and help him to bind the chains tighter about the poor black man. I came to entreat you to show your people a better way.
>
> Asenath Nicholson[39]

1.) "Jim Crow," Zip Coon," "Old Dan Tucker" and the Wearing of the Green

When Frederick Douglass was returned to Baltimore in 1836 after the botched escape attempt while working for William Freeland, Hugh Auld hired him out as an "apprentice calker" in William Gardner's shipyard. For Douglass, the experience was memorable not because he learned a valued trade, but because he was badly beaten by his co-workers.

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[38] The title is derived from David Roediger, Towards the Abolition of Whiteness, (184-85).

[39] The epigraph is from Asenath Nicholson, The Bible in Ireland (Ireland's Welcome to the Stranger) (270-271) which is also paraphrased in Colm Kerrigan's "Irish Temperance and US Anti-Slavery: Father Mathew and the Abolitionists" (109). Seamus Deane documents that Nicholson was born in Vermont and traveled to Ireland twice for the purpose of "personally investigating the condition of the poor" (133). Her writing about her trips provides an eyewitness account of the Irish famine.

When he wrote of the incident in all three autobiographies, Douglass explained how white carpenters worked alongside black carpenters, who were mostly free, without incident until one day whites refused to continue. They contended that if the company kept hiring blacks, they would soon occupy most of the jobs and displace white workers. Although Douglass was neither a carpenter nor free, eventually his fellow apprentices began to taunt and threaten him.

In the Narrative, Douglass tells how the men would talk about "`niggers'" taking over the country and that they should all be killed (81). Along with continual heckling, Douglass also endured an occasional blow and though he could defend himself one-on-one, eventually a gang attacked him "armed with sticks, stones, and heavy handspikes" (81). While surrounded on all sides, one worker rammed a spike into Douglass's head. When he fell to the ground in pain, another worker kicked him in the face full force, the toe of a heavy boot landing in his left eye, which Douglass said seemed to have "burst" (81). No one came to his defense. Instead, those not directly involved in the brawl began shouting, "`Kill the damned nigger! Kill him! Kill him! He struck a white person" (81-82). Fearing for his life, Douglass fled to the Aulds. It was not uncommon for a mob to lynch a black man for striking a white man. When Auld saw Douglass's "horribly mangled" condition, he immediately

sought retribution, however, nothing could be done because no white person would corroborate Douglass's story and his word as a black man was useless.

In his study of Douglass's adolescence, Dickson J. Preston provides more background to the shipyard incident, explaining that when Douglass was beaten by his co-workers, Maryland law prohibited any action against whites who were accused of wrong doing by blacks.[40] In the end, Auld was forced to find a new position for Douglass in another shipyard (144-145). Preston also documents that the majority of men involved in the shipyard brawl were Irish immigrants who "poured" into Baltimore "by the thousands" during the early 1800's, attracted by construction jobs on the railroads and canals as well as in the shipyards (142). Indeed, Noel Ignatiev confirms that what transpired in Gardner's shipyard was part of a period of labor unrest involving the Irish in Baltimore as well as other eastern cities (93-94). Although Ignatiev does not specifically deal with the circumstances involving Douglass, he does demonstrate that the Irish frequently instigated job actions in order to gain control (along with better working

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[40] In his Narrative, Douglass, himself, recounts how crimes against blacks went unnoticed. He writes that "killing a slave or any colored person, in Talbot County, Maryland, is not treated as a crime, either by the courts or the community" (31). He then goes on to tell of a Mr. Thomas Lanman, of St. Michael's, who frequently boasted of his murder of two slaves, one with a hatchet. Lanman felt if others "would do as much as he had done" the country would "be relieved of `the d____d niggers'" (31).

conditions) of the nation's shipyards, coal mines, docks, and railways.

Historians such as Ignatiev and David Roediger have also documented that altercations such as the one involving Douglass typifies a long-standing fractious association between Irish and African Americans.[41] As newly-emigrated Irish sought to gain a foothold in their adopted country, they consistently worked to prevent African Americans from acquiring the same. In addition to instigating labor disputes aimed at restricting the work initiatives of blacks, the Irish resisted efforts to end slavery and, after the war, tried to limit the involvement of African Americans in the democratic practices of the nation, including the right to hold public office, vote, and attend public school. Yet Ignatiev argues that the subjugation of African Americans by the Irish was not simply the result of one group standing on another in order to gain the benefits of

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[41] David J. Hellwig recounts an experience that Frederick Douglass's son, Charles R. Douglass, had with the Irish near the time of the 1863 New York City draft riot which illustrates an advancement in power relations not afforded the senior Douglass in Gardner's shipyard. Hellwig quotes from a letter that Charles wrote to his father about a battle during the Civil War when General Meade's battalion defeated a Confederate regiment. The younger Douglass tells of relating his praise of Meade in public when an Irish man confronted him, called him a "black nigger," and raised his "doubled up" fists to Douglass's face (41). The two started fighting, however, a policeman broke in and arrested the Irish man which made the other Irish in the crowd hostile toward Charles. Yet the young Douglass said the crowd's contentiousness made him feel even better and as though he could "whip a dozen Irish." He also said that he would shoot the next Irish man to strike him (41).

privilege (69). The Irish merely added to the ranks of white oppressors and "made it possible to maintain slavery" (69). In effect, when they emigrated to the United States, the Irish became a valuable component to a well-established racist system.

As Ignatiev contends, however, the white skin of the Irish did not necessarily "guarantee their admission" to the white race. "[T]hey had to earn it" (59). As they sought to improve their social standing in American society, they vehemently re-enacted the behavior of their own oppressors. The Irish, as Ignatiev demonstrates, "became white"--that is they worked toward gaining the rights and privileges accorded "white skin" which was based for a time upon their own inferior status as well as that of blacks. To be certain, the task of "becoming white" was not solely relegated to the Irish. The challenge to find ways to assimilate into a hierarchical structure dominated by the values accorded whiteness was part of the transformation process for other immigrant groups, such as Jews and Italians, as they became Americans.[42] Recently, however, as whiteness has been increasingly examined as a racial construct that has more to do with the relationship of power

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[42] In the histories of many immigrant families, it is not uncommon to find that surnames were changed to sound less ethnic and religious denominations were kept secret or abandoned all-together as a means to attain the status of whiteness and make the passage into American society less frictional.

and dominance in any given community than with biology or nature, the Irish have figured as the focal group of such investigations.

In at least four book-length studies, including investigations by Richard Williams and Theodore Allen as well as those previously mentioned by Ignatiev and Roediger, the persistent and overt efforts by the Irish to fit into the governing structure of the United States have been useful in illustrating the way that whiteness as a race, to cite Roediger, was assigned meaning in "concrete historical and social contexts" that lent it supremacy. The figuring of "whiteness" as a sign of power that one adheres to or aspires to out of choice, rather than as a cultural or ethnic phenomenon that one belongs to as an accident of birth, is explained by the very size of the Irish population which "became white." Moreover, because the Irish, to this day, are largely constituted by white skin, the necessity that they "become white" once they arrived brings clarity to the use of whiteness to signify political rank.

Ironically, throughout most of the 19th-century and early part of the 20th-century, the Irish, more than any other community, were often characterized in the same pejorative light as African Americans. In turn, blacks were frequently equated with the Irish as a form of social insult. Roediger writes of how African Americans were often referred to as "`smoked Irishmen'" while the Irish, because

of their Catholicism, were classified as one of the "not-yet-white" ethnicities or, alternately, "niggers turned inside out" (184). Beyond the nomenclature of the 19th-century, the similitudes drawn between African Americans and the Irish also manifested themselves in bogus theories which claimed the two were an inferior species. A host of quasi-scientists used physical features to determine one's place in the hierarchy. Skulls and jaw bones were measured to establish a connection between blacks and the Irish which, in turn, was used to explain their "primitive" personalities and relegate them to a subordinate social standing. Even an "index of nigrescence" was used to calculate the relationship between the two cultures (Livingston 55). Such systems of classification were useful in supporting racist misconceptions and fueling social operatives which oppressed both communities.

National magazines, such as Harper's Weekly, became a powerful tool in propagating theories of black and Irish inferiority. Illustrations frequently depicted the anatomical association between the two cultures (see ephemera at the beginning of Chapter I), insinuating their mediocrity and ignorance. The drawings of Thomas Nast, in particular, often figured African Americans and the Irish in interchangeable positions as he commented on the political and social controversies of the era. When Nast addressed voting rights for newly-freed blacks and recently-arrived

emigrants, the former was used to characterize ignorance in the South while the Irish represented ignorance in the North (see ephemera at the beginning of Chapter I). Likewise, when Nast depicted the political corruption during Reconstruction, he also used caricatures of blacks and the Irish to represent the vulnerable and gullible constituencies of both the South and the North, respectively (see ephemera at the beginning of Chapter II).

Although Nast is often though of as someone who criticized and satirized American racism, it is also possible to see the ways he contributed to misconceptions regarding black/Irish inferiority.[43] For instance, Nast rarely cast African Americans in positions where they exuded a sense of independence and self-empowerment even though he was committed to their attainment of equal rights. To be certain, some of Nast's drawings lent blacks an air of dignity that was seldom found in white portrayals which garnered mass appeal. Yet he frequently depicted them as recipients of white benevolence, even when he was not trying to be ironic, reinforcing beliefs that African Americans were helpless. Although Nast was far more willing than some

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[43] Nast's renderings of the Civil War, which brought him widespread popular attention, are supposed to reflect the influence of French artist Honoré Daumier whose drawings were committed as much to "social purpose" as they were to aesthetics (Keller, 5). Many felt that because Nast cast Emancipation as a just and nobel cause, worthy of combat, his drawings lent the war its moral purpose. Given Harper's circulation as well as Nast's talent, Lincoln called him the Union's greatest "recruiting agent" (13).

of his more conservative countrymen to advance the rights of African Americans, it does not mean his illustrations were void of paternalistic notions. Moreover, when Nast figured African Americans alongside the Irish, he often employed stereotypes connected to both communities in order to make his point more efficiently. Blacks in these depictions are often bare-footed and wear tattered clothing. In "The Ignorant Vote" (see ephemera at the beginning of Chapter One) he even portrays the African American wearing a straw hat, a sign which usually connoted the "happy darky." Nast may have been trying to instigate Irish ire by connecting their fight for voting rights with that of newly-emancipated blacks, however, he relied upon well-worn conceptions of both groups which ultimately promoted assumptions regarding their incompetence.

Specific attention must also be paid to Nast's vicious attacks on the Irish. If his illustrations of African Americans can be read at times to promote their humanity, his characterizations of the Irish were never sympathetic. He consistently satirized them, depicting newly-arrived immigrants with simian features and exaggerated clothing such as hob-nailed boots, swallow-tailed coats, and rag-tagged knickers, resembling fantastic leprechauns. According to Morton Keller, Nast's aversion to the Irish can be explained by his resentment of their resistance to "Protestant culture" as well as their "Negrophobia" (39).

Yet Nast, with his fear of "rising Irish and Catholic power" demonstrated his own xenophobia. Irish influence on tenants regarding the separation of church and state made Nast particularly anxious especially when public funds were occasionally doled out to Catholic schools and charities (160-161). Such apprehensions, however, were inconsistent since he did not express similar disapproval over the compulsory practice of reciting passages from the King James Bible in public schools. Nast's anti-Irish Catholic cartoons were considered the most virulent ever published in America. Keller writes that they exhibited "unusual power and passion" (162). They also survive as material evidence which demonstrates the subordinate standing of the Irish throughout most of the 19th-century.

Nast's antipathy toward the Irish also reflects the influence of English graphic artists on his work, particularly those who published their illustrations in Punch and continually portrayed the Irish as apes throughout the 19th-century. Ken Livingstone also reports that poems and satiric pieces in Punch cast both Africans and the Irish as savages, the result of their proported connection to monkeys rather than humans. A poem published in 1848 read: "Six-foot Paddy, are you no bigger--/ you whom cozening friars dish--/ Mentally, than the poorest nigger/ Grovelling before fetish?/ You to Sambo I compare/ Under superstitions rule/ Prostrate like an abject fool" (45). Likewise, when

the London Zoo acquired their first gorilla in 1860, a Punch satirist wrote that the Irish as a species were the "missing link" between the "gorilla and the Negro." Such a "creature" could be seen in the "lowest districts of London and Liverpool" (60-61). Given that Nast derived some of his artistic inclinations from Punch, it is no wonder his renderings of the Irish would be equally derogatory and that he would occasionally feel the need to depict African Americans in the same light.

Bolstering Nast's portrayals, were minstrel caricatures, later replaced by vaudeville personalities, which also circulated throughout the country and similarly acted out an inferred relationship between African Americans and the Irish as well as advanced notions of their stupidity. Figures such as "Jim Crow," "Zip Coon," and "Old Dan Tucker" differ from Nast's renderings, however, in that they evoke the cultural and physiological markings equated with both black and Irish communities simultaneously (see ephemera at the beginning of Chapters I, II, and III).[44]

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[44] Hans Nathan explains that during the 19th-century two types of "Negro impersonations crystallized" (50). One was based on stereotypes from Southern plantations, exemplified by the character "Jim Crow," depicted as "uncouth, ragged, and jolly" (50). "Jim Crow" was the creation of actor Thomas D. Rice, who "borrowed the gestures and steps of his act as well as the tune and words of its refrain from a colored groom in a stable in a midwestern town" where Rice was a member of a theatrical company (50, 52). "Zip Coon" exemplifies the other type who was supposed to represent a "Broadway swell" (57). The actual name "Zip Coon" is derived from raccoon meat which was believed to be a delicacy among Southern blacks (57).

Although all three personalities were depicted as black, they sported garb usually associated with the Irish. Shamrocks on their waistcoats and pipes tucked in the brim bands of their hats further enhanced the connection. Even the songs they sang, which were given the same names as the characters, were mixtures of rhythms from the music of slaves and Irish jigs and reels, explaining why collections of Irish-American and African-American music claim that the origins of many minstrel tunes emanated from both traditions.[45]

The existence of merged African-American and Irish personas helps to demonstrate an amalgamation of culture during the 19th-century, despite common theories which have allocated each racial and ethnic group distinct locations in the organization of American society. Furthermore, one can argue, to rely on concepts from the work of Paul Gilroy, figures which reflect both African American and Irish

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[45] Indeed, the black/Irish amalgamation can be found in songs such as "Jim Crow" which, in addition to its obvious black rudiments, contains elements from the Irish folk tune "I Wish the Shepherd's Pet Were Mine." Likewise, the Irish hornpipe songs "The Glasgow Hornpipe" and "Post Office" is evidenced in "Zip Coon" (Nathan, 166). In the latter half of the 19th-century and early part of the 20th-century, the vaudeville stage would reaffirm the intersections created between African American and Irish culture in minstrelsy. Joseph Weber and Louis Fields impersonated a "colored pair" and an "Irish pair" interchangeably in their act and when they, as well as Pat Rooney, another vaudevillian, appeared on stage portraying the Irish, they often resembled the minstrel caricatures representing blacks which appeared in the early 19th-century (see ephemera at the start of Chapter III).

characteristics function as "intermediate concepts" which assist in breaking ideas of "national cultures and traditions" which have characterized much of intellectual thought and which have been used to order a variety of academic disciplines, from literature to anthropology (188).[46] Just as cultural artifacts, which intertwine conceptions of African American and Irish identities, function as important signifiers that explain the sophistication of race relations during the 19th-century, they also demonstrate how borders created by race, nationality, ethnicity, and gender as well as additional demarcations were transgressed.

Indeed, much of current scholarship regarding minstrelsy has dealt with the way it allowed for "border crossings" to occur. Yet such inquiry has limited itself to black/white intersections without reference to the presence of Irish elements and their significance. For instance, Eric Lott demonstrates how minstrelsy allowed whites "to try on the accents of `blackness'" and ultimately to transcend the "rigidly bounded and policed cultures" of the era (6). Although Lott does not deny that the shows turned on the mockery and proported ignorance of African Americans, he

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[46] Gilroy posits that "black cultural traditions, analyses, and histories" have been neglected as a popular and intellectual force. By acknowledging their import, Gilroy contends new terrain is opened up "between the local and the global," disrupting the "integrity of culture" which rests upon exclusive notions of "ethnicity" and "nationality" (188).

also contends that minstrelsy was one of the first instances where whites recognized the existence of black culture by mimicking the songs, dances, and stories which sprung from the African-American experience (4).[47] Recognition of the way that "Irishness" was woven within projections of "blackness" on the minstrel stage extends Lott's contention that the dramatic form, as well as additional cultural signifiers of the time, was much more complex than a manifestation of antagonistic black/white polarities. Instead, the prevalence of black/Irish combinations manifested in a myriad of ways through minstrelsy reflects the convolutions and contradictions occurring in American society at the time. The Irish component in minstrelsy represents a material manifestation of the way that determinants such as "whiteness" and "blackness" signified something much more potent than skin color.

The work of Dan Emmett perhaps best demonstrates the schizophrenic nature of minstrelsy, oscillating between black and Irish propensities. For instance, though Emmett's song "Turkey in de Straw" is derived from "Zip Coon," which intertwines both black and Irish melodies, he published it in Francis O'Neill's The Dance Music of Ireland (Chicago:

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[47] By explaining how minstrelsy allowed whites to explore a "real interest in black cultural practices," Lott diverges from conventional appraisals of the performances which have been based solely on racial revulsion. Minstrelsy, for Lott, reflected whites' "panic, anxiety, and terror" as well as the "pleasure" they derived from blackness (6).

n.p., 1907). Emmett, however, did not ignore the black rudiments in his compositions. In a manuscript of his "Walk Rounds," which he wrote between 1859-1868 for the Bryant Minstrels of New York, he said that in his music he "always strictly confined" himself to the "habits and crude ideas of the slaves in the South." Though not wholly enlightened, such a statement demonstrates Emmett's keen recognition of the import of black culture to his own creativity.

The minstrel "Old Dan Tucker" survives as another instance where Emmett mixed both black and Irish components in his work. Though he described the song as a "Virginian Refrain" portraying "the ups and downs of Negro life" (Nathan, 119), the blackface character which appeared on the minstrel stage and acted out the part of "Old Dan Tucker" wore a costume which usually connoted the Irish (see ephemera at the beginning of Chapter III).[48] Hans Nathan reveals that one of Emmett's teachers was a Virginian named Ferguson (obviously of Irish descent) who was "`nigger all over' except in color" (110). Ferguson taught Emmett to play the banjo and acquainted him with the rudiments of African-American culture which would come to dominate his performances despite their perverse alteration.

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[48] Robert W. Snyder writes that the "typical Irish character of the late nineteenth century appeared in a take-off on an immigrant workingman's garb: a plaid suit, green stockings, corduroy breeches, a square-tailed coat, a battered stovepipe hat with a pipe stuck in the band, a hod-carrier's rig, and chin whiskers" (113).

2.) **In the Days of Ignorance**

Much has been made of the hostile reaction of the Irish which followed likenesses drawn between themselves and African Americans. To better their standing in American society, the Irish had to pry themselves loose from any comparison with African Americans, and in the process of doing so, they often, writes Eric Lott, became more "bitter and severe against blacks than the native whites themselves" (95). For Frederick Douglass, the incident in William Gardner's shipyard would prove to be one of many occasions where he would confront the racial animosity of the Irish. Later in his life, he would remark that when the Irish arrived in the United States they were "instantly taught [. . .] to hate and despise the colored people. They are taught to believe that we eat the bread which of right belongs to them" (Blassingame, Vol.2, 433). As Douglass worked for African American equality, he came to think that the Irish were "the most bigoted element in American society" (Preston, 142).

Adding to the intricacies of the era, although attracting far less intellectual scrutiny, are the reactions of African Americans to the Irish. Perhaps this is because blacks were never allowed the status of whiteness which was ultimately gained by the Irish, thus any response on the part of blacks to the Irish had little lasting affect. Yet

to omit their attitudes toward the Irish misrepresents what transpired during the 19th-century and, more importantly, continues to deny blacks a voice in the discourse of the era. In fact, African Americans expressed their reaction toward the Irish in a variety of forms, ranging from popular humor to more serious reflections found in literature and political oratory. The emotions portrayed through such responses were equally diverse, exhibiting hostility, ridicule, as well as compassion, understanding, and even reconciliation.

Folklore collections reveal that the Irish often served as the butt of jokes told by African Americans (see ephemera at the beginning of Chapters I, II, and III). Arthur Huff Fauset, one of the earliest African-American folklorists, explains that "Irishmen stories" were as common among blacks as animal stories, however, they were the result of a distinct American amalgamation of black and Irish culture rather than arising solely from Africa. Furthermore, Fauset writes that a "native born Southern Negro" would often tell stories of "Pat and Mike" with "all the spirit and even the inflection of voice that one might expect of an Irishman" (213). Such ribaldry did not go unreciprocated (see ephemera at the beginning of Chapters I, II, and III). Irish-American vaudevillians, such as James McIntyre and Thomas Heath, would use the language and characteristics of blacks in their performances later in the century. Yet the

perpetuation of black stereotypes by the Irish has often been the subject of scholarly activity while black derision of the Irish has gone relatively unnoticed.

In addition to the ways that blacks demonstrated their disdain for the Irish through humor, they also used conventional mediums such as newspapers and magazines to voice a fear of the Irish. Rather than focusing on awkward mannerisms and foibles as the Irish adjusted to their new surroundings, black reporters and editors as well as their white allies reacted to the increasing influence of the Irish as a political coalition. David J. Hellwig writes that African Americans and Anglo Americans alike were critical of Irish involvement in big city government; for example, the corruption of the Tammany ring in New York City was taken to be typical of Irish influence (42). Publications aimed at a mostly black readership, such as the AME Church Review, promoted the belief that the Irish were "uniquely ill-suited for a representative government based on law" (43). Such opinion was based, in part, on the large numbers of Irish police in metropolitan areas like Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, and New York, who often failed to protect African Americans and even instigated violence against them (43-44). The corruption and discord advanced by the Irish in the United States, a nation still seeking self-definition, won them few favors in the many mediums used by blacks to characterize the era.

This is not to say that the interaction between African Americans and the Irish was always derogatory and unwelcomed. Noel Ignatiev documents that the census of 1850 reveals that one out of every 30 persons in Philadelphia was of mixed racial ancestry. He speculates that because so many blacks lived in Irish neighborhoods and vice versa, sexual unions would not have been extraordinary. Seneca Village, which existed on the upper West side of Manhattan between 82nd and 88th Streets, represents one particular African-American/Irish community. In 1825 black Americans established the locale and by the 1840's immigrant Irish moved there. Church and census records portray a neighborhood which was "comfortably integrated" with many African Americans and Irish marrying one another, attending the same schools and churches, and using the same cemeteries (Fergus 15).[49] Ignatiev contends that the majority of mixed marriages in both Boston and New York involved African American men and Irish women (40-41). The two groups also frequently socialized with one another. Many pubs in major Eastern cities were known for their black and Irish cliental. Ignatiev also refers to black church records in Philadelphia which demonstrate that for at least 20 years one-third of the members were Irish (41). Such unions and fraternization prompted a certain amount of ambivalence on

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[49] When the city decided in 1857 to build Central Park, the inhabitants of Seneca Village were evicted so the land could be developed (Fergus 15).

the part of African Americans to completely castigate the Irish and view them with total disdain as white outsiders who threatened their livelihoods.

The literature by African Americans emanating from the 19th-century and beyond demonstrates to a fair degree of complexity the nature of black/Irish relations. In many texts there are also glimpses of the ways that African Americans and the Irish frequently inhabited the same communities and the results that such interaction prompted. The Reconstruction stories of Charles Chesnutt, Paul Laurence Dunbar's novel Sport of the Gods, Harlem Renaissance writer Dorothy West's The Living is Easy, as well as James Baldwin's pre-Civil Rights era novel Another Country, all demonstrate both a black familiarity with the Irish as well as an aversion to them. Although characters more-often-than-not represent drunks and barroom brawlers as well as undesirable spouses and neighbors, the writers also work to re-create the Irish brogue, describe the milky-white skin and red hair common among the Irish, and portray them working in service and trade positions, usually the first jobs that the Irish attained when they arrived in the United States. Despite their hostility toward blacks, some of the most intimate portraits of newly-arrived Irish can be found in the literature of African Americans.

Charles Chesnutt's short story "Uncle Wellington's Wives" perhaps best illustrates the intricate association

between African Americans and the Irish. Hellwig in his appraisal of Chesnutt's tale mostly concentrates largely on the antagonistic union between the two cultures which is figured within the text, yet Chesnutt also demonstrates characters who develop affections for one another despite their eventual dissatisfaction and contentiousness. In the story, Wellington Braboy leaves the South and deserts his wife Milly for the North, "a land," he believes, flows "with milk and honey" and is "peopled by noble men and beautiful women" [. . .] (207). While seeking employment as a coachman for a wealthy family, he meets an Irish widow, named Katie Flannigan, who works as the cook.

As is characteristic of Chesnutt, the story is told by the exploitation of half-truths and stereotypes of the era. Wellington is described as a timid and submissive Southern black man who, nonetheless, has an interest in Katie, yet his "awe of white people in which he had been reared" was too strong to allow him to act (243). Katie, on the other hand, represents the "cunning Irish." She has an interest in Wellington, but given his ambivalence, she must assist him "with a little of the native coquetry of her race" before he begins to take any initiative (243). The two are eventually married in the "colored Baptist church" and they move into an apartment in an Irish neighborhood.

The racial antagonism of the Irish toward blacks, although not skirted by Chesnutt, is at first mostly

projected by those surrounding Katie and Wellington, rather than by Katie herself. When Wellington tries to measure Katie's affections for him, he feigns his intention to look for a black girlfriend. Katie responds to the plan, however, with indignation, reflecting a racism which is tempered by her interest in Wellington, whom she really desires. She states:

> Colored lady, indade! Why, Misther Braboy, ye don't nade ter demane yerself by marryin' a colored lady--not but they're as good as anybody else, so long as they behave themselves. There's many a white woman 'u'd be glad ter git as fine a lookin' man as ye are. (244)

With such a reaction, Wellington gains the confidence necessary to propose to Katie.

Contrary to Katie's acceptance of Wellington is the disapproval of their landlord, Dennis O'Flaherty, who, when he learns that Wellington is black, serves the newlyweds with an eviction notice. When Katie inquires as to the reason, O'Flaherty responds that he does "not care to live in the same house `wid naygurs'" (247). Shocked by the epithet, Katie begins to yell and "for a brief space of time the air was green with choice specimens of brogue" (247). Despite her efforts, the couple is forced to move to a small house in a black neighborhood and not long after their resettlement, the relationship begins to dissolve. Chesnutt

tells his readers that Katie's feelings of "superiority," based on her white skin, do not fully dissipate with her marriage to Wellington. Eventually a coolness develops between her and her neighbors, who sense her attitude of self-importance. Out of loneliness, Katie, in stereotypical fashion, begins to drink as well as to beat Wellington who subsequently flees back to the South and Milly.

Hellwig writes that Chesnutt's portrayal of the Irish, mostly through the character of Katie, as "drunken, dim-witted, and dangerous to blacks" was "standard fare" (45). Chesnutt, however, with "Uncle Wellington's Wives" has done more than simply re-create the oft-focused-on antagonism enacted by the Irish on African Americans. An Irish character does not hesitate to marry a black character, they move in and out of each other's communities, and for a time, however brief, their attitudes regarding race do not function as obstacles to some form of mutual fulfillment from one another. In as much as Chesnutt presents a situation where hostility triumphs, he also depicts a glimpse of well-meaning, sincere interaction between African- and Irish-American characters.

When Frederick Douglass toured the country to speak, or when he wrote essays for national magazines and journals, including his own newspaper <u>The North Star</u>, he also used the association between the Irish and African Americans to present a perspective which he hoped would prompt a more

amicable relationship between the two. In fact, on many occasions Douglass would refer to the similarities between both cultures as well as to his own experiences in Ireland as a way to establish a report with Irish Americans, hoping an alliance would diminish and possibly end their hostility toward African Americans.

One such instance where Douglass invoked a comparison came within months after the Fugitive Slave Law was enacted by Congress. Making matters even more dire was a suggestion gaining popular appeal which proposed that free blacks be returned to Africa as a means to totally alleviate racial friction in the United States. It was not uncommon for the Irish, themselves, to approach Douglass directly during speaking engagements to ask why African Americans did not go back to their ancestral nation.[50] Douglass reacted to such sentiments by comparing the racism endured by African Americans to the prejudice experienced by the Irish for

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[50] A few years earlier, Douglass related a conversation that he had with an Irish storekeeper in Bath, New York who "gravely" told him that "it was his deliberate opinion that the coloured people in this country could never rise here, and ought to go back to Africa" (Blassingame, Vol.2, 164-165). Mocking the Irish accent, Douglass responded that he was "an American-born citizen" and "intended to stay in this country." Moreover, he took particular umbrage because the Irish man "had scarcely shed the first feathers of `ould Ireland,' and had the brogue still on his lip" (164). Douglass implored the Irish nation to "send no more such children here." He continued, "We do not want any such specimens among us" (165). From the audience's response it is evident that Douglass won their favor not only because of the way he told the anecdote but also because he invoked the antipathy toward the Irish which was a common feeling among Americans.

religious reasons. In one of his weekly Sunday-evening lectures at Corinthian Hall in Rochester, New York, Douglass referred to the 18th-century penal laws enacted against the Irish by the British, as he had done so often during his tour of Ireland six years earlier. "It has always been easier," Douglass said, for a people to form correct conclusions in regard to certain forms of injustices, when established by others, than to condemn the same forms of injustice and wrong when established by themselves" (Blassingame, Vol.2, 293). He then called on Americans to recognize and condemn "their bitter persecution and tyranny toward the colored people" which bore a "striking resemblance" to the "cruelty and barbarity" exhibited by the British toward the Irish "in the days of ignorance" (293). Given that the Irish were the chief promoters of racial hatred toward African Americans in the United States, Douglass hoped his repeated references to their own subjugation would inspire a more productive and sensitive relationship. When he referred to the persecution of the Irish, Douglass did so as a means to remind those who were newly-emigrated that oppression was not always based upon the "physical peculiarities" of men.

3.) The Many Shades of Green

The similitude drawn between the religious persecution of the Irish and the racism inflicted upon African Americans was not the only means by which Frederick Douglass sought to quash Irish-American hostility. In all three of his autobiographies, he championed the efforts of Daniel O'Connell who often called upon Irish Americans to join with abolitionists to bring an end to slavery in the United States. In Life and Times, Douglass recalled that when he met O'Connell and heard him speak in Conciliation Hall in Dublin, the "Liberator," as O'Connell was referred to in Ireland, told his audience that even though he was Irish, his hatred of the oppressor was not confined to "the narrow limits of my own green island" (683). He then went on to denounce slavery stating that "wherever the tyrant rears his head I will deal my bolts upon it, and wherever there is sorrow and suffering, there is my spirit to succor and relieve" (683). For Douglass, no other European statesman could as forcefully condemn slavery as O'Connell.

In addition to Douglass's remembrances, O'Connell's signature upon an "Address from the People of Ireland to Their Countrymen and Countrywomen in America" is, perhaps, the most frequently referred to document which evidences his commitment to persuade Irish Americans of the wrongs of slavery. Sixty thousand Irish citizens also signed the

document which was delivered to the American public with great fanfare by Charles Lenox Remond on his return from a speaking tour of Ireland and read out loud at Faneuil Hall in Boston on January 28, 1842 (Ignatiev, 8-9). The address entreated the newly-emigrated Irish to join with American abolitionists to promote "LIBERTY FOR ALL, of every color, creed, and country . . . ." (10). It was hoped that when the Irish heard how those in their homeland felt about slavery, they would end their political and economic association with American slave holders as well as curtail their own aggression toward African Americans.

Much to O'Connell's dismay, however, as well as that of American abolitionists, the address prompted responses from Irish Americans which more often than not demonstrated their rationalization of slavery rather than a commitment to work against it.[51] Noel Ignatiev reports that some prominent Irish Americans even questioned the authenticity of the address while others condemned the hypocrisy of abolitionists, in general, who argued for African-American emancipation while at the same time calling for the "extermination of Catholics by fire and sword" (13). Irish

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[51] On February 27, 1842, William Lloyd Garrison, in a letter to Richard Webb, wrote of the public reaction to the address. He said that although the meeting in Faneuil Hall was "indescribably enthusiastic," two Boston Irish newspapers "sneer[ed]" at the document and "denounc[ed]" it (Taylor, 169). Such reaction Garrison believed would "keep the great mass" of Irish "from uniting with abolitionists (169).

Catholics wondered just how committed abolitionists were to human rights when they argued on behalf of one group while ridiculing another.[52]

The lack of Irish support for the anti-slavery mission, however, involves many more factors than simple distrust of abolitionists on religious grounds. As Douglas Riach and Ignatiev have demonstrated, Irish Americans were ambivalent for reasons which involved their status in the United States,[53] their historic alienation from the British (who backed the anti-slavery campaign for their own political self-interests), as well as some distrust regarding

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[52] Discrimination based on allegiance to the Catholic church was not an unfounded fear among many newly-emigrated Irish. During the 18th-century, when many Irish first came to the United States, they were forced to change their faith in order to survive Protestant aggression. The anti-slavery movement, with its calls for a more humane society, did not erase recollections of forced assimilation. The anti-slavery movement also did not end discrimination of the Irish during the 19th-century because of their adherence to Catholicism. Given the history of hostility toward the Irish, combined with the fact that many abolitionists were Protestant, there was the belief that the anti-slavery movement functioned as one more ruse which ultimately sought to proselytize particular religious convictions rather than to end slavery. Indeed, Riach writes of how abolitionists were often encouraged to "free the Irish from their enslavement to Rome" and one clergy member even argued that southern slaveholders would only "endanger their souls" if they employed Irish-American Roman Catholics (6-7).

[53] New immigrants felt that support of the anti-slavery movement would thwart their own efforts to gain full citizenship in the United States. As Riach points out, Irish Americans were anxious to prove their loyalty to their newly-adopted country (11). Because any dissolution of slavery had the potential to rupture the United States in two, the Irish were hesitant to join with abolitionist forces.

O'Connell's motivations. Some felt his zealous condemnations of slavery were only a means to prove his allegiance to England which would subsequently allow him to continue fighting for Irish independence. According to Ignatiev and Riach, O'Connell was not above using his abolition speeches to prove his loyalty to the crown. During a trial which subsequently led to his imprisonment, O'Connell "pointed to his attacks on slavery [. . .] as evidence of his devotion to principle and British interests" (30). Moreover, while in prison, O'Connell's condemnations of slavery were particularly voracious, however, many believed they functioned only as a means to expedite his release.[54]

Despite the suspicion which surrounded O'Connell, many felt his actions were the only hope that abolitionists had in recruiting Irish Americans to join forces for the end of slavery. Even Ignatiev infers that O'Connell's death in 1847 brought a halt to any possibility of Irish-American involvement. Yet possibly more detrimental than O'Connell's

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[54] In a document written while in prison, O'Connell denounced Irish American prejudice toward blacks stating, "It was not in Ireland you learned this cruelty. Your mothers were gentle, kind and humane . . . . How can your souls have become stained with a darkness blacker than the negro's skin?" (Ignatiev, 29). Beyond his chastisement, Noel Ignatiev, writes of how O'Connell delineated several means by which the newly-emigrated could redeem themselves. He told them never again to let themselves be used by the oppressor, as they had in the settlement of Texas as a slave state, and he also implored them to "help educate and secure the franchise for the free Negro" as well as to support political candidates who sought an end to slavery (29).

death was the fact that he was often perceived as the sole Irish advocate of abolition. Although it cannot be denied that O'Connell functioned as an important spokesperson for Irish abolition efforts, his initiatives were often the result of a broader campaign in Ireland which involved many more people, namely the founders of the Hibernian Anti-Slavery Society--James Haughton, Richard Webb, and Richard Allen. If the condemnation of slavery was seen to have Irish approval beyond the voice of O'Connell, perhaps Irish Americans would have been more willing to lend their support, especially since Haughton, Webb, and Allen, as well as other members of the Hibernian Anti-Slavery Society, did not present the same liabilities that O'Connell's political aspirations brought to the cause.[55]

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[55] There is evidence from Richard Webb himself that he was wary of O'Connell's involvement in the anti-slavery cause. In letters to Maria Weston Chapman, Webb confessed that he believed O'Connell's commitment was largely motivated by self-interest. Although Webb believed O'Connell to be sincere "on great questions of civil and religious liberty," he lamented that the "Liberator" conveyed his beliefs largely through words instead of actions. Webb, most likely, was upset over O'Connell's acceptance of monetary support from slave holders for his repeal campaign. To Chapman, Webb wrote, "He is a politician--and how a politician can be upright and consistent is more than I can understand (Taylor, 168-169). James Haughton did not share Webb's opinions regarding O'Connell, however, he too admitted, on at least one occasion, that doubt followed the Irish leader. After the British House of Commons voted to end slavery in the West Indies, Haughton wrote to his brother William that he believed O'Connell to be "an honest man, more candid and open than most great men: he is received here with enthusiasm, but as is the case at home, some mean minds cannot believe in his integrity, although his whole life has been devoted to man's freedom" (Haughton, 32).

Particular examination of Haughton's efforts as well as those of Webb reveal men who devoted their lives to end slavery as well as additional forms of human injustice around the world. Such activism belies contentions regarding the fickle nature of Europeans who were seen to surrender their convictions regarding the wrongs of slavery when causes more relative to their immediate situations (such as the famine relief campaign and the Irish repeal movement) were in jeopardy of losing popular support in slave-holding states. Haughton and Webb, conversely, were unwilling to prioritize one form of inequality, such as Irish subjugation by the British, over others. Though both men saw themselves as Irish, national agendas could never be advanced at the expense of the anti-slavery movement.

From a young age, both Haughton and Webb were instilled with values which argued for a linkage between personal actions and larger global endeavors. In a biography of his father, Samuel Haughton writes of how his grandparents discouraged their children from using sugar which was harvested by slaves. Later, when James Haughton was older and involved in the anti-slavery campaign, he would entreat his fellow Irish citizens to boycott cotton that was grown on slave-holding plantations in the American south (24). Houghton's biggest contribution to the abolitionist movement, however, were the scores of letters he wrote to newspapers in the United States, England, and Ireland which

prevailed upon the Irish to support anti-slavery objectives.

In many ways, Haughton's letters function as reportage wherein he took on the responsibilities of a correspondent, keeping readers abreast of the efforts and opinions of the Hibernian Anti-Slavery Society. During the World's Anti-Slavery Convention held in London in 1840, Haughton wrote to the Dublin Weekly Herald of the business transacted by the 450 delegates from around the world who attended the conference as well as how they heard testimonial from American abolitionists and former slaves. With inference to the apathy of Irish Americans who resisted involvement in the anti-slavery cause, Haughton called upon the Irish press to "utter loudly and constantly against the shameful and dishonest inconsistency of the American nation" which upheld their Declaration of Independence with one hand while the other held "the lash saturated with the blood of their brothers" (50). Such condemnation from home, he believed, would be listened to by emigrants who closed their ears to abolitionists whom they ultimately believed were propagandists.

Haughton also publicly condemned monetary offerings from slavery's supporters to the Irish repeal movement and famine relief campaigns, insisting that such contributions not only hurt the abolition movement, by effectively silencing Irish support, but also left a blemish on the Irish nation which accepted the funds. In a letter to the

American Anti-Slavery Standard, Haughton wrote that he feared "the moral sentiment" of Ireland "has received severe injury from the reception of bloodstained contributions from American slave-holders" (78-79). Later, to the Montreal Gazette, he would repeat such sentiments, stating, "The Irishman abroad and at home who does not stand up for the liberty of all, for the black as well as the white, is a dishonoured man" (158). Although Haughton's son Samuel testifies in his biography of his father's "strong national feelings [. . .], he could not say, `My country, right or wrong'" (80). For Haughton, national concerns could not and should not be insulated from events that occurred outside the nation's borders.

Webb, like Haughton, almost from birth, had a long history of promoting justice. He was born a Quaker, and, according to Richard S. Harrison, stories about "harsh government repression," which eventually led to the 1798 rising, surrounded his childhood as well as the way Irish Friends sought to end the suffering and violence (8).[56]

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[56] The 1798 rising was influenced by the idealism of the French Revolution, whereby a band of Ulster Presbyterians were attracted to the tenants of liberty, democracy, and the rights of man. Led by Theobald Wolfe Tone, a Protestant lawyer from Dublin, they formed the Society of United Irishmen which eventually sought to make Ireland a republic, independent of English rule. Considered the only non-sectarian force in Irish history, the United Irishmen sought to consolidate Catholic manpower for revolutionary purposes. In 1798 a rebellion broke out in Leinster. Though about 30,000 people died, the insurgence failed to spread further south and the violence took on a sectarian edge. Eventually the uprising was quashed by the

After attending the Ballitore School, a well-known private Quaker institution in County Kildare, Webb apprenticed as a printer before setting up his own business in Dublin. Harrison contends that by 1838, he became an active abolitionist. In 1840, Webb was one of the Dublin delegates at the World's Anti-Slavery Convention in London and was among the first to express solidarity with Lucretia Mott who was barred from the proceedings because she was a woman (22-23). Delegates from the Hibernian Anti-Slavery Society, including Webb, were also one of the few coalitions which "ardently embraced" the "radical viewpoints" of William Lloyd Garrison (25). Among other initiatives, when Webb returned to Dublin, he arranged for Charles Lenox Remond as well as Frederick Douglass to visit Ireland on speaking tours and was among European abolitionists who contributed to a fund to buy Douglass's freedom.

Webb also used his printing and publishing business for the benefit of the anti-slavery mission in Ireland. He holds the distinction of being the first to publish Douglass's Narrative outside of the United States; he was also responsible for printing O'Connell's anti-slavery tracts for American distribution. Moreover, in October of

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Crown. Wolfe Tone was taken prisoner and convicted of treason but rather than let the British hang him, he committed suicide. Moreover, British forces became especially oppressive. The Irish parliament dissolved itself and, under the Act of Union of 1800, Ireland became an integral part of the United Kingdom. Catholics were also forbidden to sit in parliament (Killeen 40-43).

1852, Webb launched the first issue of the Anti-Slavery Advocate, a monthly newspaper sold for one penny, which was devoted to being "a cheap monthly sheet," providing "a faithful report of what [was] taking place in the United States" (Vol.1 (1), 1). In addition to printing excerpts from Douglass's North Star and Garrison's Liberator, the paper carried reviews of Harriet Jacobs' Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl as well as other narratives, an account of John Brown's raid at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, and coverage of anti-slavery speeches made to the United States Congress.

Reports relative to the situation of Irish Americans also appeared in the Anti-Slavery Advocate which for the most part described the way that new emigrants were impeding the social progress of African Americans. One article excerpted from the Daily News (the specific city was not identified) claimed that the majority of the Irish were "intensely pro-slavery, partly owning to a fierce hatred of `neygurs'" but also because they equated "anti-slavery principles" with "Protestantism and Puritanism." The writer of the piece contended that although the Irish often boasted of their new country, when it came to "slavery, the Constitution, or the national reputation" they cared very little (Vol.3 (5), 38-39). Although such reports were not accompanied by editorial remarks, it is evident that by publishing them in the Advocate, Webb hoped to implicitly

inspire the indigenous Irish to dissuade their relatives across the Atlantic from behaving so barbarously.

Interestingly, Webb also carried some of the replies which Haughton's letters garnered in his attacks on slavery and the complicity of Irish Americans. In one such response, Patrick Parks, from Portsmouth, Virginia, questioned Haughton's contentions that Irish Americans had brought dishonor to Ireland by "bowing down before the accursed alter of slavery." Because slavery was legal in the United States, Parks claimed that Irishmen did not violate any laws and therefore Ireland's honor was preserved. Moreover, given that Haughton was Protestant, Parks argued that he had "no right to define what [was] sinful or immoral to Irish Catholics in the United States." Only the Catholic Church, according to Parks, had the authority to judge what was right or wrong and no bishops of priests, "from Maine to Texas," had "decreed" that slavery, as it was carried out in the United States, was "contrary to the laws of God" (Vol.2 (22), 176). Again, by printing such remarks, Webb hoped to inform his countrymen as to the true nature of those who supported slavery.

The lack of recognition given to Haughton and Webb's persistent efforts on behalf of the anti-slavery movement can be attributed to their own self-effacement in addition to the way that O'Connell's legendary charisma eclipsed both men. For instance, the "Address from the People of Ireland

to Their Countrymen and Countrywomen in America" exemplifies an instance where O'Connell's involvement was allowed to supersede that of Haughton and Webb as well as other Irish abolitionists. Although the address has largely been thought of as the brain child of O'Connell, in actuality it was conceived by delegates of the Hibernian Anti-Slavery Society on their return from the 1840 anti-slavery convention in London. When Haughton arrived back in Dublin at the conclusion of the conference, he wrote the declaration and organized its dispatch to the United States. When it was read at the Faneuil Hall gathering, however, American abolitionists emphasized O'Connell's signature which subsequently negated additional Irish support. Later, when the address was reproduced in a pamphlet in the United States to mark O'Connell's death, Haughton, himself, spoke of it as material evidence which demonstrated O'Connell's consistent efforts for "civil and religious liberty" rather than as a document which reflected Irish conviction which functioned above and beyond the limitations of any one person. It must also be said that Haughton and Webb's repeated deference to O'Connell was the result of their interest in the cause rather than their own personal interests in advancement or notoriety.

Haughton and Webb's anti-slavery efforts are also significant in ways beyond the large scale political organization that they tried, and to a certain extent

succeeded at, amassing. Examining their actions in relation to Douglass and the context surrounding him, provides an important link in the history of efforts to win liberation and equal rights for African Americans during the 19th-century. Haughton and Webb's endeavors, along with Douglass's own testimony regarding his experiences in Ireland and his association with members of the Hibernian Anti-Slavery Society, defies attempts to paint the Irish with one brush, characterizing them as disinterested in or hostile to the abolitionist agenda. In reality, there was a concerted effort by two communities that transgressed national, cultural, and racial boundaries in order to exert influence and bring about meaningful change. When liberation occurred, it was, in part, assisted by the relationships and cultural and discursive exchanges that occurred between African Americans and the Irish.

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Conclusion

Conclusion

A colleague recently transmitted to me an E-mail message sent him by one of the students enrolled in his African-American literature class. In her missive, the student rejected the possibility that her white classmates could establish aesthetic criteria for "understanding and appreciating the Black Arts Movement" of the 1960's and 1970's because the literature from the era is "distinctly black." As a result, she posited that works such as LeRoi Jones's Dutchman and Ntozake Shange's For Colored Girls Who Have Committed Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf are too "foreign" for whites to understand because they have "no profound knowledge of and sympathy with black cultural history." As it was my colleague's first time teaching a course on African-American literature, he was taken aback by both the glibness of his student's statement as well as by the rigidity of her outlook, an outlook which constricted all understanding to the boundaries of racial make-up. I pointed out, however, that her comments have precedent when we acknowledge the ways that literature has historically been studied.

To assert that a text must be understood within the context from which it arises is a fundamental practice of literary scholarship. Even the most basic introductions to

literary study devote at least a chapter to the importance of the world of the author--obtained sometimes through nonfictional prose, essays, letters, interviews--in order to get a clearer view of authorial intent or at least circumstantial motivation. Houston A. Baker, Jr. has long held that a central characteristic of writing by African Americans is not only its connection to, what he calls, its "sociohistorical" context. He delineates this context by reference to the reality endured by African Americans when they were brought to the United States in chains, and were "systematically and legally robbed" of their humanity by a body of legislation upheld in the Constitution (2). Consequently, Baker contends that the black American--"perhaps to a greater extent than any other American-- [is] a social product" (2). Subsequently, "the literature of the black American is [. . .] most fully understood in terms of a sociohistorical framework" (2). Like my colleague's student, Baker believes that any African-American literature class must explicate its relation to circumstances that impact a larger black community.

In addition to the attention that must be paid to conditions which surround the texts, Baker also claims that the "sociohistorical factors" are of "the utmost significance" when evaluating black American literature (xv). In his 1971 anthology, titled Black Literature in America, he notes that one of the criteria used to select

the works included was their ability to "honestly reflect the experience of the black man in America" (4). Given that slavery so permeated the existence of African Americans, Baker asserts that black writers could not simply dodge that reality by imitating "in both theme and content" what white writers wrote. Instead, it is incumbent upon a black writer to portray the lives of African Americans with all of the "condition, fears, and aspirations of a suffering humanity" (4). Twenty years later, Arthur P. Davis, J. Saunders Redding, and Joyce Ann Joyce, editors of the New Cavalcade, an anthology published by Howard, would echo Baker, emphasizing that when assessing the work of black writers, it is crucial to examine how well they demonstrate the African-American experience.

I suggested to my colleague that perhaps what disarmed him the most about his student's claims was not the way she emphasized the importance of black history (for indeed, both he and I would underline such a history in our teaching), but rather the connection she made between African-American experience and the abrogation of it by white Americans. Once again, her accusation that whites study black literature from perspectives that neglect its historical and cultural milieu is well documented. In fact, Hazel Carby has written of the ways that texts by black authors have been used to make up for the absence of black communities at most universities. According to Carby, it has become

commonplace for "white middle-class students" to gain knowledge of the "other" solely through a text (177). She laments the profound injustice suffered when the literature of a people is opted for instead of a presence.

My intentions here, however, are not to grant unconditional credence to the perspectives of my colleague's student. I too am troubled by assertions which begin to parcel out the quest for knowledge to those who possess specific anatomical and cultural traits. At one point in the letter the student even claims that she is "able to pass judgement" on the works of black authors solely because she is "in the unique position of being a black person." Although I would challenge a contention that bases understanding on who one is rather than on intellectual acuity and a certain capacity for listening, I want to suggest--as I believe the student's comments did--that the ways literary study has always been organized and examined are rooted in classifications that function as prerequisites to both the creative process as well as the interpretation of it. For instance, geographic, national, cultural, racial, and ethnic divisions have traditionally been used to account for a number of factors within the discipline, ranging from the ways individual texts, authors, and literary scholars are distinguished from one another, to who can speak as an authority on specific texts, as well as the organizing of class offerings and hiring decisions made

within departments of literature. Thus, the history of encounters not predicted by rigid disciplinary, classificatory divisions such as Anglo-American, black, Irish, feminist, among others, is often difficult to imagine much less account for critically.

An examination of anthologies, beginning with those published when American literature was first thought of as an entity unto itself, reveals how scholars invoked specific ethnic and cultural criteria as a means to determine which texts and authors could be thought of as distinctly American. Brander Matthews, in 1896, can be credited with being among the first to assert that if one had British ancestry yet lived in the United States, with its different climate and social organization, than the "record" of such a life could "fairly be called American literature" (12). Indeed, until the development of the Heath Anthology of American Literature by Paul Lauter, American literature was largely believed to have emanated mostly from writers who were English speakers and had national ties to Europe. Even though some recognized early on that the diversity of the American population lent it a certain difference from other nations, authors who had white, European heritage were given prominence as those whose work truly embodied the American experience.[57] Likewise, Jay Hubbell, in 1936, Philip Rahv,

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[57] Like Brander Matthews, John Macy in 1912 gave prominence to those affiliated with British culture as the progenitors of American literature. He wrote that the

in 1957, and Cleanth Brooks, in 1973, only looked to European and especially British critics in their studies of American literature, believing they gave the best perspective on the nation's literary achievements.

With the burgeoning of black studies programs at colleges and universities across the United States during the 1960's, scholars tried to qualify the discipline within aspects that were believed unique to African Americans. Addison Gayle, Jr., in a manifesto outlining the purpose of a black aesthetic, rightly cites Philip Freneau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, John Trumbull, and Noah Webster as those who previously advocated a conscious creation of specific cultural traditions relative to the United States that could be separated from traditions of Europe (409).[58] In

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strongest influences on American thinkers and artists were British. By 1928, Norman Foerster acknowledged that American culture was more international than British. However, Foerster only compared American literature to its European antecedents and counterparts when he tried to articulate its similarities and differences within a broader context of writing. Only when Paul Lauter designed a workshop in the early 1980's to "reconstruct" the way American literature was taught, did definitions of American begin to shift from this British or Eurocentric model. Lauter complained that previous attempts to reflect the "American literary imagination or of American life and thought are woefully incomplete and inaccurate" (xii).

[58] Although all four men whom Gayle cites were known for their advocacy of uniquely American contributions, Emerson is thought of as the most popular proponent. In his 1837 address, titled "The American Scholar," he entreated his audience to create knowledge that would be based on and serve the American community. "Our day of dependence," he said, "our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close (859). No book, believed Emerson, no matter its breadth of wisdom, could express every

relation to African-American culture, Gayle names the spiritual as the first artistic form to spring from the unique history of black Americans, making it different from other aspects of the larger American culture (417). He called for African-American writers to follow suit and use the "fluid lore of a great people" as the basis for literary pursuit that would ultimately separate them from other American writers (418). By linking themselves through their writing to their history as a people, Gayle believed literature by black Americans would possess factors that were exclusive to African Americans. Accordingly, slavery made writing "black," and enabled blacks to write in unique ways.

Since Gayle, even the most institutionally acceptable scholars of the African-American literary canon such as Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Nellie Y. McKay, editors of the Norton Anthology of African-American Literature, have named slavery and the resultant quest for freedom as primary factors which make the body of writing by African Americans distinct. Gates and McKay make clear that the very capacity to read and write proved the humanity of African Americans

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thought. Nor was every thought entirely suitable to every generation. Therefore, he urged "each age [. . .] write its own books" to ensure that every era would have a body of knowledge that "fit" properly (862). In an argument "On the Emancipation of the West Indies," Emerson advanced that when the black community "contributes `an indispensable element'" to American civilization it too would be protected as "full" citizens of the United States (Gates and McKay xxxv).

and thus was a powerful indictment against forces which held them captive because they were thought to be a sub-human species. Subsequently, literacy and the resultant literature became an intrinsic part of liberation. Because African Americans must still contend with racial oppression, Gates and McKay assert that their writing continues to function as "prima facie [sic] evidence of the Negro's intellectual potential"; black writing also argues for continued efforts for civil liberties (xxxv).[59]

In as much as factors which distinguish the writing of any particular community tend to function also to legitimate it as an intellectual entity, emphasizing such characteristics can also exclude important circumstances

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[59] By surveying a century of African-American literary anthologies, Gates and McKay show how texts by black writers were continually evaluated according to how well they assisted efforts relative to the acquisition of civil rights by blacks. Although such concerns "placed tremendous extraliterary burdens" on African-American writers, Gates and McKay also suggest that such assessment makes their work unique (xxxiv). In 1922, James Weldon Johnson was among the first to assert that a crucial relationship existed between writing by African Americans and the liberation of the black community. He wrote that the "final measure of the greatness of all peoples is the amount and standard of the literature and art they have produced" (Gates and McKay xxxv). In 1929, V.F. Calverton explicitly contended that the link between freedom and literature by black authors made their work distinct. According to Calverton,"all" that was "original" in "Negro art and literature [. . .] can be traced to the economic institution of slavery and its influence upon the Negro soul" (Gates and McKay xxxiv). In 1944, Sylvestre C. Watkins echoed Calverton when he wrote, "In his struggle for a better way of life, the Negro has, through necessity, made his literature a purposeful thing born of his great desire to become a full-fledged citizen of the United States" (xxxv).

which are perceived extraneous to the population from which a particular text arises. For instance, when scholars have established the vital role that writing by African Americans plays for the black community, they have more often than not done so at the expense of certain individuals, historical moments, and influences that are not understood to be a part of the immediate black experience. Nancy Cunard's efforts to give black culture a foothold in intellectual arenas is a case in point. The daughter of Maud Burke, a wealthy Irish American, and Sir Bache Cunard, an heir to the shipping company fortune, Cunard tirelessly championed "African and Negro cultures," arguing that they were born of "civilizations" worthy of academic inquiry (Marcus 35). To assist her campaign, Cunard published, in 1934, an "855-page Negro anthology (with 385 illustrations)" which was considered "one of the first works to attempt the production of knowledge about blacks on a global scale" (38).[60] Jane

[60] Jane Marcus explains that the Negro anthology was only one of the ways that Cunard advanced her advocacy of black culture. Early on she "renounced her family and fortune" and "educated herself in the history of racial oppression", slavery, and black culture (34). She relocated from London to Paris and established the Hours Press, one of the first outlets for writers and artists of the modern movement--discovering Samuel Beckett, printing Ezra Pound's Cantos, and situating the writers and artists of the Harlem Renaissance within the period (37). A vital component of the press was that it allowed Cunard to voice her own political and social convictions. She published pamphlets expressing her outrage at the lynch mobs of the United States and launched an international campaign to free the Scottsboro Boys. In 1932, the F.B.I. characterized her address in Paris as a "depot for negro `art' and `culture'(53). When she began production of the Negro

Marcus laments, however, that because Cunard was white, female, had a fluid sexuality, was of upper-class lineage, and a Communist, the anthology was largely "ridiculed, lost, dismissed, and ignored" (35). The Negro anthology set such a monumental precedent, however, that investigations which omit it from the evolution of black studies as a discipline are incomplete.[61] Furthermore, given Cunard's race, gender, and class, she represents someone who transgressed accepted modes of behavior in order to work for the ideals of equal rights and civil liberty.

For my part, by documenting Frederick Douglass's relationship with the Irish, I have here provided another model illustrating the permeabilities of certain geographic, racial, cultural, and national boundaries. The porosity of these borders, I am convinced have implications for the way literature is studied; in addition, attention to such "non-

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anthology, the way it was compiled and the motivation behind its creation were as important as the outcome. Marcus explains that "two-thirds of the 150 contributors were black" and the text "covered every aspect of African art and civilization from individual African countries to the United States, the West Indies, South America, Hati and Cuba" (38). It was hoped the anthology would counter European exhibitions where Africans were being portrayed as "cannibals, head hunters, and savages" (38). In addition to treatises on slavery, jazz, the blues and gospel, as well as contributions from prominent black philosophers, activists, and political leaders, Cunard published essays by Zora Neale Hurston that are still unavailable elsewhere.

[61] Upon its publication in 1934, Alain Locke congratulated Cunard "on the finest anthology in every sense of the word ever compiled on the Negro" (Marcus 36). His own anthology, The New Negro, had been published in 1925.

orthodox" histories enlarges the liberatory function of writing by African Americans. For example, critic Mae Henderson argues that to recover and explore those instances when "artists, intellectuals, and activists" have "travers[ed] borders," allows certain barriers to break. As a result the formulation of "new models, symbols, and paradigms" become possible, models which assist not only in untangling relationships between oppressors and the oppressed, but also in opening up new histories (5). Douglass's study of texts by those who campaigned for Irish independence, his admiration of the renowned Irish orator Daniel O'Connell, his business dealings and friendship with Irish publisher Richard D. Webb, his alliance with members of the Hibernian Anti-Slavery Society, his efforts to bring relief to Irish famine victims, his disdain of British oppression of the Irish, and even his repudiation of Irish immigrants for their racist behavior argues for a practice of reading which does not sever literature from forces external to its immediate context of origin. Because Douglass's interaction with the Irish was so pivotal in terms of his own aspirations, those he advanced for the African-American community, and what he envisioned for the greater American culture, my dissertation challenges the conventional practice of isolating texts into rubrics which seek to confine what is reflected and the understanding of what is portrayed to those of the same national, cultural,

and racial background as the author.

In the Norton anthology, Gates and McKay recount an anecdote from a slave narrative which infers the kind of insularity that I find so troubling in relation to literary study and that my dissertation disputes. They quote at length a portion of James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw's autobiography which discusses the way he learned to read. In the account, Gronniosaw witnesses his master glance at a prayer book and recite passages out loud. Instead of comprehending that the man was simply reading the words on the page, Gronniosaw believed the text actually spoke to the master, telling him the information it contained. Subsequently, Gronniosaw put his own ear to the book with the hope that it would talk to him and bestow upon him what looked like the capacity to read. When the text remained silent, Gronniosaw writes that he believed it was because he was black and therefore "despised" by "every body and every thing" (xxviii).

Gates and McKay explain the excerpt from Gronniosaw as an example of the way that "Western letters refused to speak to [persons] of African descent" (xxvii). As a result, they contend, from the very moment that blacks were brought to the United States, it was necessary to create a corpus of writing that would stem from and directly reflect their experience. Although I do not want to argue or displace the importance of black experience to black letters, I do want

to suggest that the scope of this experience may be wider than we often acknowledge, particularly in the academy. Thus, when Douglass first opened the Columbian Orator and learned to read, in part, through the words of Arthur O'Connor who fought for Catholic emancipation in Ireland, he subsequently found a way to advance an argument for his own liberation and established a relationship that enlarged his conception of the power of language. Contra Gates and McKay, he showed that Western texts did "speak" to African Americans and in very profound ways. Beyond the immediate benefits that such a relationship established for Douglass, it demonstrates the complex potential of literary history when it is not examined in exclusionary ways, ways which replicate and reinforce received notions of racial difference and segregation.

In particular, the association between African Americans and the Irish, here embodied in the example of Douglass, shows how the rhetorical component of African-American liberation was influenced by, involved with, and assisted members outside the black community. Although it cannot be denied that in quantifying those aspects of writing by African Americans which make it black, scholars have advanced the important ways that literary achievement assists the campaign for freedom, their emphasis on such concerns have excluded interracial, intercultural, and international contributions existent in African-American

literature that also fuel its liberatory capacity. Indeed, African-American literature is all too often severed from other diasporic literatures and segregated within a narrowly drawn and exclusionary American context. Because of his association with the Irish, Douglass became more cognizant of the fact that he was part of the greater human family; as a result he gained more confidence to speak not only on matters relative to African Americans and their freedom but also injustices suffered by additional populations. When he traveled to Ireland in the midst of the potato blight, Douglass saw factors which mirrored his own oppression as well as the ways his experience could assist the Irish. Moreover, the ways that the word was upheld in Ireland as a means to achieve liberation, helped to confirm its function to Douglass. It became a force which not only proved his humanity but also a power that he could invoke to persuade others of the systematic changes that were necessary to achieve meaningful change.

It is crucial to understand, however that with Douglass's interaction with the Irish, he did not surrender his blackness. Some argue that when African-American authors engage worlds that are traditionally inhabited by whites, they forget that their experience is distinguished by slavery. As a result, it has been argued, they write as if the African-American experience is merely one part of a universal condition. Douglass, however, never negated the

fact that he was once a slave. As I demonstrate, while on the speaker's podium in Belfast, when Douglass compared his own subjugation with that of the Irish, he stopped short of insinuating that the Irish were slaves. He also prohibited his audience from making such inferences. In turn, the Irish respected the terms of Douglass's association, allowing their histories were similar but not analogous. Rather than compromise his blackness, Douglass's relationship to the Irish only served to strengthen it.

The intricate association with the Irish that Douglass sought to uphold demonstrates the ways that races and cultures can be examined in relation to one another, rather than from within exclusive boundaries. Before the end of the 19th-century, W.E.B. DuBois entreated African Americans to "speak to the nations of the earth a Divine truth that shall make them free" (823). In his formulation of the American Negro Academy, Dubois explicitly outlined a policy by which he hoped the "Negro people" would make a contribution to "civilization and humanity, which no other race [could] make" (825). Likewise, since African-American Studies have been institutionalized within the academy during the 1960's, those involved have sought to show the vitality of African-American culture. More recently, Toni Morrison has invited the critical community, particularly American literary critics, to demonstrate the influence of what she calls "Afro-Americanism." She stresses that in so

doing she does not seek to replace "dominant Eurocentric scholarship" with "dominant Afro-centric scholarship" (8). Instead, she seeks, among other things, to find out what transforms knowledge "from invasion and conquest to revelation and choice" (8). By demonstrating the way that Douglass valued the complexities of an African-American/Irish relationship, I provide a model which demonstrates the influence of an African-American voice in a way that invites affiliation. In some small way then, I hope that this study contributes to working out of the terms which may move us "from invasion and conquest," separation and solipsism, "to revelation and choice."

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Coda

CODA

READING & WRITING OUTSIDE HISTORY: Ralph Ellison & Eavan Boland

It is my hope that this study begins the work of extending ways of thinking about both Irish and African-American literature. I mean my work here to be a part of the evolving discipline of cultural studies which at once challenges notions of ethnic absolutism, and, at the same time, struggles to involve "blackness" in literary discourse and analysis. Eavan Boland's relationship to Ralph Ellison extends into the 20th-century the liberatory dialogue between African Americans and the Irish as prefigured by Frederick Douglass and members of the Hibernian Anti-Slavery Society during the 19-century. In contrast to concerns of racial equality in the United States, however, Boland's association with Ellison is crucial to the rights of women in Ireland. Despite such shifts in focus and location, the connection between an Irish poet and African-American fiction writer and essayist further substantiates the need to study literature more broadly than previous assessments which enforce national, cultural, and racial boundaries. Moreover, by examining the interaction between the two, greater understanding of Boland and Ellison is achieved as well as a greater appreciation for the challenges that still face those involved in struggle for freedom and equal

rights.

Born the daughter of Irish diplomat Frederick H. Boland and painter Frances Kelly, Eavan Boland lived the majority of her childhood in London and New York before returning to Dublin, her place of birth, in the early 1960's to attend the Convent of the Holy Child, a boarding school in Killiney, and later Trinity College. Her father's career meant that Eavan lived in diplomatic housing throughout most of her childhood and adolescence. Despite her privileged upbringing, Boland often characterizes her younger years as unhappy because her family was without a living arrangement of their own choosing. The absence of a self-made home would foster feelings of displacement and uprootedness early in Boland's consciousness that would later surface as a major theme in some of her strongest poetry.

The sense of dislocation is also apparent in Boland's prose. In essays, collected in Object Lessons, Ireland is relegated to memories of summer with lilacs blossoming and boys diving into the Liffey from the lock near Leeson Street (36). London, in contrast, is figured within the slow death of autumn. Instead of a house built for an "Irishman, his wife, and five children," the Bolands inhabited an embassy where the only reminder of Ireland were the "formal carpets," embossed with the emblems of the four provinces, which covered the building's interior. A "dark, closed-in courtyard" in the city replaced a garden which edged out

into the fields of the Irish countryside. A "sparse playroom" and "blank television" located on a remote top floor supplanted a "raggy brown-and-white terrier called Jimmy" (36-37).

Partial reprieve for Boland from life as a diplomat's daughter came when she journeyed back to Ireland as a teenager to attend school. Her spirits, however, were buoyed as much by the mood of the country as they were by her return to her place of birth. Like many European cities during the 1960's, Dublin exuded a sense of energy. One indication of its vitality, as well as the life emanating from Ireland as a whole, is the generation of poets who began their careers during this period. Boland's contemporaries at Trinity included Derek Mahon, Brendan Kennelly, and Michael Longley. Around the same time, Eamon Greenan studied at University College, Dublin while Eileen Ní Chuilleanáin attended University College, Cork. Only a few years earlier, Seamus Heaney and Seamus Deane graduated from Queens University in Belfast. Boland, herself, has described the era as "exhilarating" (Allen-Randolph 118). It was not uncommon to see Patrick Kavanagh around Dublin and she often met aspiring poets closer in age to herself, poets such as Mahon and Kennelly, in coffee shops, cafes, and pubs to talk and argue. Although Boland was only 19, Mahon has described her as a woman who possessed enough "assurance" to be twice her age. Mahon has also recalled

sessions in O'Neill's, Jammet's, and the old Royal Hibernian Hotel where the young literati of the day, including himself and Boland, met to engage in "epistemological conversation" or "literary rows and reconciliations" (23).

With all of its attendant advantages and aura, Eavan Boland's career cannot solely be characterized within the ebullient hallmarks of her undergraduate associations. Although she has consistently voiced the importance of friendships she established while at Trinity as well as the general climate of the time which nurtured young writers, she has also articulated her profound sense that something was missing during that period (Allen-Randolph 118). Exactly what or whom was absent would not become clear until after she graduated, however, along with Boland's recollections of intellectual and artistic blossoming, are memories of ambivalence which resulted in her initial reluctance to conceive of herself as a poet. With her marriage to the novelist Kevin Casey, their subsequent move to the Dublin suburbs of Dundrum, and the birth of their two daughters, Sarah and Eavan Frances, Boland came to realize that her hesitancy to "name" herself as a poet, despite her mounting recognition, was the result of limitations imposed on women by the Irish poetic establishment.

One of the more startling realizations that Boland had was that when she left Dublin proper with her husband to raise a family she found she was outside the conventional

topography of the Irish poem. If she stayed within the city, there was a possibility of becoming "an honorary male poet." Indeed, when she traveled in the literary circles of Dublin she was often told that the "best thing" about her work was that one would never know "it was by a woman" (Allen-Randolph 118). Because she left the customary world of an Irish writer, however, for a life of marriage and family, the usual signifiers of womanhood, she was perceived to have relinquished writing.

Eventually, Boland would formally outline the restrictions experienced by Irish women writers in her pamphlet "A Kind of Scar," the debut tract in a feminist series published by Attic Press.[62] In addition to the new direction that Boland's essay would lend to Irish poetry, the pamphlet is significant in this context because it was partly inspired by her reading of Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man. In fact, a year after "A Kind of Scar" was issued by

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[62] Attic Press, established in 1983, remains Ireland's only feminist publishing house. Since its founding it is credited with significantly increasing the number of women writers published in Ireland. It also introduced feminist approaches to the examination and interpretation of Irish culture and politics. Boland's "A Kind of Scar" was part of the LIP Pamphlet series which was developed by Attic to provide Irish women writers, thinkers, and activists with a forum to address contemporary issues and controversies. They range in subject matter from an analysis of Ireland as a post-colonial state to a study of feminist morality. For a more comprehensive analysis of Attic Press, see my "Claiming and Transforming an `Entirely Gentlemanly Artifact': Ireland's Attic Press," "Ten Years of Attic Press," and Kate Martin Gray's "The Attic LIPs: Feminist Pamphleteering for the New Ireland."

Attic, Boland would use Ellison more specifically when a selection of her work, including the essay, were published in the United States. When W.W. Norton released a ten-year compilation of her poetry and American Poetry Review re-issued "A Kind of Scar," Boland titled both "Outside History," a direct reference to Ellison's central character who more than once declares that he is trapped in "real chaos" because he is forced to reside "outside history" (499-500). The invisible man refers to his sense of isolation prompted by both the insignificance accorded blacks in American society as well as prejudices and stereotypes which obscure their humanity.

Beyond providing her with titles for her work, Boland's connection to Ellison continues a legacy established during the 19th-century, by those such as Frederick Douglass, Arthur O'Connor and Daniel O'Connell, whereby the dialectic between the literary and political surfaces, in part, as a crucial outcome of relations between African Americans and the Irish. In fact, many of Boland's responses to Ellison resemble those that Douglass had when he read those who fought for Catholic emancipation in Ireland in the Columbian Orator. For instance, when Douglass learned of the subjugation of Irish Catholics, he was better able to express the oppression he and others experienced because they were African Americans. Likewise, when Boland read Invisible Man, she transferred Ellison's depiction of racial

disenfranchisement in the United States to women in Ireland who have also been denied cultural efficacy. Moreover, just as O'Connor and O'Connell helped Douglass to see the importance of words to larger political transformation, Ellison prompted Boland to recognize how writing both reflects the nation that it operates out of as well as functions as a conduit of change. Through her reading of Invisible Man, she simultaneously articulates in "A Kind of Scar" the ways that Irish women have been negated from Irish history as well as her desire to "relocate" herself "within the Irish poetic tradition" in a way that would allow Irish women more a place within concepts of "Irishness" (20). In this sense, Boland, by way of Ellison, enlarges the connections between literature, nation, and identity, which are so important in Ireland, to include the ways that women figure into the paradigm. Through reading and writing, both Douglass and Boland illustrate how literacy and literary production function as key ingredients to liberation.

In addition to the ways that Boland's relationship with Ellison connects her to earlier associations between African Americans and the Irish, her invocation of Invisible Man represents the first time an Irish writer has acknowledged the influence of an African-American writer, rather than the reverse. Prior to my dissertation, literary critics have not recognized the important influence that Ellison had on Boland. Her articulation of alienation, however, as adopted

from Ellison, provided Boland with a critical stance from which her poetry could be understood and marks the beginning of an insurgence of writing by women in Ireland. In short, the Boland/Ellison relationship provoked a liberatory discourse which argues for the presence of women in Ireland in more viable ways than previous efforts.

Given the precedent that Ellison's influence on Boland establishes, their association demonstrates the larger resonances of black intellectual efforts beyond their immediate cultural parameters. As expressed in my dissertation's conclusion, scholars of black studies have complained that the contributions of blacks have not been recognized as influential in the broader framework of human interaction. Their dismay, in particular, is in reference to the burgeoning field of cultural studies which partly concerns itself with connections between varying cultures and races of people. For instance, bell hooks maintains that despite the inroads which have been made in terms of creating a space where a number of differences as well as intersections can be addressed, blacks have remained those who are talked about rather than as a people with a voice (Culture to Culture 126). Likewise, Gilroy contends that it has been a "struggle" to have blacks perceived as "agents with cognitive capacity and historicity, even intellectual history" (188). Boland's acknowledgement of Ellison's influence, however, directly addresses and begins to reverse

the inadequacies articulated by hooks and Gilroy because it demonstrates the impact of writing by African Americans in Ireland. Furthermore, because Ellison's work mitigated Boland's vision, the transaction undermines traditional models of interracial and cultural associations where whites have been perceived as dominant and influential. Finally, the connection belies what Gilroy calls "dogmatic" thinking which promotes an understanding that cultural traditions stem from insulated and separate nationalities.

Because Gilroy's critique also involves conceptions of national identity, British identity in particular, it is especially useful in examining the circumstances which initially allowed Boland to have an affinity with Ellison's work even though he wrote from an entirely different context. In his argument, Gilroy takes issue with the tendency to view blackness and Britishness as mutually exclusive operatives. He seeks to "reinterpret the cultural core" of England in a way that allows blackness to be seen as a part of "authentic national life" (190). Given the presence of slaves and their descendants in British social and political affairs, Gilroy contends blacks are a "much more powerful element [. . .] in [his] glorious nation than has previously been supposed" (190). He argues that "cultural sensibility" cannot be understood as something "produced spontaneously" from "internal and intrinsic dynamics" (190). Instead, he contends that Britain's

"*external*, supra-national, and imperial" exploits must be included in conceptions of "nationality and national culture" and from such an incorporation "race" becomes intertwined as a "primary" facet (190). For Gilroy, England's historic usurpation of black cultural rudiments and nations have prompted their synthesis as integral to Englishness.

Although Boland's objectives have never included a desire to be understood as British, it is precisely in feelings of dislocation, so adroitly described by Gilroy, that as an Irish person, she can begin to identify with aspects of experience described by diasporic blacks. Since members of both the Irish and the African diasporas have been affected by British colonization, yet have remained outsiders in British society, the very historical terrain occupied by blacks and the Irish argues for at least some affinity. Furthermore, because a significant portion of her childhood was spent in England, Boland personally experienced the alienation that also operates in diasporic black consciousness. In poems pertaining to this time frame, such as "An Irish Childhood in England: 1951" and "In Which the Ancient History I Learn is Not My Own," Boland describes not only her disenfranchisement but also the way her Irish heritage was denigrated by the British to the point where it was nearly irrecoverable. When she recounts her return to her place of birth, in "After a Childhood Away

from Ireland," Boland fully equates identity with national heritage, however, important aspects of her sense of self are missing as a result of the time spent in England. As she enters through the port-town of Cobh (where most famine victims emigrated from Ireland), Boland writes "I only stared./ What I had lost/ was not land/ but the habit of land:/ whether of growing out of,/ or settling back on,/ or being/ defined by [. . .]" (Selected Poems 66-67). For Boland, coming home would involve recovery of her national identity.

Once established in Ireland, however, feelings of alienation would again surface in Boland, although this time they were the result of restrictions exacted upon her as a woman in Ireland rather than as an Irish person in England. It is from this location that Boland wrote "A Kind of Scar" and fully utilized her reading of Ellison to articulate her sense of displacement from the Irish poetic establishment and subsequently her Irish heritage. In the essay, Boland addresses the ways that figures such as "Cathleen Ní Houlihan," "Dark Rosaleen" and the "Old Woman of the Roads" have been used to project the all-powerful political structures of Ireland, mostly in "Aisling" poems. Yet Boland also contends that such a tradition reduced women to the mythic, emblematic, and ornamental (7, 13, 16-18). Similarly, Ellison, in Invisible Man, purposely projects characters such as the boarding-school principal and members

of the Brotherhood as cardboard cutouts of African Americans who only uphold predetermined political ideologies and agendas rather than those who have the ingenuity and influence which allow for liberation. In some ways Invisible Man functions as Ellison's critique of American fiction, fiction which he would later describe in Shadow and Act as that which deprives African Americans "humanity" and "complexity" (xvii). Likewise, Boland saw that the suffering of Irish women throughout history, her "human truths of survival and humiliation," her "true voice and vision," were "routinely excluded" from Irish literature (19). Subsequently, the task for Boland and Ellison was to fashion their existence into the realms of Irish and American literature, respectively.

For Boland, many of the poems in Outside History reiterate her desire to project the real world of women, what she calls in "A Kind of Scar" the "lived vocation," meaning how women spend their time and how they feel about their experiences. In contrast to the "Aisling," the ideal is seen as a wound. The speaker of the poems on several occasions affirms that she needs "flesh" and "history" to create her sense of truth. Toward this purpose coffee mugs shatter, poetic harmonies produce discord, early spring is lost to frost, picked wild flowers bring bad luck, speech is gladly imperfect. Such defects are "human," "mortal," part of an "ordeal" in which the poet chooses to reside.

Even before "A Kind of Scar" and _Outside History_ were published, Boland began to interject her perceptions of the lives of Irish women in her poetry. In doing so, however, she did not divorce herself from themes often equated with Irish writing. Instead, _The War Horse_, Boland's second collection, figures established motifs, such as exile, famine, and war through the domains and personas of Irish women. In the title poem as well as "Child of Our Time" and "Suburban Woman," Boland writes of the troubles in the north of Ireland, yet the conflict erupts in the Republic, on small neighborhood streets, in back gardens, and children's bedrooms while people gossip with neighbors, lean on window sills and sing lullabies. Moreover, she recreates the terror through particular ichnography and action customarily connected to women. Figures hemorrhage, births are still born, even a pair of tights are ruined by runs because of the violence.

The connection between the Irish poem and Irish women would be established further in Boland's subsequent collections, _In Her Own Image_ and _Night Feed_. Rather than stemming from conventional notions of Irish politics, the poems in both books are connected to the often unrevealed and undisclosed aspects of women's lives. _In Her Own Image_ relies, in part, upon the mutilations exacted upon a woman's body, by herself and others, which reflect her vulnerability as well as destruction, especially when such disfiguring is

a response to a man's desire. For instance, "Anorexic" portrays a woman "[. . .] torching/ her curves and paps and wiles" so that she can return to her man "thin as a rib." In "Mastectomy" a male surgeon serves as the perpetrator when he removes a woman's breast as an act of misogyny. The poem, in part, reads "So they have taken off/ what slaked them first,/ what they have hated since:/ blue-veined/ white-domed/ home of wonder/ and the wetness/ of their dreams [. . .]." By moving such private aspects of women's experiences into the public space of poetry, and by showing the involvement of men in such instances, Boland broadens the political territory of the Irish poem to include the subjugation of women.

The poems in Night Feed continue to demonstrate the reality of women's lives yet rather than positioning women as powerless, Boland lends their experience more control and value. In pieces such as "Degas's Laundresses," "Daphne with her thighs in bark," "Woman Posing," "The New Pastoral," and "Domestic Interior," she uses the world of the painter to evoke her vision. The intentions of the artist, though, as he gazes on the female pose, are not Boland's focus. Instead, she gives voice to the women being painted as well as the women who view the work. For instance, a woman hanging wash is cautioned by a female onlooker not to become an idealized form. Likewise, Daphne warns her sisters that perfection is not in the stilted

world of "virtue" but in virtue transgressed. The everyday tasks of women, buying washing powder and tending to the boiling kettle, are kept routine in these poems, yet the unglorified becomes honored. Moreover, the women who speak are transformed from helpless objects into compelling subjects.

While poetry has provided Boland with a means to express an Irish woman's experience, fiction writing was the vehicle by which Ellison sought to recreate the world of African Americans. However, just as Boland's essays have functioned as a means for her to explain her poetic endeavors, Ellison's essays, in Shadow and Act and Going to the Territory, outline his objectives as a fiction writer. In Shadow and Act Ellison would prefigure the creative aspirations expressed in Boland's "A Kind of Scar" when he wrote that his writing "became the agency of [his] efforts" to depict the "wholeness" of "Negro American" life, the "attitudes and values [. . .] which render it bearable and human" (xviii-xix). In many of the essays he begins to articulate aspects of African-American culture which though "warm and meaningful" were seldom "affirmed" as important in American culture (26). As with Boland and Irish women, Ellison desired to move depictions of African Americans from well-established formulas to the lived experiences which involved both the "triumph and sorrow" of existence.

In his introduction to Shadow and Act, Ellison

described his fiction as "a conscious attempt to confront, to peer into, the shadow of my past and to remind myself of the complex resources for imaginative creation which are my heritage" (xix). To convey his meaning through experience, Ellison recounts envying his classmates who left school each fall to pick cotton in the nearby farm country surrounding his home town of Oklahoma City. Though sensitive to the painful memories that resonated in the "cotton patch" for many African Americans, Ellison also wrote that there was "richness" in the "communion" shared at harvest time. "[T]hey always returned," Ellison wrote, "with Negro folk stories which I'd never heard before and which couldn't be found in any books" (27). What his classmates "shared in the country" always seemed "much more real than the Negro middle-class values" Ellison says he was taught in school (27). Though cotton picking obviously signifies slavery for African Americans, Ellison also paradoxically evokes it as an instance where elements central to African-American culture evolved. Finding a language to articulate this dual role, without romanticization, is a crucial and difficult effort.

Although the lives of black men and women in the United States and women in Ireland are vastly different, the works of Ellison and Boland intersect in their objections to impositions which limit their experience to presumptions relative to race and gender. In Irish literature, Boland

writes that women were dismissed as a "passive texture" within a tradition which situated them either as "rhyming queens" or "muses" ("Scar" 20). Likewise, in the United States, Ellison lamented that too often "appropriate" models of African Americans were fixed within portrayals espoused by sociologists who relegated black life to a "condition" more connected to ideology than humanity. Because Ellison grew up in Oklahoma, however, he argued that his sensibility was more in tune with a "frontier attitude" where, as a boy, he was a "member of a wild, free outlaw tribe which transcended the category of race" as it was defined by "specialists and `friends of the Negro'" (Shadow xii). It is precisely in his configurations of the "frontiersman" that Ellison unknowingly helped Boland to break new ground in the Irish poetic tradition by championing women as poets as well as subjects of poetry. In addition to her own success, since the publication of "A Kind of Scar," the number of women writers published in Ireland has more than doubled; there has been an explosion of scholarship devoted to the work of Irish women writers; and feminist appraisals of Irish writing, in general, have increased.

Efforts by African Americans, in addition to Ellison's, are helpful in articulating some of the challenges still facing Irish women writers and their proponents, including Boland herself. For instance, bell hooks in her essay on cultural politics, writes about the limitations of examining

"difference" and "otherness" when those engaged in the "interrogating" have not scrutinized the "perspectives" and "location[s] from which they write" (125). She warns that unless such self-analysis occurs, "old practices" of "supremacy" and "domination" run the risk of being "re-enacted and sustained" (125). What hooks acknowledges is that many positions, including some occupied by women, possess authority and power not available to others. In fact, she has consistently advocated honest assessment of the universal characteristics of power which make it a potential liability for anyone if not recognized. Although her work largely pertains to the inequalities which result from racial differences in the United States, hooks' premise is useful in examining how any number of factors in many contexts distinguish us from one another and subsequently allow or deny privilege.

In writing about Irish women, however, Boland tends to totalize their experiences which not only negates their distinctions but also suggests they are powerless in every aspect of identity. Only women who write in the Irish language have acknowledged the way differences among women have afforded some advantages. For instance, Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill has testified that if achieving legitimacy and recognition has been difficult for women writers in general, it has been doubly hard for those who write in Irish (Gaelic). In an essay titled "What Foremothers?," Ní

Dhomhnaill remembers a proverb in Irish heard often while growing up which evokes the "extreme hostility" faced by women who desired to write:

> na trí rudaí is measa i mbaile;--
> tuíodóir fluich,
> síoladóir tiubh
> file mná
> The three worst curses that could befall a village;
> a wet thatcher (who lets the rain in)
> a heavy sower (who broadcasts seeds too densely)
> a woman poet (no reason given; none needed). (24)

Most moving is Ní Dhomhnaill's attempts to ferret out women writers from earlier centuries. Through bits and pieces of testimony that have survived into the 20th-century, it is evident that women always wrote in Irish, but Ní Dhomhnaill laments the fact that the odds were against their survival in print. "From scattered references throughout folk-lore collections," she writes, "we know that they existed, but that is about all" (24). As with Boland and "A Kind of Scar," Ní Dhomhnaill demonstrates the profound erasure of women in meaningful ways from the Irish language literary tradition.

More polemical than her description of the ways editors ignored the work of women for publication and review, however, is Ní Dhomhnaill's assertion of the ways that women writing in English have ignored their Irish counterparts.

"The most unkindest cut of all," Ní Dhomhnaill writes, "was the total lack of support or comprehension or even acknowledgement of our existence by women writing in English" (26). In exploring this dilemma, Ní Dhomhnaill defers to the work of Máirín NicEoin, an Irish critic, who attributes the problematic relationship between women writing in Irish and "`their peers who write in English'" to the lack of power accorded the Irish language in Irish society (26). Although Irish is still spoken in Ireland, British colonization reduced it to a secondary language which at times has been on the brink of extinction.

By referring to the disparities between women writers in Ireland, Ní Dhomhnaill alludes to the need that differences be recognized particularly by other women. Both Ní Dhomhnaill and NicEoin advocate that their experience, mitigated, in part, by the fact that they are Irish speakers, separates their work in important ways from those in Ireland who write in English, including other women. Ní Dhomhnaill and NicEoin also infer that there is a need for self-consciousness among women in Ireland which allows difference to be accorded legitimacy, especially when it relates to the ways that some possess and have access to power not afforded other women. Because of language differences, Ní Dhomhnaill and NicEoin contend women writing in English have opportunities not available to Irish speakers.

In contrast to Ní Dhomhnaill's "What Foremothers?," Boland argues that women see themselves as reproductions of each other. In her essay titled "The Woman Poet: Her Dilemma," published prior to "A Kind of Scar," she contends that when Irish women write, their efforts become "an amalgam of many women" (44). Boland goes so far as to place herself in a universal role, writing that the "unexpressed life of other women to the woman poet" becomes "emblematic" as if it were "intimately" the poet's own (44). Though Boland hopes affinity will inspire a substantial body of work by women, allowing them to envision themselves as writers given their absence from the Irish literary tradition, it also becomes problematic by creating an artificial composite that allows authorial identities to be constructed at the expense of difference. Despite the strength that women writers can and have derived from one another, such solidarity without recognition of difference once again denies individual women their complexity. One woman's voice does not necessarily speak for all women.

Identifying the way that Boland negates important differences among women, also points to a crucial distinction between her vision of liberation and Frederick Douglass's. When Douglass invoked a comparison between the experiences of African-American slaves and the disenfranchised Irish, he did so in a way which preserved the ways in which the two communities were not alike.

Consequently, Douglass showed how alliances could be constructed but not in ways which obliterated individual histories by means of false analogies. Given the complex relationship between African Americans and the Irish during the 19th-century, Douglass's allowances for difference were as fundamental as his recognition of compatibility. For instance, Douglass was quick to remind the Irish that though they struggled for freedom, they were not slaves. Such a reality became a potent factor in the ways that the Irish bought into the racist structures operating in the United States when they emigrated from Ireland.

The juncture between Boland and Ellison also dissolves when she works to unify writers who are women in Ireland solely because of their gender. Unlike Boland, whenever Ellison was asked to speak of the "Negro experience" he did so cautiously, frequently acknowledging that it was crucial to recognize the ways that African Americans differ from one another. For instance, in Going to the Territory he expressly states that there is a great "diversity of cultural and political experience within the Negro American group" which lends the population a "condition of mystery" and defies habitually speaking of African Americans as if they are one (43). Unlike the way that Boland believes she has an innate ability to comprehend the experience of all women because of her gender, Ellison writes that the "important variations in experience" of African Americans

"make necessary the exercise of conscious thought even on the part of those black Americans who would `know the Negro'" (43). For Ellison, racial compatibility did not preclude individual identity. Although one might be black and as such a member of a particular group, one also had a personal history that could distinguish one from the group. Such particular conditions can be especially significant in terms of the political ramifications they do or do not present.

It is not as if Boland is unaware of the important role that self-analysis and interrogation plays with regard to the place one occupies. In relation to literature, Boland has often written about her gradual recognition that "literary traditions" are not neutral but rather "drenched" in assumptions which stipulate what can be "put in and left out" of the Irish poem (44-45). Yet she limits the legitimizing forces to a patriarchy which is only upheld by male "Troubadours" without recognizing that women, too, can be involved in operations which exclude.

For example, in the essay "The Woman, The Place, The Poet," Boland writes of driving to Clonmel, a small town located in the mid-lands of Ireland in County Tipperary. She makes the journey in order to visit a workhouse where during the 19th-century Irish poor by the hundreds were remanded when they were evicted from their homes by the British. Central to the experience is Boland's disclosure

that her great-grandfather, in 1874, was hired as "master of that most dreaded Irish institution" (Object Lessons 162). Yet rather than exploring her ancestral relationship to her great-grandfather, Boland projects herself, in the remainder of the essay, as one of the homeless women who no doubt died starving in the poor house. Of her great-grandfather, she writes only that she "refus[ed] to imagine him." Boland contends that she is "ashamed of his adroit compliance" and "skillful opportunism by which he ensured [her] family's survival" (163). In side-stepping of her great-grandfather's existence, however, Boland neglects an opportunity to explore how the lives of all of us, even as women, can be touched by complicity in oppressive circumstances. Indeed, she fails to connect her genealogy as a privileged, educated, published poet writing in English to the privileges and survival of this grandfather, a genealogy quite distinct and dependent on the fact that she is not of those who died in the poor house.

An interview with Boland provides another instance in which it is possible to see how the poet neglects the way her life perhaps can be distinguished from other Irish writers. As she recounts her relationship with her mother, Boland tells of a time in her life where she worked as a lecturer at Trinity College but was unhappy with the job. She wrote to her mother about her lack of "taste" for an academic career and her mother responded that if she left

the position, she would help in any way she could (O'Connell 39-40). Although not referred to explicitly, the interview suggests that Boland's family had the financial resources to support her while she wrote and took care of her growing daughters. Surely, access to such assistance distinguishes her from some of her contemporaries many of whom, no doubt, will never have the privilege to get to Trinity, let alone leave it. Boland, herself, has acknowledged the role that personal background plays in terms of one's ability to gain acceptance as an author. With regard to Yeats, she writes, that "[b]efore he even lifted his pen," his gender, nationality, political persuasion, and even his unrequited love for Maud Gonne worked as "solid recognitions" that enabled him to be perceived as a writer (Object Lessons 25). Although her own experience is not the same as Yeats' and as a woman in Ireland the difficulty to be recognized as a poet cannot be denied, there are conditions surrounding Boland's life which work to her advantage. In terms of the politics that she has advanced, exploration of such particulars would also lend her vision a greater degree of paradoxical authenticity.

There can be little doubt that reading Boland through black voices that she acknowledges as well as those that she does not opens up new avenues by which to understand her writing. Manthia Diawara writes that when borders are crossed in ways that dissolve traditional demarcations of

scholarly inquiry, it allows for the modes of one culture to be "elaborat[ed] in order to show the limitations of the other" (204). In this way, by raising the importance of difference which persists as a liberatory element and not something to be overcome in writing that addresses and reflects the black community, it is possible to see how feminist inquiry in Ireland could be developed in constructive ways that allow for even more complex constructions of women to be advanced than those which Boland advocates. When cast alongside explorations of blackness, Boland's figuration of women into a paradigm of literature, nation, and identity only serves as a beginning for expanding notions of "Irishness." On this front, then, perhaps women such as Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill and Máirín NicEoin who write in Irish, are closer to opening up such paradigms which use, rather than exclude the terms of difference to universal liberatory ends. But that opens up a series of different questions, forestated here by the scope of this historical and English inquiry.

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