

‘to transplant in alien soil’: Race, Nation, Citizenship, and the Idea of Emigration in the Revolutionary Atlantic

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Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the un-healable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted. And while it is true that literature and history contain heroic, romantic, glorious, even triumphant episodes in an exile’s life, these are no more than efforts meant to overcome the crippling sorrow of estrangement. The achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever.

—Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile*

I was leaving the South to fling myself into the unknown ... I was taking a part of the South to transplant in alien soil, to see if it could grow differently, if it could drink of new and cool rains, bend in strange winds, respond to the warmth of other suns and, perhaps, to bloom.

—Richard Wright

The outlaws, of the men without a country.

—Stefan Zweig

Landless people are but refugees in a strange land.

— Gary Grant¹

Renegade Negroes and Exiles: Origins of Revolutionary Transnationalism

The Haitian Revolution (1791–1804) was a cataclysmic event of global magnitude. Among its many influences was the transformation of several major cities in the Atlantic world, shifting, in particular, the human geographies of the Caribbean and the larger Atlantic basin.² In the context of the Western hemisphere, the revolution was perhaps “the first truly modern international crisis of exiles.”³ At the same time that the French Revolution was underway, racial revolution spread throughout the French Caribbean colony of Saint-Domingue. In the process, discontent between the enslaved and the *gens de couleur* (free people) fused with revolutionary upheavals from France. The Black revolutionaries had been merely seeking to make themselves rightful heirs of the revolutionary saga in France. To underscore this point, one historian notes that “mere months before Haiti’s actual independence the rebel leaders defined themselves not in opposition to France and the white race but as defenders of the French revolutionary heritage.”⁴ This convulsion between transatlantic events meant dangerous republican ideals were traversing the ocean currents. From this back-and-forth emerged what, in hindsight, was the logical culmination of a Franco-Haitian revolutionary Atlantic community that consolidated discontent among the enslaved, much to the chagrin of nearby American officials.⁵ For even among the whites who fled the colony for the United States were French slaveholders who were often accompanied by some of their human property, the enslaved people of African descent—a fact that generated widespread fear among white Americans, especially slaveholders.⁶

Together, bondservants, masters, and mistresses boarded ships that dropped them on the shores of Cuba and various Caribbean islands as well as the Caribbean coast of South America and the United States.⁷ US planters rightly suspected that the political sensibilities of their own slaves, and of freedmen, would be affected.⁸ Indeed, there were notable repercussions of the French Revolution throughout the American South to suggest that their fears were not unfounded.⁹ For example, in 1800 an enslaved blacksmith, Gabriel Prosser, plotted a rebellion in Richmond, inspired in part by the example of Haiti.¹⁰ More troubles followed in 1811, as Haitian-born slave Charles Deslondes led a large band of enslaved rebels marching toward New Orleans in a failed attempt to conquer the city and overthrow the slavocracy.¹¹ Then came Denmark Vesey, a free Black carpenter from Charleston, South Carolina who plotted a failed rebellion that inspired South Carolina’s *Negro Seamen Act of 1822*, which restricted the land movements of Black sailors for fear that they would spread ideas inspired by

Haiti.¹²

In the United States, some communities, like Charleston, did not always distinguish between which parties they perceived as dangerous: masters and mistresses, free Black people, or the human chattel they took with them. All three groups were, it was believed, potential disrupters of the lucrative slave market and the stable relations between white masters and Black slaves the refugees found on arrival.¹³ Some American planters, and the broader public, correctly feared that Franco-Haitian revolutionary ideals would plant the seeds of rebellion not just among African American slaves, but even poor and working-class whites too. While sympathetic to the French slaveholders who had been arriving at American ports as refugees, the same sentiments were not held for the human property they brought alongside them, nor for the thousands of *affranchis* (free people of color) who arrived.¹⁴

Although supportive of the French Revolution in his letters to General Marquis de Lafayette, Thomas Jefferson reserved his goodwill for France, not its colonies.¹⁵ According to Thomas Clarkson, Lafayette later lamented with anger that “I would have never have drawn my sword in the cause of America, if I could have conceived that thereby I was founding a land of slavery.”¹⁶ Given the widespread racial revolution—for or against slavery—Jefferson, being closer to the theater of the revolution in Saint-Domingue, was apprehensive even as he had to consider the necessity of containing the possible excesses of the war. The president was also suspicious of France’s motives for deporting the several thousand Black exiles and people of color to other shores, especially in Florida and sometimes clandestinely. By one estimate, the French navy had brought about two thousand of the exiles on the coast of Florida.¹⁷ In one instance, on August 27, 1802, as the Haitian War for Independence (1802–1804) raged on between France and the Black revolutionaries,¹⁸ President Thomas Jefferson hurried off a letter to his secretary of state, James Madison, “on the subject of apprehensions that the negroes taken from Guadaloupe will be pushed in on us.”¹⁹ This fear stemmed from the fact that Napoleon’s effort to reconquer and establish slavery throughout the French Caribbean involved exiling revolutionaries and Black prisoners of war. Three French war ships first tried to land in “Carthage, where they touched with a view to sell, or otherwise dispose of a number of renegade negroes they have on board.”²⁰ They were barred from entering the city. As was true of other European powers, Spanish authorities feared the “renegade negroes” could potentially incite the enslaved population to rebellion. Writing from New York City a week before, Jefferson himself had heard of the exiles; American lieutenant colonel Wade Hampton wrote to Secretary Madison to alert him that “Some little time ago three French ships of War arrived at this Port [New York].... The number of these unfortunate half-starved wretches already arrived, and momentarily expected in three other ships of War, amount to about 1500, and from the best information we can collect after having been at much pains to procure it, we have little doubt but they will attempt to disperse them clandestinely along the Southern coast, they have in many instances offered to sell them in this City, in open violation of the laws” of the state.²¹ The danger was

anticipated by Colonel Hampton, who hailed from one of the wealthiest slaveholder families in South Carolina. Perhaps it took the reflex of a slaveholder who was familiar with the brutality of slavery, as Hampton was, for him to foresee that slave rebellions on the scale that were occurring in the Caribbean theater were not too far from reaching the shores of other lands throughout the Americas. Although he acknowledged that “this information may not in every respect be correct, yet we believe it nearly so, and from the extreme agitation which exists in the public mind, we have deemed it expedient to give it to you, with a view, that you make such use of it as you think proper to guard against a measure which if carried into effect may considerably endanger the peace and tranquility of the Southern States.”²² Just nine years after penning this letter to Madison, the peace and tranquility he feared might be disturbed devolved into an outright rebellion on American soil. As a military official, Hampton led the suppression of the 1811 slave uprising on the Louisiana German Coast.²³

The French nightmare had not only materialized as an Atlantic problem but also metastasized on US soil when it became known that the principal leader of the largest rebellion in American history was a Haitian-born slave driver, Charles Deslondes.²⁴ The world the Haitian Revolution made inadvertently dispersed these revolutionary exiles across the Atlantic. Ultimately such movements consolidated a Black Atlantic that existed within a milieu where Black people were exchanged as chattels, and where eminent revolutionary consciousness could pass from one agitator to the next. It appeared that no locales could enjoy tranquility that had not respected the humanity of the enslaved or the full rights of the citizenship of free people of color. Hampton, unlike his superiors who did not come from the deeper South, had reasons to be aware of the threats and dangers posed by the Haitian Revolution.

The underworld of sailors, debtors, and pirates who traveled across the Atlantic carried news of the Haitian insurrections and the political ideals they inspired. Like any revolutionary contagion that threatens to unravel the worlds of power, planters throughout the South understood that the Haitian revolutionaries must not succeed. Therefore, cities like Savannah, Georgia, passed a resolution on July 2, 1795, barring the entry of “seasoned Negroes, or People of Colour, from any of the West India, Windward, Leeward, or Bahama Islands, East or West Florida, or any other port whatever, with seasoned Negroes or People of Colour, who have been one month on the said islands, or East or West Florida.”²⁵ This desperate measure to prevent the traffic of bodies that circulated with the goods from a region that was essentially the most prominent trade partner of the United States is indicative of the problem and the “mischiefs which the people of St. Domingo, and other French islands, have experienced, from the insurrection of their Negroes and People of Colour.”²⁶ In these perceived, albeit real and present threats, some white French émigrés were often seen as possible colluders who aided slave agitation; in essence, Jacobin types associated with the *Société des Amis des Noirs* (Society of Friends of the Blacks) under the pretense of being war refugees.²⁷ This perception was not in the least unfounded, as

France did see the development of a core group of respected men who publicly advocated for equal rights for *hommes de couleur libres* (a term, though gendered, applied socially to men and women who were free persons of color).²⁸ Notable names like Jacques-Pierre Brissot, Olympe de Gouges, Abbé Henri Grégoire, and Honoré-Gabriel Riqueti, comte de Mirabeau, and philosophes like Antoine de Condorcet, as well as revolutionary general, the Marquis de Lafayette, all lent their public voices to the campaign that would later fuel the beginnings of the Haitian Revolution. It was their interventions that led to the April 4 law in 1792 that eventually accelerated the French National Convention's abolition of slavery in the colonies on February 4, 1794.²⁹ By the late 1790s, the *Société* had dispersed and was largely defunct after several prominent members were guillotined. Regardless, as far as Southern slaveholders were concerned, it had already sown the seeds of republicanism and discontent in the hearts of the enslaved. For some scholars, this migration from revolutionary Saint-Domingue to the United States explains diasporic connections that existed between Black people from Charleston, South Carolina, and those from Cap-Haitien, Haiti.³⁰ Meanwhile, in a recent study of the experiences of these migrants as an example of competing identities among people of African descent, one scholar argues that the emergence of an ethnic identity among Black Saint-Dominguans, shaped by their Roman Catholicism and Franco-African heritage, slowed the potential assimilation between African Americans and Haitian communities in early Philadelphia.³¹ Moreover, studies focusing on those same migratory influences on New Orleans demonstrate more assimilation, another indicator of the transcultural and political dynamism of the revolution.³² Irrespective of the measures of their influence, the Black revolutionaries sent shockwaves throughout the Atlantic in part because after 1793, the thirty thousand refugees who left the island helped carry the news of the revolution far beyond Hispaniola to other parts of the Atlantic world. For example, Cuba, Caracas, Guatemala, Florida, and to some extent France, as well as other nations near and far, received refugees of the Saint-Dominguan diaspora.³³ This migration did not stop until 1809, five years after revolutionary activities in Haiti had ended. For decades after, the influence of the migration would be felt in the social, economic, cultural, and physical architectures of numerous communities in the Spanish-American empire, ranging from Spanish New Orleans to Cuba, and extending to Cartagena de Indias, the most important port city of the Viceroyalty of New Granada. In Cartagena, French Caribbean migrants later established maritime connections with Haitian revolutionaries during the Latin American wars of independence to defend the city's claim to sovereignty from Spain.³⁴

To be sure, migration currents spurred by the Haitian Revolution were not the first to roil the Americas. The American Revolution before it had also created its own revolutionary diaspora of devoted loyalists, white and Black, throughout the Atlantic.³⁵ One study, for example, documents the life of Lieutenant Colonel James Moncrieff, an exiled loyalist from Georgia and South Carolina who migrated three times with his property by transporting both free Black laborers and his own considerable estate of

enslaved Americans from East Florida to Jamaica and then to the Mosquito Coast.³⁶ This article, however, takes a different angle to examine a similarly world-changing revolution that was perhaps more of a watershed than any other in the early history of transnational migration in the Americas, not least because it resulted in the spread of both antislavery ideologies and a repudiation of the same.

The Haitian Revolution began in earnest as a small-scale rebellion spurred by controversy between landed whites and their wealthy mixed-race offspring—*gens de couleur*. In this regard, it also mirrored and could be said to have been among the side effects of the revolutionary turmoil in mainland France. As events then turned from a French colonial debacle to an international affair that implicated the Atlantic World, it recreated and shifted the meanings of encounters between Black peoples and their superiors. In the process, the Haitian Revolution redefined the various kinds of experiences that freedom, citizenship, racial oppression, and enslavement wrought on Black bodies in the many zones of colonialism and slavery in the Americas. Most revealing is how, in the United States, the cultural geography of centers like Philadelphia, Norfolk, Baltimore, and New Orleans were never the same politically after they received hundreds, and sometimes thousands, of Franco-Haitian refugees.

A Home of One's Own: Against European Universalism

While the Haitian Revolution created its own diaspora, it is also worth noting that in reverse it influenced and inspired the dynamism of an Afro-political diaspora beyond its shores. That is, those who were affected by events surrounding the revolution also exerted, whether willingly or by spillover effects, influence on the diffusion of the revolution's legacy on a global scale.³⁷ Among the documented values of how those who imbibed its ideas also affected larger schemes of antislavery activism is the fact that discussions initially instigated by the American and French revolutions—issues of citizenship, nationalism, and human rights—took on new immediacy, especially in the radical imaginations of would-be political exiles from African America. Often dismissed as escapism and fantasy,³⁸ the question of citizenship—as it pertained to land, nationhood, and self-determination—had always been a major concern for Black abolitionists.

As an early exemplar of African American emigration and global antislavery, Prince Saunders, whose life story takes center stage in this study, offers many historical insights into African Americans' constant search for a stable home and a firm political identity. Before diving further into myriad historical questions that this article might spark by examining Black emigration, we must first make sense of the political, social, and racial concerns and themes that inspired this study. The main story begins with understanding what, if anything, Prince Saunders's life as a multinational exile teaches us about the politics of racism, slavery, and citizenship in the United States, and how African American perception of revolutionary Haiti was invoked in confronting the problems and questions of the early to mid-nineteenth century.

Saunders's transatlantic political career spanned the decades between 1800 and 1840. Born in 1775 in Lebanon, Connecticut, and raised in Thetford, Vermont, Saunders was the son of an enslaved Black mother and her enslaved husband, a revolutionary war veteran who had served as perhaps the nation's first Black apothecary of the army during the American War for Independence (1775–1783). In adulthood, Saunders distinguished himself by becoming among the first African Americans to graduate from an Ivy League university by the 1810s. He further developed a reputation as a leading educator and reformer in early nineteenth-century Boston. Upon migrating to Haiti, he began serving as a charismatic Haitian plenipotentiary to Great Britain and enjoyed a brief tenure as a health minister in the court of King Henry I of Haiti (1811–1820). By the time of his death in 1839, Saunders was serving as the attorney general of Haiti in the long presidency of Jean-Pierre Boyer. During his many voyages to London, Saunders worked on behalf of Haitian leaders to encourage British antislavery sympathizers to expand their ongoing transatlantic abolitionist cooperation with the Haitian king, and support Haiti's educational endeavors toward building learned societies, expanding primary education, developing the country's public health complex and other infrastructural and internal developments that he hoped would inspire African Americans to emigrate, spur economic growth in the country, and then attract the overdue recognition of the Black republic as a sovereign nation.

Ponder for a moment on how a fictional classic offers some key insights into how we might think of Black émigrés like Prince Saunders. In his classic novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, James Joyce maintains that he writes from “silence, exile and punning.”³⁹ What precisely he meant by exile is debatable, as he refused to expound on a definitive account of whether what he left behind should be considered “my home, my fatherland, or my church.”⁴⁰ Joyce's writings indicate that he appeared to be especially fond of his home, or the idea of it. His pages are imbued with an endearing attachment to the “fatherland” he so adamantly claims to reject. He also refers to his writing as the long arm writing from an exile's perspective. These same ideas of home, nationalism, and belonging are echoed in the life of Prince Saunders and his emigrationist activism with regard to the resettlement of African Americans in Haiti. For Joyce, exile offered a lens to look from the outside at Ireland, his home. In the same way, Saunders used Haiti to reexamine conditions surrounding freedom, equality, and citizenship in the United States. But why choose a life of *exile*—a loaded idea that evokes foreignness, alienation, rejection, and status as a denizen more than a citizen—a subject more than a sovereign individual, and rootlessness rather than rooted identity?

Vacillating between a *Künstlerroman* and a *bildungsroman*, *A Portrait of the Artist*, according to Joyce, is not about him; it is not an autobiographical fictional life of the artist imitating the artist's life. At least this was the line of defense he hoped would deflect the chatter that supposed that his fictional “portrait” of the “artist” and of the “young man” were in fact a self-portrait. In spite of his protest, scholars have

argued that evidence points to Joyce's life as indeed affecting his fictional narrative, not least because the main protagonist of the story mirrors young Joyce's experiences for the first twenty years of his life. In doing so, Joyce shows how the precarious life of an artist differs from that of others who occupy the same world but whose views on community, roots, nationalism, and country operate in an alternate universe to his. He often clashes with a society that prescribes his identity for him, and as a result, the artist feels distanced and displaced from the world. Pulled from a sedentary state, the artist feels isolated and is increasingly aware of a certain growing social alienation.

Sensitive, eloquent, and goal-oriented, Joyce's young man could be the European version of Prince Saunders, a Black American. Like Saunders, Joyce struggled, it seems, with the dialectics of cosmopolitanism and provincialism. He was born in one locale, Dublin, and emigrated permanently to another, Zurich, where he eventually died in exile and was buried. As noted earlier, Joyce lived as a transient national who could never in fact sever his attachment to home. If his body rests in Zurich, his mind and his ghost lie in Dublin: "For myself, I always write about Dublin, because if I can get to the heart of Dublin I can get to the heart of all the cities of the world. In the particular is contained the universal."⁴¹ The same was true of Prince Saunders, whose exilic identity was also the formation of a *particular universalism* that was unique to the lives of northern free Black people whose political existence contained multitudes—he was Afro-American and Haitian, ambassador to European gentility while a freeman in Haiti—and who was bound to a precarious racialized political existence that relegated him to second-class citizenship in his native land. In this regard, the many hyphenated selves and numerous binaries provide historians a rare opportunity to glimpse at the biography of how race and racism made a people into a political entity across borders. In this sense, in the story of Prince Saunders is a Black life that is doubly national and international in scope and that converged in one individual. In this context, Saunders's life and activist itinerary are living examples of the many political identity formations that comprise the diversity of Black America. As such, his life provides insights into the cosmopolitan and the global dimensions of Blackness.

There are also the conflicts of nation versus empire and national versus global. How, some have asked, can cosmopolitanism truly, adequately, accommodate nationalism? After all, is there not an antagonism between them that invokes one in order to counter the other? Is the cosmopolite not a rootless individual? How then can cosmopolitanism and internationalism integrate a genuine politics of citizenship that transforms structures, rights, and politics into a society of equals? In sum, what these Joycean questions are really pondering is this: how do we negotiate the complex and mutually dependent relationship between the universal and the particular, and between home and exile? Inherent in these questions are also tensions that presuppose a conflict between parts and wholes. And yet, closer historical examinations point to Haitians and African Americans dispelling such conflicts as perhaps removed from reality, if not entirely mythical. For as long as white supremacy

flourished, Haiti's symbolism as the antithesis to that world meant that African Americans and even the most enlightened republican philosophes who sought to marginalize Black people could not do so by overlooking Haiti's importance. What Haiti represented for African Americans was the idea that underscores that Black humanity cannot be disavowed in the modern age. Where actual contradictions exist are in white Herrenvolk ideologies. Simply put, unwillingness to accept the truism of Black humanity and its equality exposes deep political contradictions and hypocrisies that African Americans could point to as unaligned with American revolutionary ethos. Life was spectacularly brutal for Haitians in the postrevolutionary years. And yet, the Revolution did afford them the security of a freedom unmitigated by the cancerous psychology of white supremacy or that one could not be both Black and a human being. Indeed, this powerful claim—full equality—later became the motto of the nascent radical Abolitionist Movement in the 1830s.

To start probing these questions, consider a variety of responses from, among others, philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah. He maintains that cosmopolitanism must not be seen as diluted or inauthentic because of its seemingly rootless form. In a world of cosmopolites, patriotism is “the possibility of a world in which everyone is a rooted cosmopolitan, attached to a home of one's own, with its own cultural particularities, but taking pleasure from the presence of other, different places that are home to other, different people.”⁴² More importantly, he adds, the cosmopolitan also imagines that in such a world, migration, nomadism, and diaspora are core elements of a circulatory identity, as communities are formed by voluntary and involuntary exiles. This world of exiles is not possible in a Pan-European world, where appeals to universalism are espoused through power and white domination. The reason, argues historian Immanuel Wallerstein, has to do with the fact that “the universalism of the powerful has been a partial and distorted universalism,” which he calls “European Universalism.”⁴³ That is, this vision of the world had been put forward by Pan-European leaders and intellectuals in their quest to protect their interests, which are mainly reliant on a world of unequal and undemocratic virtues to sustain white supremacy.

By contrast, Prince Saunders's transatlantic efforts were entirely based on finding the path to enunciate and institutionalize a universal universalism where human rights, and hence human worth, is not predicated on what is given to one group by another, but on what values such society collectively creates with regard to the moral enterprise of a more wholesome humanity. In this enterprise, the criterion is a set of doctrines and ethical responsibilities derived not from the powerful, but from the context of the global universal values of the oppressed and persecuted. In short, in this moral enterprise one can find a home of one's own, where citizenship is alternatively global and local and where the exile can operate in the particular national community while having the flexibility to enjoy a citizenship expansive enough to be transnational.

Exile Then and Now: A Retrospective

In some respects, Black transnationalism has been a fixture of the Atlantic and Caribbean basin for hundreds of years preceding Saunders. Even in postcolonialism, it developed into new and enduring forms, so much so that almost two centuries after their country's declaration of independence, Haitians' migration back and forth between the United States and Haiti continued uninterrupted. Take, for instance, the fact that for more than forty years, thousands of Haitians have crossed the seven hundred-mile stretch of ocean between the northern tip of Haiti and the southern coast of Florida, hoping to land on the shores of the United States to seek asylum. This exodus began in 1972, in response to the brutal repression of the dynastic dictatorships of François and Jean-Claude Duvalier, the father-and-son duo who ruled Haiti from 1957 to 1986.⁴⁴ Then, in 1991, a military junta supported by the US government deposed democratically elected president Jean-Bertrand Aristide in a coup that prompted a mass exodus of people by boat. Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, a US naval station, provided a location for temporary housing and the orderly adjudication of asylum claims outside of the continental United States. Beyond serving a role as encampment for refugees, in 2010, Guantanamo Bay again became a critical hub for the provisions of humanitarian disaster relief following the devastating earthquakes in Haiti.⁴⁵ Despite attempts to stem the flow of migrants in the decade between 1972 and 1982, fifty-five thousand Haitians had emigrated to the United States.⁴⁶ As recently as the year 2009, 1,782 Haitians were interdicted by the US Coast Guard, detained at Guantanamo Bay, and then deported when their asylum petitions were rejected.⁴⁷

The reversal of this migration pattern is precisely what took place in the 1810s and 1820s when some African Americans left the United States and sailed for Haiti, where slavery had been abolished in 1804.⁴⁸ The Haitian Revolution ended with the victory of ex-slaves over French slaveholders. Following the declaration of independence, the Haitian Constitution of 1805 made ethno-African or Native American identity a prerequisite for citizenship, affirmed the legal emancipation of the slaves, and annulled the right of property—whether in chattel or any forms of titular holding or tangible assets—for white men. The Constitution also declared that all “Haytians shall hence forward be known only by the generic appellation of Blacks,” regardless of skin color.⁴⁹ By the stroke of a pen, Haitians in effect overthrew the tyranny of European colonialism, empire, and the legal cultures of capitalism and slavery that sustained racism. By this formulation that bundled freedom, Blackness, and nationhood in citizenship, the revolutionaries deracialized the understanding of human rights.

What is remarkable about postindependence Haiti is that it created the narrowest construction of citizenship in order to secure Black equality. At the same time, it qualified the legality of that Blackness in the most universal sense imaginable. Although an active understanding of Blackness as universal regulated Haitian citizenship, no one was in fact excluded from officially declaring him- or herself Black. That was because the citizenship clause was specifically constructed to meet a historical necessity. There were, at the time of

the Haitian War for Independence, about fifty-three hundred Polish soldiers who had defected from Napoleon's army and had joined the Haitian Revolutionaries.⁵⁰ The Polish soldiers, initially referred to as the "white negroes of Europe," were merely required to affirm by allegiance that they indeed considered themselves to be Black men. In other words, the wretched of the earth, the rejected, and the despised—people previously marginalized by racism in the law—became the subjects who defined the most universal framework for attaining citizenship.⁵¹ In doing so, Haitian revolutionaries created a legal regime that was both racially specific to Black and Indigenous liberation and also radically antiracist.

Meanwhile, chattel slavery in the United States continued unabated, as Congress would not enact a ban of the slave trade until 1807, twenty years after independence.⁵² Indeed, the inhumane tradition expanded enough to force a segment of the American population to flee the country for Haiti, the world's first Black republic. The emigrants were welcomed by enthusiastic Haitian officials who had been making overtures to African Americans to repatriate to Haiti, just a decade after the latter's independence.⁵³ However, the realities of racism in the era of the transatlantic slave trade would make it difficult for African Americans to promote the republic as representative of the virtues of self-governance. White supremacy could not tolerate the counter-hegemonic project of Black nationalism.⁵⁴ Black nationalism is here understood to describe an ideological worldview in which Haitians and African Americans stood together against white supremacy.⁵⁵ Rooted in ideologies circulating in the revolutionary Atlantic and in Haiti's radical antislavery ideals, this solidarity, which I call "revolutionary transnationalism,"⁵⁶ sought to create a society unburdened by racism.⁵⁷

Of Home, Land, and Nation

To reconceptualize this history of Black migration, I propose that we move from speaking of the Haitian Revolution simply as legacy to delineating the political relationship that developed between African American Black Nationalists and postrevolutionary Haitian allies with regard to the ideas this relationship generated around transnational politics in the Black Atlantic. I further present a history of the idea of African American emigration, not from the South but from the North, and to other lands outside of mainland North America—in this case, Haiti. Was the emigration by Americans to Haiti during the nineteenth century a political rejection of the United States? Or was it an opportunity to explore the possibilities of democratic citizenship—the right to have rights—that only Haiti had to offer, in the hope of promoting genuine democracy also in the United States?⁵⁸ Why did the Haitian government invite African Americans to settle in Haiti? And why, in spite of their insistence that they, too, were Americans, did some thirteen thousand African Americans accept the invitation? Black emigration, I argue, was not born of racial solidarity. Rather, it was the political consequence of exclusion. That much became evident as early as the 1790s when Prince Hall, a prominent African American freemason, urged Black Bostonians to heed

the example of Haiti.⁵⁹ Sympathetic to the ongoing revolutionary struggle in Haiti, Hall delivered a speech in 1797 that anticipated emigrationist sentiments that would come decades later. “The day [of revolution] dawns now in some of the West Indies Island,” he observed.⁶⁰ And like the Haitian revolutionaries, free African Americans should take note and not let themselves “be cast down under these and many abuses we at present are laboring under, for the darkest hour is just before the break of the day.”⁶¹ A common tendency among historians is to see this transnational united front between two distinct Black counterparts as a prepackaged precursor to Pan-Africanism. This ahistorical reading does not take into account that the reverse may have been more to the point: Treated within a European Atlantic that degraded Africans and their descendants as political and social inferiors, a people was shaped into consciousness whose only shared identity was not based on geography but on the deprivation of basic rights that both French and Anglo-American revolutionaries claimed as privileges of natural law. Ultimately, it was within this understanding the emigrants left for Haiti, needing as it were to sever the ties that existed between white nationalism and inequality (sociopolitical and economic) and citizenship in the United States.

To the extent that slavery undergirded freedom and economic development in the US, it was the organizing principle and the opium of the master class. As John Calhoun—an American slaveholder, congressman, and ardent supporter of slavery—reminded John Quincy Adams, slavery was the providence of Black people: “It was only manual labor—the proper work of slaves. No white person could descend to that. And it was the best guarantee to equality among the whites.”⁶² It was a stark reminder that Black bondage affirmed white freedom. And since Blackness was the mark of slavery, it was also duly associated with sin, dependence, and abjection. Slave status, considered by some a personal choice, was seen as willful submission; in their condition, slaves had forfeited the privileges of freedom.⁶³ This logic suggests that if whiteness came to represent virtue and independence, then it follows that slavery was a cornerstone of exclusion. Consequently, American citizenship became contingent on castigating Black people as unworthy of freedom. The unfitness of Black people and their enslaved status became central to early American political discourse.⁶⁴ This cruel irony—a professed “Empire of Liberty” with slaves—was displayed most vividly in a scientism of race. But the coming of the Haitian Revolution decisively challenged the foundation of this irreconcilable contradiction—the idea that Black people were naturally slaves unworthy of freedom.

Of Place, Race, and Space in Citizenship

In August 1791, slaves in northern Saint-Domingue launched a rebellion that toppled the slave-owning regime in an effort to disentangle the contradictions and realign the French Revolution with its professed ideals of the rights of man and of the citizen. In the process, enslaved Africans overthrew the French colonial order, and defeated an

armada sent by Napoleon Bonaparte with the goal of restoring slavery on the island. In 1794 the French assembly took notice and moved to recognize the de facto freedom of the Haitian slaves by formally abolishing slavery throughout its colonies. From 1797 to 1802, under the military leadership of Toussaint Louverture, the former slaves won many political concessions from France. Louverture, cementing his control over the entire island of Hispaniola, established a colonial constitution that reaffirmed the abolition of slavery and declared Black and white people equal citizens under the law. Louverture's actions angered the first consul of France, Napoleon Bonaparte, who by then had led a coup that established him as emperor. Napoleon did not object to the Haitian Constitution outright but expressed concerns that, while "it includes many good things," it was also "contrary to the dignity and the sovereignty of the French people, of which Saint-Domingue is only a part." In 1802 he sent General Charles Leclerc, his brother-in-law, to rein in the Black general, restore slavery, and "rid us of these gilded Negroes" such as Louverture.⁶⁵

With Louverture exiled and imprisoned in France, the restoration of slavery seemed imminent. The fact that broader economic aims were at the core of Napoleon's plans was not lost on anyone, especially the Africans he tried to re-enslave. If the revolution was not quelled, Bonaparte argued, France "will have nothing to wish for ... and an immense and beautiful colony will always remain a volcano, and will inspire no confidence in capitalists, colonists or commerce." That much he made clear to his brother-in-law, assuring him that "once the Blacks have been disarmed ... you will have done more for the commerce and civilization of Europe than we have done in our most brilliant campaigns."⁶⁶ Louverture was exiled to a prison deep in the French Alps, and the slaves, allied once again with freedmen, reconstituted the revolutionary army under Louverture's successor, Jean-Jacques Dessalines.

In November 1803, the revolutionaries defeated the French army to cap a thirteen-year bloody struggle and resolved to "[r]ender the country independent, and to enjoy the liberty consecrated by the blood of the people of this island."⁶⁷ Renaming Saint-Domingue Hayti, after the Taino Indians' word for mountainous land, the revolutionaries succeeded where many failed before and since: The Haitian Revolution became the only successful slave revolt in history to establish one of the first independent nations in the New World and the modern world's first Black republic.⁶⁸ It was following this declaration of independence that writers of the Haitian Constitution of 1805 introduced several short clauses—2, 12, and 14—that made Blackness the central definition of citizenship.⁶⁹

For many African American observers, what may have seemed improbable to whites was a vindication of the capacity of Black people to resist oppression and fight for their overdue freedom and equality. The examples of Louverture and his men refuted the racist myths that justified slavery. Racial ideologies could not convincingly reinforce notions of Black submissiveness, as Haiti's existence, and the clear defeat of Europeans by African and Afro-Caribbean revolutionaries, challenged ideologies of white supremacy. In place of slavery were substituted the very ideas of universal

equality that the United States claimed to embody despite institutionalizing inhumane bondage. In this sense, revolutionary Haitians conceived their struggle as rooted in the universal identity of human beings. Ethnic identity as it pertains to the related idea of equal political rights is only stipulated in the Haitian Constitution, in this instance, to guard against the legal and political exclusions of groups that were historically denied “a politics of equal dignity.”⁷⁰ In the face of this substantiation of rights, racist ideologues derided Haitian revolutionaries as nefarious cannibals, while newspapers wrote that they were only “spurred on by the desire of plunder, carnage, and conflagration ... and not by the spirit of liberty, as some folks pretend.”⁷¹ As these derogatory reports proliferated in the American press, the silencing of the Haitian Revolution’s impact came to depend on outright denial. As historian Ashli White observes, alternative “[a]ccounts in American newspapers ... generally denied that the slaves were the authors of revolution. Instead, contemporary commentators looked to other groups—French republicans, colonists, and antislavery activists among others—as a way to explain the uprising.”⁷²

Not surprisingly, these denials could not prevent African Americans from absorbing Haiti’s revolutionary example. Revolutionary transnationalism bound Haitians and African Americans as comrades in their fight against slavery. As partners, they attempted many different solutions to the problem of freedom and slavery in the nineteenth century, most notably the emigration of African Americans to Haitian shores. The Haitian Revolution had, itself, already created a white and Black diaspora, carrying stories of slave insurrections to the United States. Successive waves of emigrants to the North American mainland settled in Philadelphia, Maryland, Charleston, New York, and elsewhere. New Orleans received the lion’s share of ninety percent of Haitian émigrés, doubling the city’s Black population. Attempts to silence the broader implications of the Haitian Revolution could also be seen in the response to Denmark Vesey’s slave rebellion conspiracy, which reflected a paranoia that was not entirely unfounded. In 1822, Denmark Vesey, a former slave turned carpenter and Methodist preacher, had plotted a rebellion to execute Charleston’s slave masters, liberate the city, then sail to Haiti for refuge. In the ensuing months, the slave conspirators and their allies were put on trial by city authorities. The justices charged Vesey “with a diabolical plot designed to instigate blood, outrage, rapine, and conflagration.”⁷³ In the end, Vesey and 34 of his followers and co-conspirators were hanged. For the authorities, the lesson was clear: conceivably, Haitian revolutionaries could entice Black Americans to challenge the fatal contradiction on which American liberty was sustained—white freedom, Black slavery.⁷⁴

The North, too, worried that freedmen would catch on to the significance of a Black country as neighbor to the world’s most racially repressive nation. Revolutionaries like Thomas Jefferson, and white Americans more generally, could not imagine the United States as a biracial society and took steps to restrict its possibility. The American Constitution protected slavery and permitted the African slave trade to continue for another twenty years. Fugitive slave laws criminalized runaways and

required fugitives to be returned to their owners. Three-fifths of slaves were counted in the electoral rolls of the Southern states, dramatically expanding the power of the slaveholder gentry in national life. Meanwhile, the North took on a more racist character. While free Blacks enjoyed greater rights than the slaves, their freedom was gradually restricted through measures of disenfranchisement. Racial exclusion came to suffuse public life as white and Black people increasingly occupied segregated social spheres.⁷⁵

Taken together, these measures all but guaranteed a hopeless condition for Black Americans. Slavery emerged from the revolutionary period stronger than ever. An appetite for cotton propelled the territorial and economic expansion of the institution in the South. As hundreds of thousands of African Americans were forced into a “second middle passage” that peopled the Cotton Kingdom of the Deep South, American slavery connected American identity to a full-fledged racist ideology.⁷⁶ Thus, in the 1780s, French diplomat Hector St. John Crèvecoeur could confidently proclaim the American individual to be of European stock; a person who is “a mixture of English, Scotch, Irish, French, Dutch, Germans, and Swedes. ... He is either a European, or the descendant of a European.”⁷⁷ Congress agreed. It moved to reaffirm this principle and passed the Naturalization Act of 1790 to reinforce Crèvecoeur’s definition by restricting naturalized citizenship to white immigrants.

According to historian George Fredrickson, the harsh racism that impeded Black life in the North suggests a “tragic limitation of the white racial imagination of the nineteenth century,” namely its inability to recognize Black people as equals.⁷⁸ If the early republic anticipated the Jacksonian era’s white yeoman’s republic, then 1816 marked the most expressive moment of this racist desire. In that year, Rev. Robert Finley, a Presbyterian minister from New Jersey, founded the American Colonization Society (ACS). Finley lobbied the public and the government to deport and colonize African Americans. “We should be cleared of them,” he declared, by sending them to Africa where the indigenous “population [could be] partially civilized and Christianized for its benefit; our Blacks themselves would be put in a better situation.”⁷⁹

The ACS was not the first organization, nor would it be the last, to suggest an exodus of African Americans in one form or another. In many instances, Blacks themselves often embraced such strategies. As early as the 1780s, free African Americans in the North considered emigration as a solution to their social and political predicament. In 1780, for example, free Blacks organized the African Union Society (AUS) in Newport, Rhode Island.⁸⁰ The society displayed a strong desire to emigrate but was convinced that any steps forward had to be taken under the aegis of, for, and by African Americans themselves.⁸¹ In 1787, decades before white colonialists dominated the national debate, Boston’s Black Masons petitioned the Massachusetts General Court (state legislature) for monetary assistance “to go to Africa, and procure lands to settle upon; and to obtain a passage for us and our families.”⁸² Among the petitioners who served as signatories were Prince Hall, a Black tradesman and Methodist preacher, who, in 1776, had founded the Masonic African Lodge.⁸³ Prince

Hall's Lodge may have influenced the nationalist thought of Prince Saunders, the Northern freedman who would become the leading voice for African American emigration to Haiti in the early republic and advocates of recognizing Haiti's potential significance.⁸⁴

It would appear that Prince Hall was contradicting himself, and others associated with his beliefs, by championing an outsider's revolution to prop up critiques of his own country. He and his lodge embraced Haiti as a model to fight an increasingly racist US regime while entertaining the possibility of exiting the country. Logically, a civic critique such as theirs suggests an aim to perfect the Union, not abandon it in favor of another. Invoking Haiti could easily be taken to mean a desired goal that in and of itself appeals to wanting to become Haitians. However, the idea of a redemptive return to the African homeland, as the AUS proposed, serves to accentuate an important truth in African American political thought and identity—the integral and inevitable reification of their Americanness. Even where a revolutionary rhetoric exists against the state, it is all the same situated in the fact that, as the sociologist Paul Gilroy puts it, African American political identity “stands between (at least) two great cultural assemblages, both of which have mutated through the course of the modern world that formed them and assumed new configurations.”⁸⁵ The idea of an “ethnic identity” of belonging to a certain African race is the product of a racist environment that sealed, hermetically, any opportunity for a democratic freedom where social and political autonomy are locked into racism. Hence, the rhetoric of returning home (Africa), as much as it might have been seriously contemplated, should be scrutinized by the fact that African Americans fought for the right to stay home (the United States) by reforming the definition of citizenship in the domestic sphere.⁸⁶ The rise of the ACS and the response of African Americans who instead chose their own path toward emigration was more than merely a repudiation of white colonialists. At bottom, it was a political message that chose Haiti as a genuine option that could seriously contend with the ACS's racist nationalism.

Homecoming?

For some scholars, like Dean E. Robinson, African American nationalist movements often describe the motive of emigration as Black separatism. Hence, Black Nationalists like Reverend James T. Holly, who believed Haiti exemplified the “lever that must be exerted, to regenerate and disentrall the oppression and ignorance of the race, throughout the world,” are viewed as merely recycling the racist essentialism prevalent throughout the nineteenth century.⁸⁷ Robinson views this effort as merely a Black counterpart of the ACS, leading him to posit a false equivalence between Black organizations like the African Civilization Society and the ACS as sharing “similar aims.”⁸⁸ In juxtaposing Black nationalism as a mirror image of white nationalist tendencies, Robinson finds himself in the same analytical trap as historians like Sterling

Stuckey, who interprets African American nationalist movements as having inherited a proto-African cultural sensibility.⁸⁹

Moreover, it remains difficult for scholars to imagine Haiti as a site for asylum seekers because of its history of political instability and the return of some emigrants. This perception has in turn meant that few Americans are aware of how migration binds Haitians and African Americans in a revolutionary legacy. This remains true even as studies of the Haitian Revolution experienced a renaissance in the early 2000s. If few historians have probed the revolution's influences on African American political thought, fewer still discuss the Haitian Revolution in relation to African American migration history. For example, it has become fashionable of late among academic and popular historians to declare the Great African American Migration (1915–1970) from South to North a transformative event in US history. Indeed, it was. Some five million Black men, women, and children left their Southern homes for Northern states in search of better opportunities. The factors leading to this uprooting of generations of Black Americans included, among others, a need to escape a racist juridical regime that encouraged and enforced mob lynching, inequality of education, and widespread disfranchisement. As a result, northern and western cities like Los Angeles, Pittsburg, New York, Milwaukee, Detroit, and Chicago were demographically transformed into hubs of Black life. This migration has been studied carefully by historians, but rarely in connection with its antecedents in the nineteenth century.

Migration has always played a key role in the making of African Americans. For example, following the Haitian Revolution, New Orleans experienced an influx of free people of color that would alter its culture and its politics. The population of Afro Creoles grew with the coming of Haitian émigrés who had already moved to Cuba. This 1809 migration brought close to ten thousand people from the former colony of Saint-Domingue, including some 3,102 free persons of African descent and another 3,226 slaves brought by their masters. In the wake of this migration, New Orleans not only doubled its population but also became the largest center of Black culture in the United States, as sixty-three percent of its current inhabitants could trace some form of African ancestry in their lineage.⁹⁰ This connection to Haiti adds an important new dimension to our conceptual framework involving Anglo African Americans in this period and illustrates the key role of migration in shaping African American life and ideologies.

The historical footprints of postrevolutionary Haiti can be seen in the linkages between African Americans of Haitian descent who settled in New Orleans after their expulsion from Cuba in the immediate years following the Haitian War of Independence. The Atlantic odyssey of these Afro-Creoles' have been analyzed in great details by the works of Rebecca Scott, Jean M Hébrard, Ada Ferrer, and Mary Frances Berry.⁹¹ For instance, Scott's seminal article, "The Atlantic World and the Road to Plessy v. Ferguson," traces the concept of full and universal citizenship, regardless of color, in the Louisiana Constitution of 1868 to the political activity of many of the Haitian émigrés of color and their descendants, who were elected to the 1867–1868

state constitutional convention. She argues: “The concept of equal public rights was built on a transnational political dialogue that encompassed Haiti as well as France, translated into terms that were readily accessible to people who had never left the state of Louisiana.”⁹² Scott’s work is part of a body of studies of postemancipation societies and their organic exchanges of radical political ideas within the sphere of the Black Atlantic, particularly Haiti’s role in instigating antislavery and anticolonial movements inside the United States and the wider Americas. As historian Ada Ferrer notes in *Freedom’s Mirror*, enslaved people across the Atlantic World “actively engaged with the Haitian Revolution and later with Haiti itself as a way to think about freedom and “to ease the burden of their enslavement.”⁹³ However, beyond integrating the Haitian Revolution into analyses of African American migration history, such perspectives help to probe how migration toward, not just away from, Haiti helps us better understand the processes, internal and external, that linked African American antiaristocratic and anticaste thinking to Black Northerners’ claims to US citizenship. Moreover, how was African Americans’ invoking of the language of rights traceable to Haitian revolutionaries? The point here is not to argue that African American activists acquiesced to the mechanisms of resistant strategies reflected by Haitian émigrés and vice versa. Rather, it is to question, from the vantage point of the Haitian Revolution as a transnational event, the ideas and activism of Black northerners who would later imbibe such ideas and emigrate to the Black republic. Hence, such a comparative outlook on the history highlights the processes and outcomes that resulted in the shared development of abolition and voluntary migrations within the Black Atlantic.

The story of the Haitian Revolution is more than just the history of Haitians. It is as diasporic, transnational, and Atlantic as the economic forces that thrust it into history were shaped at the interstices of European colonization, global commerce, and Atlantic slavery in the Americas. The history therefore belongs to Americans too. Haiti was central in how one talked about freedom and citizenship in the face of white supremacy in the nineteenth century, an experience with which African Americans, free or enslaved, were too familiar. The transatlantic currents of ideas that circulated between Haitian revolutionaries and free Blacks posed a challenge to the prevailing racism of American nationalism. Free Blacks in the United States had always stood midway between freedom and bondage.⁹⁴ Because they did not fit neatly in the racial binary of American politics, their demands for citizenship and suffrage borrowed from the example of their Haitian counterparts. In this sense, African Americans who contemplated emigration, and those who actually resettled, served as a ready-made contingent of visionary leaders for the African American struggle for freedom more generally.

I propose to study Northern Blacks’ emigration to Haiti as an important consideration in reframing our understanding of African American migration history. In looking to the Caribbean, I am also shifting the historiography toward a reconsideration of external as well as internal processes of Black migration. Close examination of this history subverts our general ideas of North versus South, domestic

versus foreign theaters of action, separatists versus integrationists, and Black nationalism versus diasporic and transnational qualities. I argue that the one phenomenon that has always been constant in the African American migration experience is that migration was driven by a radical notion of Black citizenship that stood in opposition to white supremacist exclusion, and was thus universalist and inclusionary in its desire to transform US citizenship. Repositioning the analysis in this way helps us transcend binary opposites that fail to capture the much more complicated and intimate realities of history as lived.

This last point is critical to this study. Black migration from the North did not have its origins in an ideology of separatism independent of white supremacy, or in a supposed organic affinity to an African heritage. Deploying such essentialist notions of identity to make sense of solidarity is a hopelessly imprecise task. The real objective rests in understanding the historical reasons that undergird what individuals and groups are searching for when they voluntarily uproot themselves from one political locale to another. The intellectual lineages in understanding such movements are both more intricate and more obvious than it initially appears. That is because we tend to lean too comfortably on the assumption that the émigrés were in search of a Black country of their own. What, after all, is a “Black” or “white” country in this conceptualization if, as Thomas Jennings affirms, “Our claims are on America; it is the land that gave us birth. We know no other country”?⁹⁵ As Barbara Fields points out in her seminal study, “Ideology and Race in American History,” too often scholars overlook the conceptual problems that must be resolved before employing race as a mode of historical analysis.⁹⁶ What she calls “the single race theory of Black” is evident in historical scholarship that explores histories of Black people as wholly contingent on the idea that what binds them is an African identity. Like Fields, I see such history as inadequate to explain why Black nationalists devised their fight as an ideological struggle to entirely transform American society, not simply to better its race relations.⁹⁷

Similarly, Appiah urges scholars “to remove the rubbish that lies in the way of knowledge” about “the illusions of race” and the “invention of Africa.”⁹⁸ To Appiah, once we begin to read race into difference, we tend to forget that “[w]hatever Africans share,” it is not a common traditional culture or even belonging to a common race.⁹⁹ What this criticism fails to underscore, however, is that jettisoning Blackness as constitutive of an “ennobling lie” elides race as an ideological consequence of racism. The African American experience is rooted in a uniquely and inescapable truth: that Black people experienced their political environment through a racially imposed structural violence. Whereas Euro-Americans invented the ideology of race to sustain that environment, constructing a people bound to enslavement, African Americans used the same to invent “themselves not as a race, but as a nation. They were not troubled, as modern scholars often are, by the use of racial vocabulary to express their sense of nationality. Afro-American soldiers who petitioned on behalf of ‘These poor nation of colour’ and ‘we Poore Nation of a Colered [race]’ saw nothing incongruous

about the language.”¹⁰⁰ That nation (African Americans) within a nation created a heritage of nationalism that was in this instance Black and had its heritage in this double movement that includes a demand for political rights.

The backlash against white supremacist formulations of US citizenship and nationhood is, at bottom, the source and origin of most Black migrations. Yet, in explaining these political endeavors as nothing more than failed attempts at Black nationalism, the historiography neglects the fact that exiling to places like Haiti and returning to the United States served as the demonstration of an alternative outlook on freedom and citizenship. This exercise in what I call *exilic nationalism* shifted the constructive terrains of citizenship away from a purely internal discourse dominated by the United States.

Taking a cue from Julius Scott’s “Common Winds” thesis, I am arguing that Black nationalism in the United States can be understood as the intra-racial political struggles of African Americans to attain citizenship and equality. Within a transatlantic framework, this identity formation developed into a transnational struggle when it aligned itself with Haiti’s antislavery ideals and traditions. My label “revolutionary transnationalism” articulates this hemispheric exchange. The term highlights historical moments when African American orators like James McCune Smith and leading editors in the abolitionist press, like John Russwurm and Samuel Cornish, employed the heritage of Haitian antislavery “to imagine an alternative collective history distinct from that of white America.”¹⁰¹ Yet even as they transformed this Black Atlantic current, African Americans held fast to their American identity, suggesting that theirs was a nationalism attached to the idea of equality and inclusion, not a geographical locale.¹⁰² To make sense of this, I propose *exilic nationalism* as a geopolitical concept.¹⁰³ That is to say, the exodus of African Americans to Haiti posited them as go-betweens who witnessed Haitian freedom and citizenship on the one hand, and used this experience to resist American *Herrenvolk* democracy on the other.¹⁰⁴ *Exilic nationalism* thus involves an exploration to see what unrestricted Black freedom looked like.

Fly Away Home

The idea of the *exilic nationalist* who exported abroad the fight for equality suggests that those who emigrated to Haiti occupied a complex place in the space between nationalism and transnational currents. Black identity has always been a concept in flux. On the one hand, circumstances that virtually rendered free Black people aliens at home shaped their response to self-exile. On the other, the push factor of the domestic racism that drove them to emigrate did not in itself shatter their sense of belonging in the United States. They became citizens in exile or foreign-national refugees, whom we today (sometimes confusedly) call expatriates. This duality further reinforces their attachment to citizenship as a recognition of their humanity and natural birthright, and that standing in alliance with Haitian revolutionaries provided a

confirmation of their Blackness as integral within a particular recognition of the politics of equal rights.

On August 30, 1824, the esteemed African American abolitionist and preacher Peter Williams, Jr., remarked to departing emigrants that in Haiti they would find a country “where a dark complexion will be no disadvantage; where you will enjoy your freedom.”¹⁰⁵ Williams continued by insisting that they must “go to that highly favored, and as yet only land, where the sons of Africa appear as a civilized, well ordered, and flourishing nation.”¹⁰⁶ In urging the emigrants to “go, remembering that the happiness of millions of the present and future generations depends upon your prosperity,” he underscored the fact that voluntary emigration was a political statement of the highest order—to underscore the failure of American freedom and democracy while simultaneously enslaving Black Americans. In the process, he also appropriated the rhetoric of democratic ideals to point to Black people’s capacity for self-rule.¹⁰⁷ In doing so, Williams posited the American Revolution as insufficiently radical in contrast to Haiti’s.

Similarly, such early Black abolitionists as William Hamilton pointed to revolutionary personalities like Thomas Jefferson to drive home the American legacy of equal rights coupled with racism. Jefferson, Hamilton claimed, was a dilettante who “kept around him a number of slaves,” and who first declared “that all men are created equal, and that they are endowed with inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” before arguing “that one class of men are not equal to another, which by the bye, does not agree with axioms of geometry, that deny that things can be equal, and at the same time unequal to one another.”¹⁰⁸

Individuals like Williams believed that American prejudice could be exposed through the juxtaposition of the American Revolution’s failed promise with the possibilities inherent in the Haitian Revolution. The success of the emigrants’ resettlement effort was crucial to reinforcing the point that racism, as much as ideals of democracy and liberty, was a definitive part of the American revolutionary heritage. Rather than conceiving African and American as antithetical, emigrants viewed their journey to Haiti as an opportunity to reconcile those notions with broad claims to citizenship.¹⁰⁹ Conceptualized in that way, emigration appears as a means to articulate inclusion through an alternative vision of American nation-building. In this context, the idea of voluntary emigration as self-expulsion is obliterated and appears much more integrationist in nature. Put more simply, emigration was not the goal; it was the means to an end.

As my study will show, Black nationalism in the nineteenth century was itself a variant of American nationalism, intended to defend Black inclusion in state and national politics.¹¹⁰ Color in itself was not mutually exclusive to identification with American nationality. Perhaps no other historian encapsulates this striving for equality more succinctly than W. E. B. Du Bois’s *Souls of Black Folk*. In “[t]his longing to merge [African-Americans’] double self into a better and truer self,” Black Americans simply wished, Du Bois argues, “to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an

American.”¹¹¹ This fact added a contentious element to the conflicts between African Americans and their Haitian hosts, who failed to understand that voluntary emigration did not entail rejection of the United States.

Emigration occurred within a conceptual landscape in which slavery and race, as well as class and gender, provided a rationalization of unequal status. Within this framework, racism was the bane of Black existence, whether freed or enslaved. While pushing for citizenship recognition, free Black leaders like James Forten did not shy away from expressing pride in Haiti and even encouraged those who experimented with the idea of resettlement to the Black republic, while in the same breath denouncing the American Colonization Society.¹¹² The embrace of Haitian society as a political refuge and a significant symbol in African American thought points to perhaps the earliest example of the African American political tradition as multifaceted.¹¹³

In an effort to reject white Americans’ imagined homogenous community, the Du Boisian insight of double-consciousness becomes particularly revealing. The warring ideals that poignantly illustrate the undemocratic character of American nationalism were the effort to be both Black and American, a struggle born of their assumed incompatibility in the white imagination. Du Bois’s gift of “second sight” resonated in the ability of Black folk to imagine a more universalized version of freedom and citizenship that refuted the supposed dichotomy between Black and white. Haiti, I argue, offers the singular example of a world that was both imaginable and possible. Yet, however tragic the racist logics of American citizenship were, there was an equally fatal logic that sustained this emigrationist impulse to incorporate Haiti within racial uplift. Some emigrants viewed Haiti as the workshop to exhibit the vanguard qualities of free African Americans to other Black people.¹¹⁴

It may appear incongruous that African Americans would conceivably make these racialist arguments for inclusion, but in confronting racism in a racist world, common sense is not too common. Racialist arguments by Blacks are better seen as not merely indicative of the times but as strikingly underscoring the limitations of racial ideologies and American citizenship in the early nineteenth century. As Rogers M. Smith notes, the understanding of citizenship was grounded in the exclusion of others, namely Black people, women, and Native Americans.¹¹⁵ Encountering the hate that forged race out of racism, Black people as an entity had to explain, within dubious civilizational terms, why they too were a dignified people. However, trapped within the racially discursive traditions of the period, the language of consciousness African Americans used to make this appeal for dignity was articulated in terms that could readily apply to white people’s perspectives on civilization. Hence, African Americans, as well as Haitians, had to constantly create and recreate their collective being in all the varied forms that were available to them: ideologies of nation, religion, empire, and the competition of racialized civilizations. Their ideological response to white supremacy necessitated the unfortunate claim to being the vanguards of Black racial uplift.

Faced with scientific racism and efforts to limit citizenship and nationalism, African Americans were compelled to legitimize their national belonging to the United States.¹¹⁶ In Haiti, as in African America, intellectual efforts to defend Blackness were a response to Europeans' exclusion of the freedmen from the rights of citizenship.¹¹⁷ As Doris Garraway shows, the first Haitian writer of note, Pompée Valentin de Vastey, who was the secretary and "publicist" of King Henry Christophe, passionately defended the Black monarchy as an enlightened product of the modern and thus comparable to European nation-states.¹¹⁸ When confronted with these racist exclusionary principles, African Americans also formulated a response undergirded by a politics of place and space. In the words of historian Wilson Moses, proponents of emigration to Haiti believed "[t]he humanity of the Negro would be vindicated and the link between Blackness and slavery would be destroyed, once an African civilization had been established" there.¹¹⁹

Citizenship and Transnationalism

There emerged from this emigrationist rhetoric another legacy that historians must reassess when examining the roots of Black radical traditions: the evolution of a claim for a more universal construction of citizenship that recognized Black humanity as equal and yet pleaded for a particular respect of Black transnationalism. In this outlook, African Americans lobbied for political acceptance while identifying with ethno-racialist ideas modeled after Euro-American nationalist thought. It differed from other models of nationalism, however, by attaching its advocacy for civic belonging to resettlement in a foreign country. It was driven by visions of Haiti as a revolutionary Zion, a utopian sanctuary for Black citizenship and projections of Black respectability seen as expressible only in an authentic Black republic. Here too, the embrace of Haiti as a republic is the accommodation of a different idea of what the "enlightened" nation ought to be. That a country like Haiti, forged in revolutionary consciousness and against slavery, could deem itself a Black republic radically subverts the American Declaration's claim of the United States that "all men are created equal." In short, African Americans redefined their claim to American citizenship through Afro-civilizational politics, for which Haiti provided an enticing theater of action. Haiti, then, was used to reject the racist elements of American nationality while asserting the potential for American citizenship to be multiracial in character.

Thus, even as they sought to refashion American citizenship, African Americans employed the very traditions they hoped to reject.¹²⁰ It is not surprising, then, that African Americans held to assimilationist aspirations through separatist means. Haiti was the landscape where this experiment would be partially shaped and reflected back to the American homeland. Insofar as this exercise was nationalistic, it displayed an Anglo-African particularity within the larger universal claims of US citizenship. It was thus a campaign reflective of American nationhood, not antithetical to it. It carried an aura of Europeanized racist dogma as to who qualified for inclusion into American

citizenship and the American polity. And yet, this complicated, and often paradoxical, view of inclusive citizenship could only be performed in exile.

Even though this emergent Black radicalism employed the racist thinking of the period, the more important fact is that it was collectively forged by using Haiti as the countervailing example against white supremacist politics. It therefore radically transformed and reimagined the landscape of human equality. At its heart was the conviction that using the master's tool to expose the lie of white supremacy could have implications for creating a new birth of American freedom. What were the implications of this belief—that one could simultaneously reject American citizenship in absentia and rejoin it on more radical and equal footing? What were the promises and limitations of having to project new visions of citizenship from the rhetorical and real political uses of Haiti? The roots and consequences of that exercise in Black power, its ability to transform African American citizenship in the nineteenth century, are the central issues at concern here.

Home at Last ... ?

It continues to confound many historians that the emigration movement to Haiti was mired in instances of doublespeak: How can one simultaneously be in exile and yet advocate for civic belonging by resettling in a foreign country? The skepticism that underlies this question echoes the tension within the title of this section. As Richard Wright maintains, to transplant in alien soil, for African Americans, has meant to rehearse freedom dreams outside of their more immediate constraints so that they could grow differently. It was ultimately an effort to save American freedom ideals from the chokehold of white supremacy. It is precisely because of racism that one must step out of the ordinary to reimagine a new geography of freedom. But in doing so, culpability seems to rest with the emigrant whose voluntary emigration eludes historians who see in it what the literary critic James Wood describes as transcendental homelessness.¹²¹ Wood notes that this condition evokes a certain permanence of exile without finality. Perhaps, he argues, the fact seems to call on a necessary neologism instead: *home-looseness*. While accurate, a new word is not needed to describe what has historically been a pattern of uprooting African American lives: a population that lived in the milieu of exile because of constant dislocation within the homeland and external residency without the familiarity of home.¹²² In other words, the intimate “ties that might bind one to Home have been loosened, perhaps happily, perhaps unhappily, perhaps permanently, perhaps only temporarily ... [and] overlaps, at times, with the more established categories of emigration, exile and postcolonial movement.”¹²³ Rather than even see it as homelessness, Wood suggests we might see, as in the experiences of the Black emigrants, a dichotomous tradition interwoven in the juxtaposition of Home vs. home.

African American émigrés made their Black diasporic *home* in Haiti, but *Home*, however, was in the United States. As honorary Haitians they were merely guests

transplanted in alien soil. Moreover, it helps to understand, in the words of Wood, that “[w]here exile is often marked by the absolutism of the separation, secular homelessness is marked by a certain ... structure of departure and return that may not end.”¹²⁴ To pursue this idea, it would better serve us to see the experience of Black emigrants to Haiti as having lived in a constant process of dialectic discovery: fluctuating between transnational politics and transatlantic Black liberation movements. Nineteenth-century African American migration history therefore demands that we reimagine the act of exodus and return as a continuous search for freedom: “To think about home and the departure from home, about not going home and no longer feeling able to go home, is to be filled with a remarkable sense” of loss.¹²⁵ Haiti provided an ideational home that was desirable—revolutionary in birth, Black, and free—but also the place that could not materialize into what African Americans wanted in the final analysis: an end to the domestic dilemmas of citizenship and nationalism, racism, and full equality.¹²⁶ That fight could be projected outward, but its eventual solution would have to be debated and worked out on the home front.¹²⁷ The African American emigrant as an exilic national continues to understand citizenship as part and parcel of membership in a national American body.

And yet, this striving for belonging was dented by the insecurity generated by racism, which traumatized the political psyche of African Americans with a survival instinct, alert and ready to take flight from a *Home* they realize is fundamentally inhospitable. This hostility at home inspires flight precisely because the emigrants are aliens in their native land. This fact is why I have, throughout my studies, called for a historical outlook that decenters Black nationalism from an essentialist understanding of race as given. Put another way, historical here means that in the exilic nationalism of African Americans, I view a production of a sharpened vision of democratic citizenship that is firmly rooted in land and the political memory of a right to stay home. Since, almost by extension, memory of home will accompany exile, this remembrance is likely to construct the search for an alternate future. To put it another way, this combination of exile, home, and memory form the bedrock of what Edward Said calls a “radical exilic vision.”¹²⁸ Thus, even when away from home, in the case of African American emigrants in Haiti, the very historical experience that led to exclusion and flight from the motherland also frames the contours of the historical experience for resistance and inclusion.¹²⁹ And if so, there was only one ethno-political place to communicate the universal language of rights and ideals of inclusion: the Black republic of Haiti, as it had already discredited Europeanized versions of universal equality, versions with “practices and a hypocrisy that needed to be exposed, and a more universal humanism enacted and taught.”¹³⁰ In appealing to Haiti, the emigrants affirm the postrevolutionary republic as a test case for a true universalism on matters of racial equality.

The historical experience examined throughout this article further echoes Said’s point that “particular to the experience of dislocation, exile, migration ... [is] the sense of dissonance engendered by estrangement, distance, dispersion, years of

lost-ness and disorientation—and just as important, the precarious sense of expression by which what ‘normal’ residents find easy and natural to do requires in exile an almost excessive deliberation, effort, expenditure of intellectual energy at restoration, reiteration, and affirmation that are undercut by doubt and irony.”¹³¹ One could also add to Said’s analysis the perspective of American novelist Suzanne Berne, that “an exile’s greatest fear is that by losing the world that has shaped him, he will somehow cease to be himself. Even for the voluntary exile—the pioneer or the immigrant—everything that once seemed fixed is uprooted; everything known becomes strange. Most unsettling of all is the future, which an exile cannot predict, having left history behind.”¹³² In short, this then is the sum of the African American striving that characterizes what Du Bois had encapsulated in his edifying equation of *Double-Consciousness*. At the core, then, the free Black experience in nineteenth-century America is marked by this alien–insider dichotomy in which those African Americans who were free lived as nonpolitical entities domestically colonized within the larger American community. Any effort to confront questions of emancipation and citizenship in this hostile environment was undermined by what David Swift calls the perceived problem of Blackness.¹³³

When, as a Black republic, Haiti provided an exit route, it in effect became host to Black emigrants whose refuge from white supremacy equally marked them as provocateurs against, and interlopers inside, this same system. However, as experiences on the ground revealed, becoming interlopers provided its own challenges.¹³⁴ A contentious element of transplanting to alien soil was the irreconcilable conflicts that emerged between African Americans and their Haitian hosts, who failed to understand that voluntary emigration did not presuppose rejection of the United States. Emigration was but one strategy among many, including freedom suits and other protest movements within the United States, in the quest for equal citizenship.

Notes

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¹ Gary Grant, president of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association (BFAA), quoted in Anuradha Mital and Joan Powell, “The Last Plantation,” backgrounder, *Food First: Institute for Food and Development Policy* 6, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 1. See also Valerie Grim, “Between Forty Acres and a Class Action Lawsuit: Black Farmers, Civil Rights, and Protest against the US Department of Agriculture, 1997–2010,” in *Beyond Forty Acres and a Mule: African American Landowning Families Since Reconstruction*, ed. Debra Ann Reid and Evan P. Bennett (Gainesville,

FL: University Press of Florida, 2014), 271–96; Marcia A. Wade, “New Evidence may be Influential as the National Black Farmers Association and the Black Farmers and Agriculturalist Association Seek Congressional Intervention,” *Black Enterprise*, October 2005, 36; and Waymon R. Hinson, and Edward Robinson, “‘We Didn’t Get Nothing’: The Plight of Black Farmers,” *Journal of African American Studies* 12, no. 3 (2008): 283–302.

² See Matthew J. Smith, *Liberty, Fraternity, Exile: Haiti and Jamaica After Emancipation, 1838–1915* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2015), which provides a micro-Caribbean history of how the two postemancipated countries became entangled in their anticolonial struggles. For example, “Haiti, a free country, would not trade with or consume products grown in the slave colony of Jamaica. For Jamaica, panicked planters feared that free movement of Haitians might lead to the adoption of radical ideas in Britain’s premier West Indian colony” (21). Smith demonstrates, in detailed examples, how this entangled heritage formalized the Haitian–Jamaican connections that conjoined their two histories in the age of postemancipation. Indeed, the constant movement of people between Haiti and Jamaica fostered an intimate history of solidarity between Franco-Caribbean Haitians and their British Caribbean counterparts to influence a maritime and political culture that singularly shaped the stories and genealogies of exiles and politicians, abolitionists and diplomats, laborers, and merchants—as well as mothers, fathers, and children.

³ R. Darrell Meadows qtd. in Vanessa Mongey, “A Tale of Two Brothers: Haiti’s Other Revolutions,” *The Americas* 69, no. 1 (2012): 37.

⁴ Phillippe R. Girard, “Birth of a Nation: The Creation of the Haitian Flag and Haiti’s French Revolutionary Heritage,” *Journal of Haitian Studies* 15, no. 1 (2009): 136. It must be emphasized that the Haitian Revolution did not, at the outset, set itself apart from its sister revolution in the French mainland. In fact, as Girard convincingly argues, the actual history of the Haitian flag explains the fact that “Haiti’s flag and other state symbols were profoundly inspired by French revolutionary iconography. This symbolic continuity may come as a surprise considering that Haiti was born of a singularly violent conflict, but it is consistent with the letters and speeches issued by revolutionary actors in the first half of 1803” (135–36).

⁵ R. Darrell Meadows, “Engineering Exile: Social Networks and the French Atlantic Community, 1789–1809,” *French Historical Studies* 23, no. 1 (2000): 67; R. Darrell Meadows, “The Planters of Saint-Domingue, 1750–1804: Migration and Exile in the French Revolutionary Atlantic” (PhD diss., Carnegie Mellon University, 2004). <http://lib-ebook.colorado.edu/ebook/3120207.pdf>.

⁶ Slave ownership among the wealthy and free people of color in colonial Saint-Domingue was common. Although much rarer, the same was true of US states like Maryland, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Virginia. But as Carter G. Woodson explains, these African American slave proprietors were “Benevolent Negroes [who] often purchased slaves to make their lot easier by granting them their freedom for a nominal sum, or by permitting them to work it out on liberal terms.” Thus, there might also have been a fear that free Blacks from Saint-Domingue might further this trend from slave ownership to manumission. Woodson, “Free Negro Owners of Slaves in the United States in 1830, Together with Absentee Ownership of Slaves in the United States in 1830” (The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History,

Washington, DC), 3–4; See also Sara E. Johnson, *The Fear of French Negroes: Transcolonial Collaboration in the Revolutionary Americas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

⁷ These are three notable books on the influence of migration to the United States: Nathalie Dessens, *From Saint-Domingue to New Orleans: Migration and Influences* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2010); Rebecca J. Scott and Jean M. Hébrard, *Freedom Papers: An Atlantic Odyssey in the Age of Emancipation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014); Ashli White, *Encountering Revolution: Haiti and the Making of the Early Republic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012).

⁸ White, *Encountering Revolution*; Ashli White, “The Saint-Dominguan Refugees and American Distinctiveness in the Early Years of the Haitian Revolution,” in *The World of the Haitian Revolution*, 248–260 (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press); Julius Sherrard Scott, “The Common Wind: Currents of Afro-American Communication in the Era of the Haitian Revolution” (PhD diss., Duke University, 1986); and Alfred N. Hunt, *Haiti’s Influence on Antebellum America: Slumbering Volcano in the Caribbean* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988).

⁹ See Joseph Cephas Carroll, *Slave Insurrections in the United States 1800–1865* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1971), 41–45. In the words of historian and anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot, it was “unthinkable” that slave resistance could achieve the same radical notions of freedom and equality that were an integral part of the American and French Revolutions. See Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon, 1995). Historian Lester Langley echoes Trouillot when he argues that “the Haitian Revolution and its meaning are essential for understanding the revolutionary age in the Americas. Haiti was at once an affirmation of the *universality* of such revolutionary credos of liberty and equality and a denial of that contemporary ideology, which subsumed slavery in the revolutionary cause”; Langley, *The Americas in the Age of Revolution, 1750-1850* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 3.

¹⁰ See Douglas R. Egerton, *Gabriel’s Rebellion: The Virginia Slave Conspiracies of 1800 and 1802* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 45–49, 168–72.

¹¹ See Daniel Rasmussen, *American Uprising: The Untold Story of America’s Largest Slave Revolt* (New York: Harper, 2011); and Junius P. Rodriguez, “Rebellion on the River Road: The Ideology and Influence of Louisiana’s German Coast Slave Insurrection of 1811,” in John R. McKivigan and Stanley Harrold, eds., *Antislavery Violence: Sectional, Racial, and Cultural Conflict in Antebellum America* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 65–88.

¹² See W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Alan Frank January, “The First Nullification: The Negro Seamen Acts Controversy in South Carolina, 1822–1860,” (Master’s thesis, University of Iowa, 1976); and Douglas R. Egerton, *He Shall Go Out Free: The Lives of Denmark Vesey* (Madison, WI: Madison House, 1999), 15–20, 42–45, 136–38.

¹³ See Margaret Wilson Gillikin, "Saint Dominguan Refugees in Charleston, South Carolina, 1791-1822: Assimilation and Accommodation in a Slave Society," PhD diss., University of South Carolina, 2014.

¹⁴ See White, *Encountering Revolution*; Ashli White, "The Saint-Dominguan Refugees and American Distinctiveness in the Early Years of the Haitian Revolution," in *The World of the Haitian Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 248–260; J. S. Scott, "The Common Wind"; and Alfred N. Hunt, *Haiti's Influence on Antebellum America: Slumbering Volcano in the Caribbean* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, [1988], 2006).

¹⁵ Writing to General Marquis de Lafayette, Jefferson advised doing all that was possible to tame the enslaved revolutionaries: "What are you doing for your colonies? They will be lost if not more effectually succoured. Indeed no future efforts you can make will ever be able to reduce the Blacks. All that can be done in my opinion will be to compound with them as has been done formerly in Jamaica. We have been less zealous in aiding them, lest your government should feel any jealousy on our account. But in truth, we as sincerely wish their restoration, and their connection with you, as you do yourselves. We are satisfied that neither your justice nor their distresses will ever again permit their being forced to seek at dear & distant markets those first necessities of life which they may have at cheaper markets placed by nature at their door." Thomas Jefferson to Marquis de Lafayette, June 16, 1792 (Gilder Lehrman Collection). See also Tim Matthewson, "Jefferson and the Nonrecognition of Haiti," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 140, no.1 (1996): 22–48.

¹⁶ Letter from Thomas Clarkson to Maria Weston Chapman, writing from Playford Hall, near Ipswich, Oct. 3, 1845. For more on French and British antislavery, see Lawrence C. Jennings, "The Interaction of French and British antislavery, 1789–1848," *Proceedings of the Meeting of the French Colonial Historical Society* 15 (1992): 81–91; and Robert Stein, "The Revolution of 1789 and the Abolition of Slavery," *Canadian Journal of History* 17, no. 3 (1982): 447–68.

¹⁷ See Jane Landers, *Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolutions* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011); see also Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787–1804* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 404–07, 411–12; and Josette Fallope, *Esclaves et citoyens: les Noirs à la Guadeloupe au XIXe siècle dans les processus de résistance et d'intégration, 1802–1910* (Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe: Société d'Histoire de la Guadeloupe, 1992), 50–52.

¹⁸ For a complete account of the last two years of the Haitian Revolution, which scholars note went from a colonial revolt for various autonomous demands to outright self-determination, see Philippe R. Girard, *Slaves Who Defeated Napoleon: Toussaint Louverture and the Haitian War of Independence, 1801–1804* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2014).

¹⁹ Letter from Jefferson to Madison, August 27, 1802, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (digital edition), ed. Barbara B. Oberg and J. Jefferson Looney (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008–2016).

²⁰ Letter from Hampton to Madison, August 21, 1802, *The Papers of James Madison* (digital edition), ed. J. C. A. Stagg (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2010). Original source: Secretary of State Series, Volume 3 (1 March–6 October 1802).

²¹ Letter from Hampton to Madison, August 21, 1802, Charles Edward Cauthern, ed., *Family Letters of the Three Wade Hamptons, 1782–1901*, South Carolina Sesquicentennial Series, no. 4 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1953).

²² Letter from Hampton to Madison, August 21, 1802, *The Papers of James Madison*.

²³ See chapters 6 and 7 in Rasmussen, *American Uprising*.

²⁴ See Rasmussen, *American Uprising*.

²⁵ Cauthern, ed., *Family Letters of the Three Wade Hamptons; The Papers of James Madison*.

²⁶ “A Meeting of the Inhabitants of the City of Savannah, at the City Hall on Thursday the 2nd Day of July, 1795.” Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, ID# 485349.

²⁷ While not as active as its American and British counterparts, well before the French and Haitian revolutions, French enlightenment thinkers had begun to renounce slavery, especially when aided by the likes of William Wilberforce and Thomas Clarkson, who often traveled to Paris to encourage the French to end the slave trade. More than antislavery, the society members supported the campaign for racial equality of *hommes de couleur libres* (free persons of color). On French abolitionists and antislavery societies, see S. E. Johnson, *The Fear of French Negroes*; David Geggus, “Racial Equality, Slavery, and Colonial Secession during the Constituent Assembly,” *American Historical Review* 94 (1989): 1290–1308; Jean Tarrade, “Les colonies et les principes de 1789: les assemblées quelles voies pour l’abolition de l’esclavage.” In *Les abolitions de l’esclavage de L. F. Sonthonax a V. Schoelcher: actes du colloque international tenu à l’Université de Paris VIII les 3, 4 et 5 février 1994*, ed. Michel Dorigny, (Paris: Editions Unesco, 1995); Paule Brasseur, “Libermann et l’abolition de l’esclavage,” *Revue française d’histoire d’outre-mer* 73 (1986): 336; Serge Daget, “The Abolition of the Slave Trade by France: The Decisive Years, 1826–1831,” in *Abolition and its Aftermath: The Historical Context, 1790–1916*, ed. David Richardson (Abingdon, Oxon: Frank Cass, 1985), 141–67; David Geggus, “Haiti and the Abolitionists: Opinion, Propaganda and International Politics in Britain and France, 1804–1838,” in *Abolition and Its Aftermath: The Historical Context, 1790–1916*, ed. David Richardson (Abingdon, Oxon: Frank Cass, 1985), 113–40; William B. Cohen, *The French Encounter with Africans: White Response to Blacks, 1530–1880* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980); Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall, *The Abbé Grégoire and the French Revolution: The Making of Modern Universalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Lawrence C. Jennings, *French Anti-Slavery: The Movement for the Abolition of Slavery in France, 1802–1848* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Stein, “The Free Men of Colour and the Revolution in Saint Domingue,” 7–28.

²⁸ John David Garrigus, *Before Haiti: Race and Citizenship in French Saint-Domingue* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

²⁹ See “Decree of the National Convention of 4 February 1794, Abolishing Slavery in all the Colonies,” in *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity in The French Revolution and Human Rights: A Brief Documentary History*, translated, edited, and with an introduction by Lynn Hunt (Boston/New York: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 1996), 115–116.

³⁰ See Winston C. Babb, “French Refugees from Saint Domingue to the Southern United States, 1791–1810,” (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 1954).

³¹ See John Davies, “Class, Culture, and Color: Black Saint-Dominguan Refugees and African-American Communities in the Early Republic” (PhD diss., University of Delaware, 2008).

³² See chapter 5 in S. E. Johnson, *The Fear of French Negroes*. Johnson deploys an analytical concept called “transcolonial collaborations” to describe how Black newspaper editors and white collaborators used the memory of the Haitian Revolution to foster a transnational Black consciousness that connected abolitionists from New York, Paris, and Port-au-Prince during the antebellum era.

³³ See Davies, “Class, Culture, and Color.”

³⁴ See Dessens, *From Saint-Domingue to New Orleans*; for Cartagena de Indias, refer to Edgardo Pérez Morales, *No Limits to Their Sway: Cartagena's Privateers and the Masterless Caribbean in the Age of Revolutions*, Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2018, pp. 15–28, 109–19.

³⁵ See for example, *The Book of Negroes*, which was compiled by the appointed commissioners responsible for British Loyalists who evacuated New York between April and November 1783, available at <https://www.fold3.com/image/6602563/#6602540>.

Cognizant of the problem of flight, in Article Seven of the Treaty of Paris between the United States and the United Kingdom, American patriots demanded a prohibition on “carrying away any Negroes or other property of the American Inhabitants.” Treaty of Paris, 1783; International Treaties and Related Records, 1778–1974; General Records of the United States Government, Record Group 11; National Archives.

³⁶ Jennifer K. Snyder, “Revolutionary Refugees: Black Flight in the Age of Revolution,” in *The American South and the Atlantic World*, ed. Brian Ward, Martyn Bone, and William A. Link (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013), 81–103. James W. G. Walker, *Black Loyalists: The Search for a Promised Land in Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone 1783-1870* (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2017); Alan Gilbert, *Black Patriots and Loyalists: Fighting for Emancipation in the War for Independence* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013); Mary Louise Clifford, *From Slavery to Freetown: Black Loyalists after the American Revolution* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2006).

³⁷ For an exploration of the revolution’s impact on Black Atlantic migratory patterns, see the following studies: “Haiti, Canada, and a Pan-African Vision,” in Elizabeth Rauh Bethel, *The Roots of African-American Identity: Memory and History in Free Antebellum Communities* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1999); Sara Fanning, *Caribbean Crossing: African Americans and the Haitian*

Emigration Movement (New York: New York University Press, 2015); Claire Bourhis-Mariotti, *L'Union fait la force: les Noirs américains et Haïti, 1804–1893*. (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2016); “The Quest for an Asylum,” in Léon Dénius Pamphile, *Haitians and African Americans: A Heritage of Tragedy and Hope* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008); “The Means of Alleviating the Suffering”: Haitian Emigration and the Colonization Movement, 1817-1830,” in Ousmane K. Power-Greene, *Against Wind and Tide: The African American Struggle against the Colonization Movement* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 17–45.

³⁸ See Theodore Draper, *The Rediscovery of Black Nationalism* (New York: Viking Press, 1973).

³⁹ Quoted in Louis Menand, “Silence, Exile, Punning: James Joyce’s Chance Encounters” *The New Yorker* July 2, 2012. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/07/02/silence-exile-punning>.

⁴⁰ According to Menand, “Joyce persisted in what he called his ‘voluntary exile’ in order to write the way he wanted to write,” “Silence, Exile, Punning.”

⁴¹ Quoted in Michael Patrick Gillespie, *James Joyce and the Fabrication of an Irish Identity* (Amsterdam; Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 2001).

⁴² Kwame Anthony Appiah, “Cosmopolitan Patriots,” *Critical Inquiry* 23, no. 3, *Front Lines/Border Posts* (Spring, 1997), 618.

⁴³ Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein, *European Universalism: The Rhetoric of Power* (New York: New, 2006), xiv.

⁴⁴ See Amy Wilentz, *The Rainy Season: Haiti Since Duvalier* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989); Michele Wucker, *Why the Cocks Fight: Dominicans, Haitians, and the Struggle for Hispaniola* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1999); David Nichols, “Haiti: The Rise and Fall of Duvalierism,” *Third World Quarterly* 8, no. 4 (Oct. 1986), 1239–1252; and Patrick Bellegarde-Smith, “Dynastic Dictatorship: The Duvalier Years, 1957–1986” (excerpt from “Haiti: The Breached Citadel”), in *Haitian History: New Perspectives* (London, UK: Routledge 2013), 273–284.

⁴⁵ See “Subtitle H—United States Naval Station Guantanamo Bay Preservation Act” in House Bill H.R.4909” in National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017, available at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/4909/text>.

⁴⁶ See Ruth Ellen Wasem, “United States Immigration Policy on Haitian Migrants,” May 17, 2011, Congressional Research Service: Washington, DC, 1–17.

⁴⁷ Wasem, “United States Immigration Policy,” 1–2.

⁴⁸ For more on the Haitian Revolution, see C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins; Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963); David Patrick Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002); Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge, MA:

Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004); and Carolyn E. Fick, *The Making of Haiti: The Saint Domingue Revolution from Below* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990).

⁴⁹ “Haitian Constitution” in *New York Evening Post*, July 15, 1805.

⁵⁰ Jan Pachoński and Reuel K. Wilson, *Poland’s Caribbean Tragedy: A Study of Polish Legions in the Haitian War of Independence, 1802–1803* (Boulder: East European Monographs; New York: Distributed by Columbia University Press, 1986). See also reviews of Jan Pachoński and Reuel K. Wilson, *Poland’s Caribbean Tragedy: A Study of Polish Legions in the Haitian War of Independence, 1802–1803*: Raymond Joseph, “Poles in Haiti,” *New York Times*, March 22, 1987, <http://www.nytimes.com/1987/03/22/books/peles-in-haiti.html>; Selden Rodman, “A Long Way from Poland,” *New York Review of Books*, December 18, 1986; James S. Pula, “Reviewed Work: *Poland’s Caribbean Tragedy: A Study of Polish Legions in the Haitian War of Independence, 1802–1803* by Jan Pachoński, Reuel K. Wilson,” *Polish American Studies* 45, no. 2 (1988): 76–78, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20148264>.

⁵¹ Jean Casimir, “Prologue,” in *The World of the Haitian Revolution*, ed. David Patrick Geggus and Norman Fiering, xi–xx (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009); Ada Ferrer, “Haiti, Free Soil, and Antislavery in the Revolutionary Atlantic,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 117, no. 1 (2012): 40–66; Anne Gulick, “We Are Not the People: The 1805 Haitian Constitution’s Challenge to Political Legibility in the Age of Revolution,” *American Literature* 78, no. 4 (2006): 802; Julia Gaffield, *The Haitian Declaration of Independence: Creation, Context and Legacy*, 2016, <https://uniqueatpenn.wordpress.com/2015/12/21/race-and-the-haitian-constitution-of-1805/>. A less relevant but good study of how colonial Saint-Domingue influenced the revolutionary context of emerging law: Malick W. Ghachem, *The Old Regime and the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

⁵² David Waldstreicher, *Slavery’s Constitution: From Revolution to Ratification* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2009); George Van Cleve, *A Slaveholders’ Union: Slavery, Politics and the Constitution in the Early American Republic* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

⁵³ Henry Christophe, *Henry Christophe and Thomas Clarkson: A Correspondence*, eds. Leslie Griggs and Clifford H. Prator (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1952); Loring Daniel Dewey, *Correspondence Relative to the Emigration to Hayti, of the Free People of Colour, in the United States: Together with the Instructions to the Agent Sent out by President Boyer* (New York: Printed by Mahlon day, no. 372, Pearl-Street, 1824).

⁵⁴ The failure of emigration also stemmed, in large part, from the fact that in an age when the political economy of slavery ruled the day, Haiti’s internal struggles were compounded by diplomatic isolation. In defense of protecting white supremacist interests, an unlikely alliance formed between the United States and European powers to help France quarantine Haiti diplomatically. It wasn’t until 1824 that France, after imposing an indemnity on Haitians for planters’ property destroyed during the Haitian Revolution, restored under King Charles X diplomatic relations to formally recognize its former colony’s independence. See Laurent Dubois, *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2012). For more, see Paul Farmer, *The Uses of Haiti* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1994), 66; Peter

Hallward, *Damning the Flood: Haiti, Aristide, and the Politics of Containment* (London: Verso, 2010), 12. When Simon Bolivar, the revolutionary leader of Gran Colombia, organized the first Pan-American Congress in 1826, he excluded Haiti from attendance because of increasing pressure from the United States. “This exclusion further isolated Haiti, which had not received official recognition from most world powers because the existence of a Black-led independent republic challenged the international system based, in part, on colonization and slavery.” Quoted from “Haiti: Early National Period (1806–1844),” in Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates, *Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience: The Concise Desk Reference* (Philadelphia: Running Press, 2003), 119.

⁵⁵ See “Introduction” in John H. Bracey, August Meier, and Elliott M. Rudwick, *Black Nationalism in America* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970), xxv–lv.

⁵⁶ For a similar articulation on this notion of a “revolutionary transnationalism” rooted in the Atlantic, see Mitch Kachun, “‘Our Platform Is as Broad as Humanity’: Transatlantic Freedom Movements and the Idea of Progress in Nineteenth-Century African American Thought and Activism,” *Slavery and Abolition* 24, no. 3 (2003): 1–23. Kachun writes, “[d]espite their growing recognition of significant differences and divisions among diasporic Blacks, African American intellectual activists looked towards other African peoples around the Atlantic world with a sense of common identity and common cause. Especially when looking close to home—Haitians throwing off slavery’s chains to establish the hemisphere’s second independent republic in 1804, or Blacks in the British West Indies achieving freedom in the 1830s—these fellow Africans’ pursuit and attainment of freedom were seen as part of the same struggle being joined by Blacks across the diaspora, and their accomplishments were viewed hopefully, as harbingers of the ultimate triumph of liberty and rights in the United States and throughout the Black Atlantic” (2).

⁵⁷ For further reading on my definition of Black nationalism as drawn from a variety of sources, refer to the following works: Tommie Shelby, “Two Conceptions of Black Nationalism: Martin Delany on the Meaning of Black Political Solidarity,” *Political Theory* 31, no. 5 (2003): 664–692; Patrick Rael, “Black Theodicy: African-Americans and Nationalism in the Antebellum North,” *The NorthStar: A Journal of African American Religious History* 3, no. 2 (Spring 2000); Patrick Rael, *Black Identity and Black Protest in the Antebellum North* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Rodney P. Carlisle, *The Roots of Black Nationalism* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1975); Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism, 1820–1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Dean E. Robinson, *Black Nationalism in American Politics and Thought*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001); and Floyd J. Miller, *The Search for a Black Nationality: Black Emigration and Colonization, 1787–1863* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975).

⁵⁸ See Chief Justice Warren’s dissent in *Perez v. Brownell*, 356 US 44 (Supreme Court 1958), in which he concluded that “Citizenship is man’s basic right for it is nothing less than the right to have rights. Remove this priceless possession and there remains a stateless person, disgraced and degraded in the eyes of his countrymen. He has no lawful claim to protection from any

nation, and no nation may assert rights on his behalf. His very existence is at the sufferance of the state within whose borders he happens to be. This government was not established with power to decree this fate. The people who created this created a sovereign state with power to function as sovereignty. But the citizens themselves are sovereign, and their citizenship is not subject to the general powers of their government. Whatever may be the scope of its powers to regulate the conduct and affairs of all persons within its jurisdiction, a government of the people cannot take away their citizenship ... The basic constitutional provision crystallizing the right of citizenship is the first sentence of section one of the Fourteenth Amendment. It is there provided that 'All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.' United States citizenship is thus the constitutional birth-right of every person born in this country. Under our form of government, as established by the Constitution, the citizenship of the lawfully naturalized and the native-born cannot be taken from them."

⁵⁹ Prince Hall, *A Charge Delivered to the Brethren of the African Lodge on the 25th of June, 1792. At the Hall of Brother William Smith, in Charlestown* (Boston: Printed and sold [by T. and J. Fleet] at the Bible and Heart, Cornhill, Boston, 1792). See also Dorothy Porter Wesley, *Early Negro Writing, 1760–1837* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 79–80.

⁶⁰ Prince Hall, "Pray God Give Us the Strength to Bear Up Under All Our Troubles," Primary document in Philip Sheldon Foner, *The Voice of Black America; Major Speeches by Negroes in the United States, 1797–1971* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972), 15–16.

⁶¹ Hall, "Pray God," 16. See also, Maurice Jackson, "'Friends of the Negro! Fly with Me, the Path Is Open to the Sea': Remembering the Haitian Revolution in the History, Music, and Culture of the African American People," *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 6, no. 1 (2008): 59–103.

⁶² From *The Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, Comprising Portions of His Diary from 1795–1848* (New York: Scribner, 1951), letter dated Washington, March 2, 1820. A brief excerpt from February 24: "I had some conversation with Calhoun on the slave question pending in Congress. He said he did not think it would produce a dissolution of the Union, but if it should the South would be from necessity compelled to form an alliance, offensive and defensive with Great Britain."

⁶³ See Francois Furstenberg, "Beyond Freedom and Slavery: Autonomy, Virtue, and Resistance in Early American Political Discourse," *The Journal of American History* 89, no. 4 (2003), 1295–1330.

⁶⁴ For more on the idea of the construction of nationalism and citizenship, see Linda Bosniak, *The Citizen and the Alien: Dilemmas of Contemporary Membership* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006). For American understanding of citizenship as consisting of not just liberalism but multiple traditions that include illiberal practices, see Rogers Smith, *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in US History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

⁶⁵ Quoted in Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*, 254.

⁶⁶ Quoted in Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*, 254.

⁶⁷ Haiti's Act of Independence, "Liberty or Death: Declaration of Independence of Haiti," in *Major Problems in Atlantic History: Documents and Essays*, ed. Alison Games and Adam Rothman (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2008), 326.

⁶⁸ For more on the Haitian Revolution, see James, *The Black Jacobins*; Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*; Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*; Fick, *The Making of Haiti*.

⁶⁹ "Haitian Constitution," *New York Evening Post*.

⁷⁰ Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," in *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, ed. Amy Gutmann (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 41. See also Amy Gutmann, ed., and Charles Taylor et al., *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton: New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008), 25–73, 87–99. For more on the Haitian Revolution as an extension of Enlightenment ideals commensurate with the spread of human rights during the Age of Revolution, see Robin Blackburn, *The American Crucible: Slavery, Emancipation and Human Rights* (London: Verso, 2011). Refer to Blackburn's summary article: "The Achievement of the Haitian Revolution, 1791–1804," in *Revolution!: The Atlantic World Reborn*, ed. Thomas Bender, Laurent Dubois, and Richard Rabinowitz (London, UK: Giles, 2011), 115–38; Susan Buck-Morss, *Hegel, Haiti and Universal History* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009); Nick Nesbitt, *Universal Emancipation: The Haitian Revolution and the Radical Enlightenment* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008).

⁷¹ Quoted in Furstenberg, "Beyond Freedom and Slavery," 1318.

⁷² Ashli White, "The Politics of 'French Negroes' in the United States," in *Haitian History: New Perspectives*, ed. Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall (London, UK: Routledge, 2013), 123. See also, Ashli White, *Encountering Revolution: Haiti and the Making of the Early Republic* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010). For more on white responses to the Haitian Revolution in popular culture and Western historiography, note Haitian-American historian and anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot's concept of Haiti's Revolution as "unthinkable history" in *Silencing the Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015); David Brion Davis, *Revolutions: Reflections on American Equality and Foreign Liberations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990); and Alfred N. Hunt, *Haiti's Influence on Antebellum America*.

⁷³ Quoted in Douglas R. Egerton, "Abolitionist or Terrorist," *New York Times*, Feb. 25, 2014.

https://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/26/opinion/abolitionist-or-terrorist.html?_r=0

For more on the Denmark Vesey Conspiracy: Douglas R. Egerton et al., *The Denmark Vesey Affair a Documentary History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2017); James Hamilton, *Negro Plot: An Account of the Late Intended Insurrection among a Portion of the Blacks of the City of Charleston, South Carolina, Published by the Authority of the Corporation of Charleston* (Boston: Joseph W. Ingraham, 1822); Rubio, Philip F. "Though He Had a White Face, He Was a Negro in Heart": Examining the White men Convicted of supporting the 1822 Denmark Vesey Slave Insurrection Conspiracy." *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 113, no. 1 (2012): 50-67; Paquette, Robert L., and Douglas R. Egerton. "Of Facts and Fables: New Light on the Denmark Vesey Affair." *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 105, no. 1 (2004): 8-48; Michael P. Johnson,

"Denmark Vesey and His Co-Conspirators." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (2001): 915-76; Thomas J. Davis, "Conspiracy and Credibility: Look Who's Talking, about What: Law Talk and Loose Talk." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 59, no. 1 (2002)

⁷⁴ See Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1983). See also Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975), and Eric Foner, *The Story of American Freedom* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), 102–03. To paraphrase Peter Onuf in his review of Christopher Tomlins's *Freedom Bound*, colonial charters showed that free labor was neither the primal condition of free people in a state of nature, nor did it, in Tomlin's words, "arise in the course of an unidirectional eighteenth-century transformation of Anglo-American" society. Freedom was a function of colonization and would remain so until the civil war. Hence, in the antebellum period, just as colonialism had done, "local statutory regulation established interstitial zones of freedom" in North–South regional construction that enabled the white public to enjoy free labor in the North and in large pockets in the South under a legal regime that secured slavery; review of *Freedom Bound*, by Christopher Tomlin, *Journal of Legal Education* 61, no. 2 (2011): Tomlins qtd. in Onuf, 322.

⁷⁵ See Leon Litwack's *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [2007], 1961): "Reflecting the popular conception of the United States as a white man's country, early Congressional legislation excluded Negroes from certain federal rights and privileges and sanctioned a number of territorial and state restrictions. In 1790, Congress limited naturalization to white aliens; in 1792, it organized the militia and restricted enrollment to able-bodied white male citizens; in 1810, it excluded Negroes from carrying the United States mails; in 1820, it authorized the citizens of Washington, D.C., to elect 'white' city officials and to adopt a code governing free Negroes and slaves. Moreover, it repeatedly approved the admission of states whose constitutions severely restricted the legal rights of free Negroes. On the basis of such legislation, it would appear that Congress had resolved to treat Negroes neither as citizens nor as aliens" (31).

⁷⁶ On Ira Berlin's definitive scholarship on this, see *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998); Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003); Ira Berlin, *The Making of African America: The Four Great Migrations* (New York: Viking, 2010). On forced separation of families, see Steven Deyle, *Carry Me Back: The Domestic Slave Trade in American Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). Damina Alan Pargas, "Disposing of Human Property: American Slave Families and Forced Separation in Comparative Perspective," *Journal of Family History* 34, no. 3. (2009): 251–74.

⁷⁷ Quoted in Foner, *The Story of American Freedom*.

⁷⁸ George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind; The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), xix.

⁷⁹ Robert Finley to John P. Mumford, February 14, 1816, in Isaac V. Brown, *Biography of the Rev. Robert Finley, D.D., of Basking Ridge, N.J. with an Account of his Agency as the Author of the American Colonization Society: Also a sketch of the slave trade: A view of our national policy and that of Great Britain towards Liberia and Africa* (Philadelphia: J.W. Moore, 1857), 99–100. For more discussion on the American Colonization Society, see Douglas R Egerton, “‘Its Origin Is Not a Little Curious’: A New Look at the American Colonization Society,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 5, no. 4 (1985): 463–80.

⁸⁰ Floyd J. Miller, *The Search for a Black Nationality: Black Emigration and Colonization, 1787–1863*. Blacks in the New World (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975), 12–17.

⁸¹ As articulated by Miller, the AUS rejected leading British abolitionist Granville Sharp’s idea of a settlement, “Province of Freedom,” to be controlled under the auspices of England, much like a white-controlled colony. Miller, *The Search for a Black Nationality*, 10–11.

⁸² Miller, *The Search for a Black Nationality*, 4–5. See also primary document from the Massachusetts State Archives, in “The Boston Plan,” PBS: Africans in America, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part2/2h59.html>.

⁸³ Miller, *The Search for a Black Nationality*, 4–5.

⁸⁴ Miller, *The Search for a Black Nationality*, 16.

⁸⁵ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 1.

⁸⁶ I am borrowing here from the more contemporary concept around migrants’ rights as discussed in the “Introduction” and “Chapter 7: The Right to Not Migrate” in David Bacon, *The Right to Stay Home: How US Policy Drives Mexican Migration* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2014). When African Americans protested the virulent racism of US policy and the general national attitude that supported deportation projects by the American Colonization Society, they often did so in fierce defense of a “right not to migrate.”

⁸⁷ James T. Holly, “A Vindication of the Capacity of the Negro Race for Self-Government and Civilized Progress (1857),” in *Classical Black Nationalism: From the American Revolution to Marcus Garvey*, ed. Wilson Jeremiah Moses (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 133.

⁸⁸ Robinson, *Black Nationalism in American Politics and Thought*, 19.

⁸⁹ See Sterling Stuckey, *The Ideological Origins of Black Nationalism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972); Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture*.

⁹⁰ “The Consequences of the Haitian Migration,” In Motion: The African-American Migration Experience, www.inmotionaame.org/migrations/topic.cfm?migration=5&topic=9

⁹¹ Rebecca J. Scott, “The Atlantic World and the Road to Plessy v. Ferguson,” *Journal of American History* 94, no. 3 (2007): 726–33; Rebecca J. Scott and Jean M. Hébrard, *Freedom Papers: An Atlantic Odyssey in the Age of Emancipation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014); Mary Frances Berry, “We Are Who We Say We Are”: A Black Family’s Search for

Home Across the Atlantic World (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); and Caryn Cossé Bell, *Revolution, Romanticism, and the Afro-Creole Protest Tradition in Louisiana, 1718–1868* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004).

⁹² Scott, “The Atlantic World and the Road to Plessy v. Ferguson,” 728–29.

⁹³ Ada Ferrer, *Freedom’s Mirror: Cuba and Haiti in the Age of Revolution*. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, [2016] 2014), 15–16.

⁹⁴ See Bell, *Revolution, Romanticism, and the Afro-Creole Protest Tradition*; Shirley Elizabeth Thompson, *Exiles at Home: The Struggle to Become American in Creole New Orleans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009); and Laura Foner, “The Free People of Color in Louisiana and St. Domingue,” in *African Diaspora: Africans and Their Descendants in the Wider World to 1800*, Howard University Black Diaspora Committee, ed. (Needham Heights, MA: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 323–42.

⁹⁵ Thomas L. Jennings, quoted in Jacqueline Bacon, *Freedom’s Journal: The First African-American Newspaper* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007), April 4, 1828.

⁹⁶ Barbara J. Fields, “Ideology and Race in American History,” in *Region, Race, and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward*, ed. J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson (New York / Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 143–77; see also Karen E. Fields and Barbara Jeanne Fields, *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life* (New York: Verso, 2012).

⁹⁷ To quote Barbara Fields, it is debilitating intellectually to suppose that “any situation involving people of European descent and people of African descent automatically falls under the heading ‘race relations.’ Argument by definition and tautology thereby replaces argument by analysis in anything to do with people of African descent. Probably a majority of American historians think of slavery in the United States as primarily a system of race relations—as though the chief business of slavery were the production of white supremacy rather than the production of cotton, sugar, rice and tobacco. One historian has gone so far as to call slavery ‘the ultimate segregator. He does not ask why Europeans seeking the ‘ultimate’ method of segregating Africans would go to the trouble and expense of transporting them across the ocean for that purpose, when they could have achieved the same end so much more simply by leaving the Africans in Africa. No one dreams of analysing the struggle of the English against the Irish as a problem in race relations, even though the rationale that the English developed for suppressing the ‘barbarous’ Irish later served nearly word for word as a rationale for suppressing Africans and indigenous American Indians” (“Slavery, Race, and Ideology and Race in the United States of America,” in *Racecraft*, ed. Karen E. Fields and Barbara Jeanne Fields, 111–48, here 99).

⁹⁸ Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In My Father’s House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (London: Methuen, 1992), 62; see also Chapter 1: “The Invention of Africa.”

⁹⁹ Appiah, *In My Father’s House*, 26.

¹⁰⁰ B. Fields, “Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States of America,” 114.

¹⁰¹ Gabriele Pizarz-Ramirez, “‘The Darkest is Before the Break of Day’: Rhetorical Uses of Haiti in the Works of Early African-American Writers,” *Atlantic Studies* 4, no.1 (April 2007): 37. For abolitionist press, see for example J. Bacon, *Freedom’s Journal: The First African-American Newspaper*. See J. S. Scott’s “The Common Wind: Currents of Afro-American Communication in the Era of the Haitian Revolution.” In agreement with my views of the implications of the Haitian Revolution, Pizarz-Ramirez argues that Haiti emerged, in the postrevolutionary stage, as an important point of “reference for early African-American collective identity discourses ... the Haitian Revolution decisively shaped the discourse patterns with which African Americans such as Prince Hall and John Russwurm entered the debate about what it means to be “American,” (Pizarz-Ramirez, “‘The Darkest is Before the Break of Day,’” 38).

¹⁰² This fact represented a profound distrust of nationalism as understood in white supremacist terms and sought instead to create new forms of political belonging. Black nationalism in its exilic tendencies is not tied to a principle of homeland. The experiential possibility of seeing freedom in alternative spaces was a purely ideological exercise. The fact that a number of options from Canada to Sierra Leone and Liberia were also discussed with great seriousness in emigration is instructive in this regard. In short, Haiti proved a formidable choice, not because of any territorial integrity—they were indifferent to specificities of national geography itself—but because of the principles behind Black nationalism, which at its base vied for political inclusion just as Haiti had done in its revolutionary bid to be included among Atlantic nation-states. For a comparative outlook on how the ethnic-nationalism of African Americans compare to other movements in this regard, see Faisal Devji, *Muslim Zion: Pakistan as a Political Idea* (Cambridge, USA: Harvard University Press, 2013). Devji’s insights inform my thinking that Haiti was precisely important to African Americans because Black nationalism required grounding in a space it could not wither away under the pressures of racism (13–48).

¹⁰³ My use of the term “exilic nationalism” is borrowed from various scholars. See the following sources: Paul Allatson, *Exile Cultures, Misplaced Identities* (Institute for International Studies Annual Research Symposium and Workshop on Exile and Social Change, held in July and December 2004 at the University of Technology, Sydney [UTS], Australia) (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008), 36–38; and Allon Gal, Athena S. Leoussi, and Anthony D. Smith, *The Call of the Homeland Diaspora Nationalisms, Past and Present* (Leiden: Brill, 2010). I am particularly drawn to Anthony Smith’s definition of nationalism, which holds the concept to mean “an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a human population some of whose members deem it to constitute an actual or potential ‘nation.’ Nation, in turn, I would now define as a named and self-defined human community whose members cultivate shared myths, memories, values, symbols and traditions, who reside in and are attached to an historic territory or ‘homeland,’ create and disseminate a distinctive public culture, and observe common laws and customs” (4–5). For my perspective on an ethnic African American nationalism informed by its resistance to the Herrenvolk state, refer to Nikhil Pal Singh’s *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), a book I found particularly instructive on Black freedom imaginations of the nation. Singh makes a case for seeing the foundations of American

democracy as tied up to racial exclusions, despite the American myth that race and nation are mutually exclusive concepts. African Americans, argues Singh, always recognized that racism was entangled with American nationality and citizenship. As Du Bois articulated in *The Souls of Black Folk*, this construction of the nation posited the descendants of Africans as a problem people. Catherine Squires's review of Singh brilliantly sums up the argument: "Because property rights formed the basis of citizenship and the 'universal' right to political participation, 'the ideal national subject has actually been a highly specific person whose universality has been fashioned from a succession of those who have designated his antithesis, those irreducible non-national subjects who appeared in the different guises of the slave, Indian, and, at times, immigrant' (21). The exclusion of these groups has been central to the consolidation of national power; thus, Black existence is repeatedly formulated as a problem, from the antebellum dreams of sending Black people back to Africa to Gunnar Myrdal's *American Dilemma*, to neoconservative calls for an end to all race-based public policies." Catherine R. Squires, "Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy (review)," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 9, no. 2 (2006): 343.

¹⁰⁴ For how I am deploying the concept of the "Herrenvolk Republic," see these three important studies of Jacksonian America: Paul Goodman, *Of One Blood: Abolitionism and the Origins of Racial Equality* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (London: Verso, 1990); Christopher L. Tomlins, *Freedom Bound: Law, Labor, and Civic Identity in Colonizing English America, 1580–1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

¹⁰⁵ Quoted in Leslie M. Alexander, "The Black Republic": The Influence of the Haitian Revolution on Northern Black Political Consciousness, 1816–1862," in *Haitian History: New Perspectives*, ed. Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall, 57.

¹⁰⁶ Quoted in Alexander, "The Black Republic," 57.

¹⁰⁷ Quoted in Alexander, "The Black Republic," 57.

¹⁰⁸ Quoted in Manisha Sinha, "To 'Cast Just Obloquy' on Oppressors: Black Radicalism in the Age of Revolution," *William and Mary Quarterly* 64, no. 1 (2007), 157.

¹⁰⁹ To be sure, such strategic oration could easily play into the hands of racists who advocated for Black deportation. Nevertheless, it was in reaction to internal threats of racism and enslavement in the years following American independence that Black Americans grew increasingly frustrated with how citizenship was misconstrued as a white privilege.

¹¹⁰ If one understands the dynamism of American nationalism in the same way as historian David Waldstreicher, as I do, it is instructive to think of this double-movement as not only focused on separation because nationalism in America "has been a set of practices that empowered Americans to fight over the legacy of their national Revolution and to protest their exclusion from that Revolution's fruits. It is not inherently reactionary or progressive; like other nationalisms, its political meanings are multiple, even contradictory, and can be shown to have changed radically over time" (Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making*

of *American Nationalism, 1776–1820* [Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012], 3.

¹¹¹ W. E. B. Du Bois and Brent Hayes Edwards, “Of Our Spiritual Strivings,” in *The Souls of Black Folk* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 2.

¹¹² Julie Winch, *A Gentleman of Color: The Life of James Forten* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 210.

¹¹³ David Everett Swift, *Black Prophets of Justice: Activist Clergy before the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 24–27. The Black experience was marked by an alien-insider dynamic in which those Africans who were free lived a domestically colonized status within the larger American community. Any effort to confront questions of emancipation and citizenship in this hostile environment was undermined by what David Swift calls the perceived problem of Blackness.

¹¹⁴ For more on African-American benevolent attitudes toward civilizing the race, see James Sidbury, *Becoming African in America: Race and Nation in the Early Black Atlantic* (Oxford University Press, 2007).

¹¹⁵ Rogers M. Smith, *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in US History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

¹¹⁶ In *Black Nationalism in American Politics and Thought*, Dean Robinson agrees that Black nationalism throughout the nineteenth century was not as outward-looking as the historiography has led many to believe. Yet, his initial characterizations of Black nationalist sentiments also obscure more than they reveal, positing it as an untenable dream from the outset. Because they were trapped in nineteenth-century thinking, Robinson argues, Black nationalist ideologies were not capacious enough for an alternate vision to white racism.

¹¹⁷ Robert Carr, *Black Nationalism in the New World: Reading the African-American and West Indian Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 25–26.

¹¹⁸ See J. Michael Dash, “Modernism, Modernity and Otherness,” in *The Other America: Caribbean Literature in a New World Context* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998), 43–60. This ideological pairing between freedom and authoritarianism stemmed from the antinomian legacy of the Enlightenment and endured as the bedrock of the Haitian state well into the second half of the twentieth century. See also Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Haiti, State Against Nation: The Origins and Legacy of Duvalierism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1990). It must also be noted that Haitian politics struggled to regain its footing and political stability throughout the nineteenth century. One thing was certain: Haitians did have a sustainable political identity, unencumbered as they were from the racist pressures of a repressive white majority. This is not to claim that Haitians escaped the virulent white supremacy that dominated the Atlantic world, but that the essence of the state, from its founding, had always presupposed a sense of antagonism toward racism, colonialism, and slavery. As such, it constructed its 1805 state constitution on the specified stipulation that Blackness is the

universal base criterion for citizenship, showing that its understanding of race and itself stands fundamentally in opposition to whiteness.

¹¹⁹ Moses, *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism*, 21.

¹²⁰ James Brewer Stewart, “Rethinking the Politics of Slavery, 1776–1836,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 32, no. 3 (2012); see also Lacy K. Ford, Jr., “Making the ‘White Man’s Country’ White: Race, Slavery, and State-Building in the Jacksonian South,” in Michael A. Morrison and James Brewer Stewart, *Race and the Early Republic: Racial Consciousness and Nation-Building in the Early Republic* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002), 135–58; James B. Stewart, “The Emergence of Racial Modernity and the Rise of the White North, 1790–1840,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 18, no. 2 (Summer, 1998), 181–217.

¹²¹ James Wood, “On Not Going Home,” *London Review of Books* 36, no. 4, February 20, 2014. <https://www.lrb.co.uk/v36/no4/james-wood/on-not-going-home>.

¹²² For examples of this ongoing search for home, refer to George E. Brooks, “The Providence African Society’s Sierra Leone Emigration Scheme, 1794–1795: Prologue to the African Colonization Movement,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 7, no. 2. (1974): 183–202. See also Simon Schama, *Rough Crossings: Britain, the Slaves, and the American Revolution* (New York: Ecco, 2006).

¹²³ Wood, “On Not Going Home.”

¹²⁴ Wood, “On Not Going Home.”

¹²⁵ Wood, “On Not Going Home.”

¹²⁶ I am building on Ira Berlin’s insights from *The Making of African America*, 24–48. In what Berlin calls the “contrapuntal narrative,” Black people lived, for much of their experience between the sixteenth and twenty-first centuries, not so much in flux but in “anticipation of catastrophic change. Husbands and wives, parents and children, kinfolk and neighbors understood that their ties would at some point be severed and that they would be required to reconstruct their lives anew often in radically different circumstances. Such expectations—and the accompanying anxieties—informed Black life, for the migrations’ reverberations echoes throughout African American communities” (31, 24).

¹²⁷ The coming of the Civil War, with its many discordant rhetoric around disunionism, was one example of how this struggle imploded in national politics. For rehearsals to these debates on the national stage, see Parts 2 and 3 in James Brewer Stewart, *Abolitionist Politics and the Coming of the Civil War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008). See also Elizabeth R. Varon, “The Language of Terrifying Prophecy: Disunion Debates in the Early Republic,” in *Disunion! The Coming of the Civil War, 1789–1859* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008). On the contest between antislavery forces and the slave power of the South, see Edward B. Rugemer, “Caribbean Slave Revolts and the Origins of the Gag Rule: A Contest between Abolitionism and Democracy, 1797–1835,” in *Contesting Slavery: The Politics of*

Bondage and Freedom in the New American Nation, ed. John Craig Hammond and Matthew Mason, 94–113 (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011).

¹²⁸ Edward W. Said, “Introduction” in *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), xxxiv. For my emphasis on historical experience, see other scholars whose perspectival analyses corroborate similar arguments: Singh, *Black Is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy*; Tommie Shelby, *We Who Are Dark: The Philosophical Foundations of Black Solidarity* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005); Corey D. B. Walker, *A Noble Fight: African-American Freemasonry and the Struggle for Democracy in America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008).

¹²⁹ Said, *Reflections on Exile*, xxvii.

¹³⁰ See Said, *Reflections on Exile*, xi–xxxv.

¹³¹ Said, *Reflections on Exile*, xxxii.

¹³² Suzanne Berne, “Raised by the Aborigines,” review of *Remembering Babylon* by David Malouf, *New York Times*, October 17, 1993, <http://www.nytimes.com/books/00/08/20/specials/malouf-babylon.html>.

¹³³ Swift, *Black Prophets of Justice: Activist Clergy Before the Civil War*.

¹³⁴ For a detailed look on how African Americans of Franco-Haitian heritage influenced the radical republican platforms of the era, see Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877* (New York: HarperPerennial, 2014); Rebecca J. Scott, *Degrees of Freedom: Louisiana and Cuba After Slavery* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 15, 28–29; R. J. Scott, “The Atlantic World,” 726–33. It must be noted that the South has not been of major focus here as are free Black people from the North. However, it was during the Reconstruction period (1863–1877) that the influence of the Haitian Revolution in the United States came full circle. The freedmen from Louisiana, consisting mostly of Franco-Haitian descendants of *gens de couleur* and *anciens libres* who had immigrated to the United States during the Haitian Revolution, sounded the call for greater political demands that echoed the aspirations of earlier emigrationists. And while many freedmen were exceptional in their class politics, being property owners and at times owning sugar plantations, Scott traces the activist roots of the most radical among them to their Haitian heritage, which fused a tradition of Black republicanism with a long career of fighting for equal rights in the French Caribbean. Hailing from free communities themselves, they invoked the French-inflected ideology of Haitian revolutionary ideals, which they believed were commensurate with universal manhood suffrage. According to Scott, the debate over full and universal citizenship entered the Louisiana Constitutional Convention in 1867–1868 in part because of Haitian émigrés. It was in Louisiana’s Reconstruction ordeal that the republican ideals of Haitian migrants, African American emigrants’ quest for citizenship in Haiti, and the quest for equality of those who had remained in the United States, were fully actualized.

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