

Julia Faisst (Siegen)

Degrees of Exposure: Frederick Douglass, Daguerreotypes, and Representations of Freedom¹

This essay investigates the picture-making processes in the writings of Frederick Douglass, one of the most articulate critics of photography in the second half of the nineteenth century. Through his fiction, speeches on photography, three autobiographies, and frontispieces, he fashioned himself as the most "representative" African American of his time, and effectively updated and expanded the image of the increasingly emancipated African American self. Tracing Douglass's project of self-fashioning – both of himself and his race – with the aid of images as well as words is the major aim of this essay. Through a close reading of the historical novella "The Heroic Slave," I examine how the face of a slave imprints itself on the photographic memory of a white man as it would on a silvered daguerreotype plate – transforming the latter into a committed abolitionist. The essay furthermore uncovers how the transformation of the novella's slave into a free man is described in terms of various photographic genres: first a "type," Augustus Washington (whose life story mirrors that of Douglass) changes into a subject worthy of portraiture. As he explored photographic genres in his writings, Douglass launched the genre of African American fiction. Moreover, through his pronounced interest in mixed media, he functioned as an immediate precursor to modernist authors who produced literature on the basis of photographic imagery. Overall, this essay reveals how Douglass performed his own progress within his photographically inflected writings, and turned both himself and his characters into free people.

1 *LIFE* Portrays Frederick Douglass

On November 22, 1968, *LIFE*, the first photojournalism and highly successful American news magazine, initiated a four-part series on "Negro history," entitled "The Search for a Black Past." For its cover, it chose an iconic daguerreotype of the most famous black leader and abolitionist of the nineteenth century: Frederick Douglass. Inside the cover pages, Part One of the series, "Rebels, Runaways, and Heroes: The Bitter Years of Slavery," ran close to thirty pages. It consisted mainly of essays by John Hope Franklin, an African American historian who had earned his Ph.D. in Harvard's American Civilization Program and become chairman of the history department at the University of Chicago.

He had written the first, canon-forming textbook history of the African American's place in American life, *From Slavery to Freedom*, and had helped lay the foundation for black studies in United States academe. George P. Hunt's "Editor's Note" introduces Franklin by recapping how the historian had originally wanted to specialize in English history, but changed course because that would have meant "research trips to England, which in those Depression days seemed distant as the moon. So I [Franklin] got into American history instead." (Hunt 1968: 3) He made African American history an indispensable component of the history of the United States.

To suit the taste of the magazine's readership for entertaining and general interest affairs ranging from politics, history, sports, science, music, and fashion to modern living, Hunt's note describes Franklin's homemaking abilities and his knack for cultivating orchids, the first species of which he had brought back to his Chicago home from Hawaii in 1959. According to Franklin, he and his wife "spend about 20 minutes together looking for new shoots and admiring shapes and colors." In what follows, the note endorses Franklin as a "[s]cholar, traveler, orchidologist" who takes vivid and regular interest in domestic affairs, including the care of exotic plants and international education. The latter was his "big outside interest," and he was mostly concerned with the effects international education could have on world peace, and the necessity of an international community to overcome prejudice and advance peace. "We must," Franklin proclaims, "do what we can to build up an international community of scholars that cuts across narrow differences, that transcends prejudice. That, I believe, is the best path to peace – and I want to do all I can to foster that" (3).

LIFE partakes in Franklin's educational enterprise built on the power of integration with its "Search for a Black Past" series. It is introduced by Roger Butterfield, author of *The American Past – A History of the United States from Concord to Hiroshima, 1775-1945* told with "the aid of a thousand pictures" from 1947 as well as a 1954 *LIFE* article on George Eastman who had founded the Kodak company and invented roll film. In his introduction to the "Black Past" series, Butterfield, too, proclaims the need to understand African American history as an integral part of American history, and the struggle for egalitarianism as a central concern of this history:

American historians, with few exceptions, have never dealt properly with the American Negro. They have written patronizingly about him, or deplored his sufferings, or all but ignored his presence, treating him as an appendage to American history rather than an integral part of it... [the struggle for freedom and equality] is the central theme of Negro history and, hence, a central theme of American history.... Today, when the struggle has become the critical social issue of our time, there is an urgent attempt to understand its background. Here *LIFE* begins a series which, taking a fresh look at Negro history, is an effort to place in proper perspective this richly significant segment of the American experience (Butterfield 1968: 91).

One of the best-known pictures ever to appear in *LIFE* may have been Alfred Eisenstaedt's photograph of a nurse in the arms of a sailor, celebrating V-J Day in New York City on August 27, 1945. But the November 22, 1968 issue I address here purposely turns away from more recent political affairs and looks back to a historical image on its front cover. Fittingly, and in accord with the way the Editor's Note framed historian Franklin within the domestic realm of household plant cultivation, the cover makes use of a private portrait of Frederick Douglass, preeminent African American abolitionist and orator of the nineteenth century.² His image is embedded in an old-fashioned frame that places it squarely in a century then a hundred years past. It is important to note, however, that what looks like a conventional frame is actually part of an antique glass-fronted daguerreotype case, as can be seen in an image taken in 1850 by J. R. Eyerman upon which *LIFE* based its own image.

The frame of this image is wider and thus shows us more details of the material conditions surrounding not only Douglass's portrait but also any typical portrait of the mid-nineteenth century than *LIFE*'s cutout. Eyerman's image depicts the ex-slave who has become one of the most recognized statesmen of the United States with meticulously kempt hair, distinguished clothes, and a confident expression on his face. By showing the daguerreotype case that holds his portrait, the image frames him, literally, as a coveted object of times past. It depicts just enough of the viewing case to let us identify it as such. In contrast, *LIFE* touches up and reframes Douglass by omitting the left part of the case as well as the spring clasp. In other words, *LIFE* cuts out the material conditions this image was originally framed in, literally as well as figuratively. It detaches the image from its historical conditions and transports it straight into the present – as it wished to do with African American history.

In the nineteenth century, a case protected an irreproducible daguerreotype from touch as well as oxidation of the fine silver deposits forming the blacks in the image. Yet, in its intricate and elegant ornamental fittings, its leather bind, and velvet inlay, this case also emphasized the preciousness of the image of a loved one. It presented it for the entire world to see. Fastening the clasp would preserve it tight and sealed in private; opening it meant to put the image it contained on public display. Moreover, opening the case entailed confronting one's own image, as the mirror-like glass plate that protected the daguerreotype also reflected the countenance of the viewer. By leaving out the case and thus de-historicizing the image, *LIFE* presented the image of the most representative of African Americans (and, by extension, the history of all African Americans) as an artifact still very much of concern to the present day. It is an image that cannot be closed shut and stored away; it must remain open to view, mirroring the conditions American history is founded on.

2 Fashioning the "Representative Man"

It is no accident that *LIFE* selected this particular image in 1968 to adorn an issue that looks back at African American history in words and images. Douglass was the most famous African American orator, speechwriter, author, and image-maker of his time, but also one of the most articulate critics of photography in the nineteenth century. Through his writings, speeches, and images, he fashioned himself as the most "representative" African American, and thereby effectively updated and expanded the image of the increasingly emancipated African American self in the second half of the nineteenth century. Tracing Douglass's project of self-fashioning – both of himself and his race – with the aid of images as well as words is the major aim of this essay.

Along the way, I will investigate how Douglass launched the genre of African American fiction through his pronounced interest in mixed media.³ Furthermore, he functioned as an immediate precursor to modernist authors who produced literature on the basis of photographic imagery. Performing his own progress within his speeches, three autobiographies, and frontispieces, Douglass turned both himself and his characters into free men (British admirers freed him legally when they paid 150 Pound sterling in 1846). A close reading of his novella "The Heroic Slave" will uncover how he explores the different photographic genres popular in his time, and how the transformation of his protagonist from a slave into a free man is described in terms of these photographic genres. First a "type," Augustus Washington (whose life story mirrors that of Douglass) changes into a subject worthy of portraiture over the course of the historical novella.

Before I delve into a closer reading of "The Heroic Slave" and Douglass's autobiographies, let me return briefly to the 1968 *LIFE* issue and the way it frames Douglass. The "Black Life" series includes essays on Nat Turner, John Brown, Bishop Richard Allen, the founder of the African M. E. Church, Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad, the "'Inalienable' rights" that "never meant Negroes," and, of course, Douglass. Visual materials including historical black-and-white as well as modern-day color photographs, drawings, and paintings accompany all of the essays. Two opposing pages are devoted to Douglass. While they, too, include three photographs, they make no further mention of the daguerreotype on the magazine's cover. This leaves open the question of whether Douglass, the most representative African American of his time (both in terms of being the most recognizable and recognized one) was not identified because he was still as easily recognized by a 1968 readership, or whether he was viewed merely as *a* representative of all African Americans, or even all Americans. The main caption to the essay suggests the former: "For all Negroes, Frederick Douglass was THEIR LEADER" (Butterfield/Franklin 1968: 103). Franklin's essay itself, however, puts Douglass in the same rank as the man holding the highest office in the nation at the time, Abraham Lincoln. He looked, Franklin writes, "so much like a President that one day in the White House a visiting judge mistook him for Abraham Lincoln" (102).⁴ By the time the Civil War came to an end and Douglass recounted his life as an eminent statesman in his third autobiography, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, he was, in Franklin words, "the unofficial president of American Negroes" (102).

The importance of looks for Douglass as an adjunct to his speeches and writing for his self-fashioning project shines through in a well-known passage from his first autobiography, *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written By Himself*. Franklin cites this text in the pages of *LIFE*: "My feet have been so cracked with the frost that the pen with which I am writing might be laid in the gashes," Douglass writes, speaking not only to the poor conditions of slavery but also hinting at the inadequacy of the medium of writing to convey these conditions. In Douglass's imagination, gashes wide enough to hold a pen can hide and bury the most fundamental means of communication, writing. With a pen no longer able to write, African American writing becomes something that its adversaries could trample upon. In order to reach the widest audience possible in his search not only for freedom but also for black equality (which meant a break with leading white abolitionists), Douglass needed pictures to inform and supplement his writings.

As Franklin points out, Douglass understood the Civil War not just as a war against slavery but also as a struggle for the rights that would make slaves full citizens, including the right to vote. It is important to note that Douglas seeks inalienable rights not only for African Americans but for all Americans, including, for instance, poor whites of the South. At the end of his essay, Franklin provides a definition of Douglass's feelings about color and race: "I base no man's right upon his color and plead no man's rights because of his color. My interest in any man is objectively in his manhood and subjectively in my own manhood" (103). Emancipation, for Douglass, always means self-emancipation as well, not solely as an African American man but as "a man." Freedom, for him, is a fundamental right of all "men" – including him and all human beings.

3 The Democracy of Images

LIFE in 1968 understood perfectly the indispensable role visual technology played in the struggle for (black) equality, an ideal that African Americans like Douglass considered an inalienable right for *all* Americans already one hundred years earlier. *LIFE* replicates this insight in the images it employs. The most prominent image accompanying the Douglass essay depicts the African American leader working at his desk, clad in a fancy suit and shiny hair, in front of a well-appointed library and a framed image of himself on the wall. The other main piece of the 1968 issue, "Harambee for the Olympians: Laden with medals, Kenya's heroes," shows the beaming faces of the members of the Kenyan track and field team upon their return from the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City where they had won eight Olympic medals (three of them gold). On the inside of the front cover, we find an ad for compact Kodak Instamatic movie cameras. This ad draws on the democratizing potential of visual culture, an idea that existed since Douglass's time and the invention of the daguerreotype portrait: "Kodak Instamatic movie cameras are so small they fit your palm. Not to mention your Christmas stocking. They're instant-loading. *Anyone* can load them *anytime*. They're super 8, so *anyone* you give one to will get such sharp, bright movies he (or she) will think he's (or she's) the greatest."⁵

The rhetoric of democracy paired with greatness that Kodak endorses here is directly related to the rhetoric of representativeness, likeness, and progress in Douglass's life and work. By thinking through these three issues in photographic terms, as I do in this essay, we will come to see that Douglass exercises his right to "picture theory" long before contemporary scholar W. J. T. Mitchell would in his critical study of the same name (Mitchell 1995). Douglass's picture theory of imagining and imaging post-slavery is twofold. As far as imagining was concerned, thinking about pictures for him meant thinking about theory, philosophy, and morals. When it came to imaging, thinking about morals, philosophy, and theory meant thinking in pictures. To put this differently, theorizing and picturing, for Douglass, are methods if not courses of action that cannot be disentangled and yield multiple perspectives on the issues at hand. To progress is to continuously make not only words, but also images.

From its inception in 1839, photography was taken as an essential metaphor behind the democratic aesthetic. Douglass's autobiographies and speeches, and in particular his first and only foray into fiction from 1853, "The Heroic Slave," were products of this increasingly ocular time. As I will lay out in this essay, these texts display the enormous interest Americans, and in particular African Americans had in the "truer" possibilities of depicting human beings in a more unmediated way that early forms of photography promised. In the 1850s, new imaging technologies afforded a quality of veracity and impartial likeness the works of white painters so far had neither been able to achieve nor were necessarily interested in achieving.⁶ The technology of photography thus entailed what John Stauffer calls a "democratizing aspect" that could act as a social leveler and dismantle racial and social hierarchies. This democratic potential was important to all Americans at the time, but especially to African Americans (Stauffer 1998: 55-56). Most significantly, this egalitarian style played a major role in the cause of abolitionism. African Americans could now begin to have portraits of themselves that were more impartial than earlier forms of visual representation. They could represent themselves as members of the human race rather than as blacks. Furthermore, they could use these photographs, visual icons of representational justice, as material means in their struggle for racial equality and social progress.

4 Douglass's Picture Theory

Over the course of his life, Douglass composed three speeches that explicitly addressed the peculiar human faculty to make pictures, actual picture-making processes, and the power of photographic images. Laying out what Douglass explicitly calls a "theory of art," "Pictures," "Pictures and Progress," and "The Trials and Triumphs of Self-Made Men" speak directly to representations of racial identity, social progress, and the abolition of slavery (Douglass n. d. [ca. late 1864]: unpaginated). Only recently have scholars including John Stauffer, Sarah Blackwood, Beth McCoy, and Sean Ross Meehan began to theorize Douglass's "critical, visual literacy" that was of such importance to his life's project of re-envisioning personal, racial, and social identities (Meehan 2008: 161).⁷ In his "Pictures" speech, undated but written between November 1864 and March 1865, Douglass returns to the origins of photography and pays due tribute to the inventor of the daguerreotype process of photography, Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre. He commends Daguerre for two features of his epoch-making invention. First, the process of daguerrotypy enables us to depict any aspect of "every object" of interest. By this logic, every "object" (that is, also, every subject of representation) is of equal value. Second, it allows each member of society, including those from the lower strata, to possess a visual assurance of their rightful, even proud existence. As Douglass has it, "[n]o man contemplates his face in a glass without seeing something to admire" (Douglass n. d. [ca. late 1864]: unpaginated). Finally, they too, can procure self-portraits of their own. Singling out Daguerre as the inventor of a modern age remarkable "for the multitude, variety, perfection, and cheapness of its pictures," Douglass directs our attention to the fact that

[t]he great discoverer of modern times, to whom coming generations will award special homage to will be Daguerre. Morse has brought the seeds of the earth together, and Daguerre has made it a picture gallery. We have pictures, true pictures, of every object which can interest us... What was once the special and exclusive luxury of the rich and great is now the privilege of all. The humblest servant girl may now possess a picture of herself such as the wealth of kings could not purchase fifty years ago (Ibid).

For Douglass, in fact, photographic images are not only democratizing and truer now but ideally suited to lead audiences closer to all truths – which must, first of all, include the truth of African American slavery and how to progressively picture its imminent yet gradual abolition. Douglass is aware that, in this speech, his turn away from his main topics – slavery and freedom – to the question of "pictures" might initially seem like an uncalled-for digression.

He maintains, however, that the attention paid to pictures enables people "to grapple more effectively with the sterner duties and dangers of practical life." Thinking about pictures, according to him, is a means to bend minds that are too focused solely on speech, and to speak to the mind as well as to the heart. It is a way to recognize and appeal to the importance of sentiment and moral outrage that were determinative in bringing about the end of slavery. As a result, "under the somewhat indefinite title of pictures and by means of pictures we may be led to the contemplation of great truths – interesting to man in every stage of the journey of life" (Ibid).

Douglass's contemplation of the greatest truth of all, freedom, had evolved from first-hand experience, but was applicable to the condition of slavery in general: "My interest in any man is objectively in his manhood and subjectively in my own manhood." Having undergone a life-altering transformation from slave to free man, Douglass embarked on a literary journey which necessitated a threefold revision of his autobiography. In it, he takes the kind of liberties with re-writings and re-interpretations of a life-story that is generally associated with fiction writing – and produced his piece of genuine literature, "The Heroic Slave." During his physical as well as literary journey, Douglass stands as much a poet who "feed[s] the thought and imagination with ideas and pictures" as he stands as a poet who feeds ideas and pictures with thought and imagination (Ibid.) This is why it is entirely appropriate for an abolition speech to be entitled "Pictures." Pictures are what creates history, as well as witnesses to this history: "Men of all conditions and classes, can now see themselves as others see them and as they will be seen by those [who] shall come after them," Douglass maintains (Ibid). Not unproblematically, as this passage indicates and as I will address shortly in more depth, possessing a picture of oneself entails the potential of being possessed by the taker or viewer of this image, if not by the image itself. Still, conforming to a pose one has voluntarily struck for the purpose of a picture is preferable to not be given an opportunity to make pictures at all. Only those who can *imagine* and *see* the end of slavery can bring it about; only man's "dreamy, clairvoyant, poetic, intellectual, and shadowy side" allows the "illusion" of slavery to "take the form of solid reality" in which shadows get themselves recognized as substance (Ibid). According to Douglass, fancies triumph over facts in their ability to transcend realities when it comes to realizing and actively seeking out the possibility of freedom.

5 "The Heroic Slave" Pictures Realities

The novella "The Heroic Slave" from 1853 takes precisely these kinds of "pictured" realities as its main narrative and generic engine. As this story is the first known historical novella published by an African American author, it must be granted a more prominent place than it has so far for the formation of the African American and thus American literary canon. As Douglass's first and only venture into the evolving genre of African American fiction, it marks the literal origin of this genre. Incidentally, it addresses the themes most pertinent to the African American experience at the time, namely freedom and equality. The narrative is thus not only significant in terms of literary history, but political and national history as well. In the novella, the fugitive slave Madison Washington delivers a soliloquy on freedom from the depths of a forest. Mr. Listwell, a white man, overhears this soliloquy. It leaves an enormous impression upon him and his imagination. To no lesser degree, however, his "overseeing" the face and figure of the black orator Washington also leaves an indelible mark on Listwell: it imprints itself on his photographic memory as it would on the silvered daguerreotype plate that Oliver Wendell Holmes called a "mirror with a memory" (Holmes 1861: 13-29). "[Y]our face," Listwell confesses upon meeting Washington for the second time, "seemed to be daguerreotyped on my memory" (Douglass 1999: 226). The slave's image figures larger than words in the white man's imagination, communicating not only to his "heart" and "fancy" but also to the picture-making power of his mind, this "divinest of human faculties" that is picture-conceiving and picture-producing (Douglass n. d. [ca. late 1864]: unpaginated). Ever since the morning of their initial encounter, states Listwell, "you [Washington] have seldom been absent from my mind, and though now I did not dare to hope that I should ever see you again, I have often wished that such might be my fortune" (Douglass 1999: 226).

Even more than his vocal acts, the black man's impressive facial features motivate Listwell to become an abolitionist in the years between his first and second encounter with the slave. As Douglass would theorize it ten years later in his speech "Pictures," Washington and his cause are heard because he who "speaks to the feelings, who enters the soul's deepest meditations, holding the mirror up to nature, revealing the profoundest mysteries of the heart, by the magic power of action and utterance *to the eye and ear*, will be sure of an audience" (Douglass n. d. [ca. late 1864]: unpaginated, emphasis mine). Listwell provides this audience, open to revelations that approximate a religious conversion experience: "The speech of Madison rung through the chambers of his soul, and vibrated through his entire frame. 'Here is indeed a man,' thought he, 'of rare endowments, – a child of God, – ... pouring out his thoughts and feelings, his hopes and resolutions to the lonely woods'" (Douglass 1999, 223).

It is only natural that Listwell would invoke the technology of early photography in the context of the decisive moment of his transformation. The democratic and humanizing discourse of daguerreotypy that was of major importance to the abolitionist cause in its veracious representation of African Americans is imprinted on this narrative as a whole.

"The Heroic Slave" is an ideal example of how the new and popular medium of daguerreotypy is put into words in fiction. It elegantly weaves a literary and historical narrative in visual terms and thus brings about a transformation of language as well. As the critic Alan Trachtenberg rightly argues, the uses of photography "as a metaphor, as image and idea" in its first decades in the United States brought about a "history of verbalizations." "The history of picturing photography in the medium of language," he asserts, is a neglected facet of the history of the medium (Trachtenberg 1991: 22). This is especially true in the context of early African American fiction writing. Literary imaginings of photography abound in the works of writers such as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, Walt Whitman, Herman Melville, and Oliver Wendell Holmes and are treated as such; there is no reason why a black writer like Douglass should not be added to this illustrious list of nineteenth-century American authors. As for his white literary companions, the discourse of early photography not only forms the material and ideological backdrop for Douglass's work but also becomes thematized in it and permeates the intellectual and emotional set-up of all characters, including himself.

In order to investigate this "photographization" of the narrative in more depth, I will proceed to place the story more squarely in the historical context of the various photographic genres of photography as Douglass would have known them when he was putting "The Heroic Slave" into words. To start with, photography at mid-century consisted of three genres: the landscape, the genre or figure scene, and the portrait. The "view" of a landscape, whether "inhabited" by human beings or not, was not fully appreciated until William Henry Fox Talbot invented the modern negative-positive print process (and thereby the larger-format prints that aptly represented the vastness of nature). Rather, it finds its initial expression in the form of daguerreotypes. Douglass draws on the landscape genre in "The Heroic Slave" when Washington deems it impossible to verbalize the fire that chases him, the fugitive, out of his temporary home, the forest.

Betraying a wish to have recourse to a visual representation rather than a verbal description that would render the vast and terrifying scene more accurately, he says to Listwell, "I will not harrow up your feeling by portraying the terrific scene of this awful conflagration. There is nothing to which I can liken it. It was horribly and indescribably grand" (Douglass 1999: 228). Narrating the scene, however, is what he instantly does. His assertion of the impossibility of recounting the fire is directly followed by an ekphrastic definition of precisely the "conflagration view" that defies words. He shrouds its extended and detailed description in the vocabulary of the sublime. "Running before [the fire], and stopping occasionally to take breath, I looked back to behold its frightful ravages, and to drink in its savage magnificence. It was awful, thrilling, solemn, beyond compare" (Ibid). While the fire is attractive precisely because it is so repellent, it is no longer Washington who is portrayed as the savage, but the grand conflagration. The fire drives Washington forth, and he runs "alike from fire and from slavery" (Ibid). By doing so, he profits from a photographic view of slavery. To put this differently, Washington's description of the forest is visually graphic by necessity; it assumes the material qualities inherent in a landscape daguerreotype that it mirrors in language in order to describe not only Washington's flight from slavery to freedom, but also his emotional turmoil that accompanies this life-changing event.

6 From Figure Scene to Portrait, from Slavery to Freedom

More prominent than the landscape genre of the "view," both in the novella and the time it originated in, however, are the portrait and the "figure" or "genre" scene. About nine out of ten daguerreotypes in Douglass's time took the form of the portrait. The purpose of portrait photography was both the description of an individual and the inscription of social identity. According to John Tagg, the rise of the photographic portrait corresponded to "the rise of the middle and lower-middle classes towards greater social, economic and political importance" (Tagg 1988: 37).⁸ Having one's portrait taken made these various forms of progress visible. By contrast, the "genre" or "figure" scenes represented an often idealized and sentimental working class. They are less important in terms of social or commercial advancement, though also intended for the middle and upper classes to consume. Whereas the portrait individualizes the subject it depicts, "genre" images (also called "artisanal" images) typify their referents.

When Listwell beholds Washington's countenance in the forest for the first time in "The Heroic Slave," his initial depiction of the slave's appearance echoes the conventions of a "figure" scene. Madison's "black, but comely" face is that of a type, namely, that of a submissive if not outright feminized slave, notwithstanding his "manly form." "A child might play in his arms, or dance on his shoulders," Listwell observes, "[a] giant's strength, but not a giant's heart was in him. His broad mouth and nose spoke only of good nature and kindness" (Douglass 1999: 222). The quotation marks around the 'black, but comely' face give us a hint that the white man is actually aware of typifying the character of the black man. An allusion to black Solomon in Song of Solomon 1:5, Listwell's description reminds us of the long line of precursors that help a type come into existence in the first place.

Yet there is more to the sketching of Washington's outward appearance than typification. That Washington's face, in Listwell's eyes, is reminiscent of a mask exemplifies Ralph Waldo Emerson's critique of the daguerreotype as "a portrait of a mask rather than a man" (Emerson 1960-1982: 115-116). Emerson considers the photographic process to be outside of nature, producing images that are no more than poor resemblances. According to Emerson, daguerreotypes cannot capture the essence of man. But it is important to keep in mind that the representation Douglass presents us with does belong to the genre of a "figure" scene – in which a mask-like appearance image necessarily is the marker of a certain type or class; in this case that of bondsmen. Emerson's critique aside, daguerreotypes were widely acknowledged as life-like images, reflecting one's character, appearance, and status.⁹ The middle and upper classes' predilection for the genre of portrait photography stemmed from the desire to see themselves come to life, so to speak, and to visually ensure their social position. Moreover, daguerreotypes were believed to allow glimpses into the hidden parts of character, the inner workings of one's soul. Favoring the portrait genre, in other words, meant favoring one's own status, which was derived from outward as much as inward appearances. Naturally, the middle and upper strata considered portraits life-like images – reflecting the kind of life they wished to transmit to the eyes of society.

In marked contrast, the gaze directed towards "figure" scenes was innately patronizing. Those images could not depict the "essence of man" since slaves and other members of the lower classes had to lack any interiority to speak of. Thus, Washington's dark face-as-mask stresses the underbelly of daguerreotypy, the figure genre. Working from the assumption that an "image of a man's face stands for a man, and perhaps, in turn, for a class of men," Washington's mask-like image presents the kind of class expression that free, well-respected white men and women could categorize as that which they did not belong to (Sekula 1982: 94). Scrutinizing figure photographs of the "low lives" with a magnifying glass (a common practice given the tiny format of the pictures at the time), these women and men could mentally distance themselves from the slaves that were not yet worthy of full-fledged portraiture and their representations on the page.

7 The Daguerreotype Comes to Life

In "The Heroic Slave," however, open-minded Listwell gives reign to his desire "to sound the mysterious depths of the thoughts and feelings of a slave" (Douglass 1999: 222). He employs a metaphorical magnifying glass to look at Washington's facial features in more detail. What comes into view is an image taken from nature, a black bird: the slave's brow is "as dark and as glossy as the raven's wing" (Ibid). Scrutinizing Washington from up close, Listwell invests the image he beholds with life. He does so against the backdrop of the forest and its inhabitants, the kind of natural environment Douglass deems a "picture of progress" in his "Pictures and Progress" speech (Douglass 1979-1992a: 471). Listwell endows Washington's face with the quality of life-likeness that is so decisive for portrait photography. When his gaze reaches his "eye, lit with emotion," the daguerreotype completely comes to life (Douglass 1999: 222). Mirroring the eloquence of his soliloquy with his sensual expression, Madison's face is described according to the conventions of the portrait genre. Ringing "through the chambers of [Listwell's] soul, and [vibrating] through his entire frame," his image prefigures the freeman-to-be who will no longer "[hide] away from the face of humanity" (223). "Here," Listwell states, "is indeed a man... guilty of no crime but the color of his skin... From this hour I am an abolitionist. I have seen enough and heard enough, and I shall go to my home in Ohio resolved to atone for my past indifference to this ill-starred race, by making such exertions as I shall be able to do, for the speedy emancipation of every slave in the land" (Ibid). Seeing the man in Washington, Listwell is able to imagine *every* slave in the country as a free man, and becomes keen to partake in the abolition of slavery throughout the nation.

The way it is cast, Washington's image verges on the artistic borderline of two genres of photography, and on the sociological and historical borderline between slavery and freedom. "The Heroic Slave" provides an early premonition of the slave's future as a freeman in which he will ascend to the middle class, free to employ photographs for his own purposes. No longer a racialized type, he will emerge "into a visibility that accords with [the African Americans'] own vision" (Mitchell 1995: 162-163). Even more significantly, his overstepping the boundary of black and white will result in a more integral vision of a racially diverse American identity. While Listwell becomes an abolitionist, Washington becomes a free man. Both transcend their traditional places in society. As Robert Stepto suggests, "heroic slave and model abolitionist [in their transformation] become separate but one," signaling the idea that freedom for slaves can transform both black and white members of society and, by extension, both the South and the North – and thus the nation (Stepto 1984: 181).

8 Performing Progress and Writing Change

In his historical novella, Douglass brings into play a model of mutual change. With this model, he transforms a binary opposition into a tool of analysis as a way to, in Fredric Jameson's words, "perceive difference and identity in a whole new language the very sounds of which we cannot yet distinguish from each other. It is a decoding or deciphering device, or alternately a technique of language learning" (Jameson 1972).¹⁰ Notably, Douglass's technique of language learning is based on the assumption that identities can be refashioned. This is enacted through his writings as well the picture-making processes that underlie these writings. The triple rewriting of his autobiography, in particular, acknowledges that identity is a dynamic construction that happens over time and that adjusts continually to the changes experienced within but also outside the self. The autobiographies as well as "The Heroic Slave" can be understood as acts of self-liberation. They are declarative speech acts in which "one brings a state of affairs into existence by declaring it to exist" (the state of freedom) but, as we have seen, they are also declarative acts of the imagination and of imaging (Searle 1979: 16-20).

Douglass rewrites his autobiography multiple times, as if it were a work of fiction that could be altered at will yet also one that is always, by definition, unfinished and in need of lengthening. He thereby performs, in W. J. T. Mitchell's words, a particular "ekphrasis of the self," since his self as a slave but also as a freedman, at the moment of writing, is a former self. This past self is removed from the actual experience of slavery and freedom through time, "not present to the speaker but mediated and distanced by memory and autobiographical information" (Mitchell 1994: 201).¹¹ The past, for Douglass, is available only in mental images. I have written earlier about the problem that might arise with the possession of such images: the image, in turn, might possess its speaker. While Douglass, as an ekphrastic object, hopes to speak of and for himself, "from the standpoint of a present in which [he] is no longer an object but now has become a subject," the abolitionists in whose service he places his life's work objectify him anew. William Lloyd Garrison especially uses him "as his text," as Douglass puts it in his second autobiography *My Bondage and My Freedom*, operating under an assumption that is reversed from the one put forward in "The Heroic Slave" (Douglass 1996b: 365). For Garrison, the image of Douglass's face stands in not only for a man, but also for a class of men – precisely the men depicted in the typifying figure photographs. Douglass counteracts this objectification imposed on him by an outside observer through a subversive act. He undermines his objectification by objectifying himself. By representing himself as an object, he reveals what Henry David Thoreau calls "within outwardness" in a journal entry on daguerreotypy (Thoreau 1906: 189).¹²

To put this differently, and more positively, Douglass renders his own persona, the man newly ascended to freedom, an art object.¹³ He also escapes beyond the portrait, into a shifting, transcendent 'I'.

Performing his own progress in "The Heroic Slave," his autobiographies, and his speeches, Douglass does portray the life-altering developments in his characters' lives yet first and foremost depicts his own progress. Throughout, he freely makes use of actual photographs to advocate his cause, picturing free man. "The process by which man is able to possess his own subjective nature outside of himself giving it form, color, space, and all the attributes of distinct personalities, so that it becomes the subject of distinct observation and contemplation," he is convinced in his "Pictures" speech, "is at bottom of all effort – and the germinating principle of all reform and progress" (Douglass n. d. [ca. late 1864]: unpaginated). As John Stauffer discusses in detail, the author makes himself a distinct subject of observation by using an engraving based on a daguerreotype to open his second autobiography, *My Bondage and my Freedom*, which was published in 1855 (Stauffer 2002: 45–48). If we look at the subsequent frontispieces of his autobiographies side by side, we can see his gradual passage from a destitute slave to a distinguished statesman most clearly.

More than in a close reading of Douglass's visible transformation, however, I am interested here in how the production processes that underlie these images influence Douglass's thinking about the question of genre, both in visual and textual terms. The invention of daguerreotypy made it possible to incorporate images into the text of a narrative. When Douglass opted for such verbal-visual integration, he replicated not only the kind of mixed-genre work that could also be found in the photographic journals that came into existence in the 1850s, but drew attention to the question of genre more generally. In fact, *My Bondage and My Freedom* marks the advent of a new genre. While the conventional slave narrative ended with the liberation of the fugitive slave as it did in the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself*, he incorporated the description of the life of the freeman into the traditional slave narrative in *My Bondage and My Freedom* published a decade later. Making innovative use of various photographic genres of his time to depict changes in character development in "The Heroic Slave" from 1853 must have facilitated Douglass's launch of a new genre in 1855. Thus, his only foray into the evolving genre of African American fiction brought about the major revision of his first autobiography, the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself*, his slave narrative dating from a decade earlier (Douglass 1996c: 1–102). In *My Bondage and My Freedom*, Douglass takes into account the entirety of his life in which he, like his character Washington, rises from a slave to a freeman, from a type to an individual. Thereby, he has created nothing less than the first full-fledged African American autobiography.

9 Underexposure vs. Overexposure

The particular kind of progress described above, however, is not without its problems. Neither Douglass nor Washington stand simply as the individualized "great men" as Douglass's work portrays them, immortalized through their exceptional stories for the nation and its history. Neither are they exactly the "representative colored men of the United States" their white audience made them out to be. In their striking eloquence, both individuals do escape *one* typified conception of the self, namely, that of the slave. This escape, however, does not forestall the logic of typification altogether. Now, their personae are captured in the type of the freeman. Formerly underexposed in the American public imagination as fugitive slaves – at the beginning of "The Heroic Slave," Washington is described as "still enveloped in darkness," hidden in the shady darkness of the forest, not getting enough light, and therefore being of very pale appearance – they now, as freemen, become overexposed. In their capacities as narrators, orators, and writers, they are "[l]ike a guiding star on a stormy night... seen through the parted clouds and the howling tempests" (Douglass 1999, 220).¹⁴ Like overexposed photographs, they experience an overabundance of light that results not only in the sharpness of their images, but also in contrasts that are too stark to be convincing. Thus, the underexposure of the fugitive slave (in the best case to the invisible audience of an abolitionist-to-be such as Listwell) and the overexposure of the freeman (to a decisively public audience of abolitionists) are two sides of the same coin. Both are deviations from the optimum exposure, which is the only kind of exposure that would result in daguerreotypes that render an individual truly life-like. In their need for an audience, neither Washington nor Douglass can ultimately escape the genre of the figure photograph within their narratives, and become the immaculate portrait they try so hard to achieve.

But even if he felt literally captured in the figure genre of the free man, Douglass's status as representative man rang true to his followers because "he was so vastly and repeatedly publicized, or *re-presented*" (Baggett 2000: 103). This wholesale representation was facilitated by means of modern technologies such as photography and magnetic telegraphy. In his introduction to *My Bondage and My Freedom*, James McCune Smith illustrates the prominence of Douglass's public persona in the media by pointing to the magnetic telegraph. Most distinguished are those, McCune Smith says, whose deeds find their way into the papers by the near-lightning speed of propagation that is also at work in the transmission of coded text messages over wire. The actions of public opinion "movers" will then appear in print under the heading "By Magnetic Telegraph," to be read like the most exciting news in the dailies are, namely instantly. Douglass is among those who create such instant news:

If a stranger in the United States would seek its most distinguished men – the movers of public opinion – he will find their names mentioned, and their movements chronicled, under the head of "BY MAGNETIC TELEGRAPH," in the daily newspapers. The keen caterers for the public attention, set down, in this column, such men only as have won high mark in the public esteem. During the past winter – 1854–5 – very frequent mention of Frederick Douglass was made under this head in the daily papers; his name glided as often – this week from Chicago, next week from Boston – over the lightning wires, as the name of any other man, of whatever note. To no man did the people more widely nor more earnestly say, "Tell me thy thought!" And, somehow or other, revolution seemed to follow in his wake (Douglass 1996b, 132).

Despite people's inclination to turn increasingly to Douglass for sharing his thoughts that is reported here, his status as "opinion mover" was not unequivocal. Not unlike an image of a fine daguerreotype photograph (figure or portrait) that only starts breathing life once it blends light, shadows, and color, Douglass's life, his writings and speeches, are not free from this blend of lightness and darkness. All too often, they leave a trace of irresolvable darkness like his character Washington who "is seen by the quivering flash of angry lightning, and... again disappears covered with darkness" (Douglass 1999: 220). The darkness is inevitably part of the picture, especially given Douglass's experience of the symbolic violence of Northern racism and the Massachusetts abolitionists who consider him "better fitted to speak than to write" (Douglass 1996b, 367). In a well-known passage in *My Bondage and My Freedom*, Douglass recounts how one of them had said, "Give us the facts, we will take care of the philosophy." It was this kind of rhetoric, depriving him from the status of a subject that can speak for itself, providing critical analysis and facts, that had caused him to embark upon a double exile, first in Britain and Ireland from 1845 to 1847, and then in Rochester (Ibid).

Only in upstate New York, away from the major East Coast abolitionists, is he able to found his own newspaper, the *North Star*, to pen his literary work "The Heroic Slave," and to publish *My Bondage and My Freedom*. All three were key elements in creating an image of him that offers an alternative to the way his former collaborators liked to picture him. In "The Trials and Triumphs of Self-Made Men," one version of one of his most popular speeches in which he relates his experience of making himself a man, Douglass, again, draws on the power of photographs, fostering a variety of perspectives: "There have been many daguerreotypes taken of life. They are as various as they are numerous. Each picture is coloured according to the lights and shades surrounding the artist" (Douglass 1979-1992b: 291).

In accord with Douglass's changing living conditions, his second autobiography includes an account of his break with the Garrisonians, as well as his efforts to start the newspaper that would help him gain greater personal freedom. He emphasizes the subjective aspect of this freedom when he renames his paper *Frederick Douglass Newspaper*. What is more, *My Bondage and my Freedom* addresses Douglass's difficulties of presenting himself to his European audiences as someone who is from the United States, but cannot fully represent the nation, given that he is part of a stratum of society that lacks full citizenship as of yet. Not belonging to a nation, he cannot represent one.

A letter he writes to Garrison from Ireland sheds light on how much the abolitionists' influence on his existence continues to cast Douglass as a slave, even if only in spirit. What I termed Douglass's "exile" is not even an exile in the proper sense of being absent from one's native country. As an outlaw in his own country, Douglass is no native. He represents a peculiar kind of exile who is without an origin and feels more at home when being elsewhere. Lacking any geographically, legally, or socially defined nationality, he chooses what Kenneth Warren calls rhetorical exile (Warren 1990, 268). This rhetorical exile allows him to represent himself both *elsewhere* and *otherwise*: with the verbal and visual means he selects on his own, and many of which have been already discussed in this essay. In *My Bondage and My Freedom*, he asserts his own aspirations as well as his perspective on the question of exile by including the Ireland letter:

I wish it [my message] to go in the right direction, and according to truth. I need hardly to say that, in speaking of Ireland, I shall be influenced by no prejudices in favor of America. I think my circumstances all forbid that. I have no end to serve, no creed to uphold, no government to defend; and as to nation, I belong to none. I have no protection at home, or resting-place abroad. The land of my birth welcomes me to her shores only as a slave, and spurns with contempt the idea of treating me differently; so that I am an outcast from the society of my childhood, and an outlaw in the land of my birth (Douglass 1996b, 372).

In and through his writings, Douglass creates daguerreotypes of himself, and his own life. As he maintains in his "Pictures" speech, this picture-making ability is the key ingredient to anyone who is after progress because it provides the base for imagining and thus creating favorable conditions that stand in opposition to the current ones: "Poets, prophets, and reformers are all picture makers, and this ability is the secret of their power and of their achievements. They see what ought to be by the reflection of what is, and endeavor to remove the contradiction" (Douglass, n. d. [ca. late 1864], unpaginated). Douglass here builds on an Aristotelian tradition which regards representation as an exclusively human domain. Only human beings, he stresses, have the power to create on account of their powers of imagination: "[Imagination], this sublime, prophetic, and all-creative power of the human soul... is the peculiar possession and glory of man" (Ibid). Man, as it were, is "the only picture-making animal in the world." Problematically, however, Douglass's notion of humans, and especially African Americans as "representational animals," anchors them squarely within the deep-rooted prejudice that aligns black physiognomy with animalistic features.¹⁵ Douglass taps into precisely the rhetoric he means to abandon. In other words, the history Douglass's images show is inseparable from the history they enact. Slavery, in ever-more subtle and unconscious forms, winds its way back into the text and continues to be at work exactly where it should not: on the level of its textual and visual representation. It is indeed "profoundly ironic that black representation, which sought to combat slavery, was itself dependent on slavery for its proliferation and strength," as Stauffer states. "In one sense, you could say that slavery was a muse that fueled the power of the black image – and black art more generally – which in turn sought to vanquish slavery" (Stauffer 2006: 267). Additionally, for Douglass, exile by definition forestalls the successful achievement of complete freedom, on United States turf and elsewhere.

10 Comparative Freedom

The precarious nature of freedom becomes most obvious in *My Bondage and My Freedom*, where Douglass revises his description of his spiritual renewal by inserting "comparative" before the word "freedom." His fight with Covey, a major event that helps set him free, is still a "resurrection," but only one to the "heaven of comparative freedom." Douglass's contention that his spirit makes him "a freeman in *fact*, while I remained a slave in *form*" holds true not only for the duration of the fight but also after his official liberation (Douglass 1996b, 286).

Only now, he has become a bondsman in the hands of white abolitionists. Similarly, his first day as a free man in New Bedford is not the "starting point of a new existence" as it was in the *Narrative*, but a more tentative "starting point of something like a new existence" in a place where he sees "a pretty near approach to freedom on the part of colored people" (Douglass 1996c, 95 and Douglass, 1996b, 356–357). The realization that hits Douglass here and that will remain with him throughout his life is that the search for progress is an ongoing, and potentially unending enterprise. I concur with William L. Andrews who points out that Douglass is "not a self-made man but a man still in the making, characterized ultimately by what Melville termed 'that lasting temper of all true, candid men – a seeker, not a finder yet'" (Andrews 1991, 146). Douglass cannot be a self-made man because he never comes to entirely conceive of himself as a free man himself. Even as late in his life as the publication of his third and final autobiography, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (1881), he declares as an elderly statesman, "I write freely of myself, not from choice, but because I have, by my cause, been morally forced into thus writing" (Douglass 1996a, 938). Being a liberated master's slave has turned Douglass into the slave of his own writings, re-writings, and re-visions.¹⁶ His life's story is to narrate his experience as a slave. "My part has been to tell the story of the slave. The story of the master never wanted for narrators... I have lived several lives in one: first, the life of slavery; secondly, the life of a fugitive from slavery; thirdly, the life of comparative freedom, fourthly, the life of conflict and battle; and fifthly, the life of victory, if not complete, at least assured," he concludes in the "Retrospection" chapter (Douglass 1996a, 912-913).

But being stuck in a narrative dictated by slavery is only one aspect of denied liberty. What this conclusive statement shows to be even more at stake is that Douglass seems to see no need to act further in his victory, no need to continue the fight. But then, taking up action for Douglass on his progressive journey towards greater freedom meant precisely nothing other than putting into words "the whole soul of man ... a sort of a picture gallery [,] a grand panorama, in which all the great facts of the universe, in tracing things of time and things of eternity, are painted" (Douglass, 1979–1992a, 459). The soul of man, comprising past, present, and future of his world in the form of a picture gallery, would be capable of creating images that assert not only Douglass's personal history but the history of humankind – bearing indiscriminate witness to all aspects of this history. Douglass remains the representative example of a man who created images in his speeches and his writings. He was made to do so since he was the prime reflection "of the system into which he was born and its greatest living contradiction. Slavery never received a more eloquent indictment than in his autobiographies, editorials, and speeches. For him, language not only carried the ability to know, but, more importantly, the power of self-assertion" (Blight 1990, 310). In this sense, he was a self-made man.

Charged with the ultimate power of self-assertion, language's potential failure when it came to representations of freedom was nevertheless high. As Stauffer points out, it was Douglass's self-representation as a free man in *My Bondage and My Freedom* that induced in him "a crisis of language and aesthetics" (Stauffer 2003: xxv). In the book, Douglass begins his life as a supposed free man by claiming "[t]here is no necessity for any extended notice of the incidents of this part of my life." (Douglass 1996b: 349) As with the conflagration view in "The Heroic Slave," however, he contradicts his own words and proceeds to describe life after his formal liberation. His joyous excitement upon his arrival in New York "which no words can describe" finds its expression in the portrait he draws of himself in the final fifty pages of his second autobiography (Douglass 1996b: 350). His post-liberation life is too decisive in the development from a bondsman to a freeman, from a slave to a human being, as to not be portrayed. But it can only be portrayed in the new genres Douglass is creating, the full-fledged African American autobiography that includes life after liberation and African American literary narrative, underlaid with the discourse of images as I have described it.

11 Exile Doubly Exposed

To conclude, let me return to the notion of exile. Despite its problematic identity politics, it is useful to do so because what Svetlana Boym calls the main feature of exile, "a double conscience, a double exposure of different times and spaces, a constant bifurcation," is emblematic not only of Douglass's physical exile. It is also the engine that spurs Douglass's artistic mixed-genre productions that result from this experience, as well as the decisive marker of the African American experience ever since W. E. B. Du Bois (Boym 2001, 256). Through the combination of textual and photographic elements, double conscience and exposure materialize themselves separately in each medium, but additionally complement each other. Thus, text and image, taken together, can be viewed as a form of double exposure, or double consciousness, of the experience of exile. Exile literally means to "leap outside," and his expatriation, a "prolonged absence from one's native land, endured by compulsion of circumstances or voluntarily undergone for any purpose" causes Douglass to switch back and forth between the genres of word and image ("Exile" in: *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, 2006). Daguerreotypic representation is particularly apt to transmit the experience of exile, as it is an "imperious sign" of past and future deaths at the same time as it is a proof of having been or being alive (Barthes 2000, 97–99). Notions of absence as well as presence are always already inscribed in the daguerreotype.

To take this even a step further, the picture-making processes derived from the invention of photography itself could be regarded as a kind of exile. Literally, early photography constitutes a place apart from Douglass's writings and speeches, even if both words and images are inextricably linked in his work. This linkage is mirrored in the similarities between the author and his protagonists, his different selves in the various stages of his life in the autobiographies, and the fugitive slave Washington in "The Heroic Slave." Washington's voice in particular is hardly distinguishable from that of his author. As a result, the double-voicedness presents us with a peculiar version of Bakhtinian heteroglossia. Douglass's language and the picture-making processes it enables lie on the borderline between one's self and the other, but a borderline where words are half someone else's only to become one's own (Bakhtin 2002, 293). As Du Bois would have it in the early twentieth century in *The Souls of Black Folk*, Douglass here already knows, and exemplifies, that in order to "attain his place in the world, he must be himself, and not another" (Du Bois 1997, 617).

Douglass aimed to be himself as much as he could, even if exposing himself to the world and representing his representatively-unrepresentative version of freedom meant that double-speak, words, images, and their contradictions were his primary themes. Irresolvable contradictions are at work in three ways in Douglass's writing: extratextually in simultaneously addressing a white and black audience, intratextually in the master-slave discourse, and "intertextually" in the heterogeneous elements it combines.¹⁷ Not only the slave narrative, as W. J. T. Mitchell suggests, "is notable for its formal frontiers ... its textual heterogeneity, its multiple voices, boundaries and frames – prefaces, frontispieces, and authenticating documents," but so are the literary forms Douglass derives from that genre (Mitchell 1994, 205).¹⁸ Vacillating between "facts and philosophy" as well as spoken word, image, and written word while knowing that he can be himself, a free man, only to a limited degree, Douglass does fully cross one borderline. As it happens, this frontier is determinative when we direct our attention to African American literary history, and thus American literary history at large. Having his various selves traverse so closely to the borderline of intermedia frontiers, Douglass creates new literary genres along the way. What is more, he paves the way with his intermedia life-project for American modernism, whose major characteristic is the testing of limits of representation, art, and expression in a variety of media. Indeed, by casting his shadow as far as 1968, Douglass, the representative man, finally represents men (and women) when *LIFE* applies its litmus test of the relevance of African American representation for American history at large.

Bibliography

Andrews, William L. (1991): "My Bondage and My Freedom and the American Literary Renaissance of the 1850s", in: Andrews, William L. (ed.): *Critical Essays on Frederick Douglass*. Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 133-147.

Baggett, Paul (2000): "Transcending the Boundaries of Nation: Images and Imaginings of Frederick Douglass", in: *In Process* 2, 103–113.

Bakhtin, M. M. (2002): *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Ed. Michael Holquist. Trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: U of Texas P.

Barthes, Roland (2000): *Camera Lucida*. Trans. Richard Howard. London: Vintage.

Benjamin, Walter (1980): "A Short History of Photography", in: Trachtenberg, Alan (ed.): *Classic Essays on Photography*. New Haven: Leete's Island Books, 199–216.

Benjamin, Walter (2001): "The Work of Art In the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", in: Leitch, Vincent B. (ed.): *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. New York, London: Norton, 1166–1186.

Blackwood, Sarah (2009): "Fugitive Obscura: Runaway Slave Portraiture and Early Photographic Technology", in: *American Literature* 81.1, 93–125.

Blight, David W. (1990): "Up from 'Twoness': Frederick Douglass and the Meaning of W. E. B. Du Bois's Concept of Double Consciousness", in: *The Canadian Review of American Studies* 21.3, 301–319.

Boym, Svetlana (2001): *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books.

Butterfield, Roger and John Hope Franklin (Nov. 22, 1968): "Search for a Black Past", in: *LIFE*, 90–122.

Cassuto, Leonard (1997): *The Inhuman Race: The Racial Grotesque in American Literature and Culture*. New York: Columbia UP.

Dorsey, Peter A. (May 1996): "Becoming the Other: The Mimesis of Metaphor in Douglass's *My Bondage and My Freedom*", in: *PMLA* 111.3, 435–450.

Douglass, Frederick (1999): "The Heroic Slave", in: Foner, Philip S. (ed.): *Frederick Douglass: Selected Speeches and Writings*. Abr. Yuval Taylor. Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 220–247.

Douglass, Frederick (1996a): "Life and Times of Frederick Douglass", in: *Autobiographies*. New York: The Library of America, 453–1045.

Douglass, Frederick (1996b): "My Bondage and My Freedom", in: *Autobiographies*. New York: The Library of America, 103–452.

Douglass, Frederick (1996c): "Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave", in: *Autobiographies*. New York: The Library of America, 1–102.

Douglass, Frederick (n. d. [ca. late 1864]): "Pictures," holograph, in: Frederick Douglass Papers, Library of Congress (and on microfilm), unpaginated.

Douglass, Frederick (1979-1992a): "Pictures and Progress", in: Blassingame, John (ed.): *The Frederick Douglass Papers: Series One: Speeches, Debates, and Interviews, Volume 3*. New Haven: Yale UP, 452–473.

Douglass, Frederick (1979–1992b): "The Trials and Triumphs of Self-Made Men", in: Blassingame, John (ed.): *The Frederick Douglass Papers: Series One: Speeches, Debates, and Interviews, Volume 3*. New Haven: Yale UP, 289–300.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (October 1923): "Photography", in: *The Crisis* 26.6, 249–250.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1997): "The Souls of Black Folk", in: Gates, Henry Louis Jr. (ed.): *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*. New York and London: W. W. Norton, 613–740.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo (1960–1982): *Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*. Vol. 8. Cambridge: Harvard UP and Belknap P.

"Exile", in: *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. Accessed June 6, 2006.

Freedberg, David (1989): *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response*. Chicago and London: The U of Chicago P.

Gates, Henry Louis Jr. (1987): *Figures in Black: Words, Signs, and the "Racial Self."* New York and Oxford: Oxford UP.

Gates, Henry Louis Jr. (1998): "Writing, 'Race,' and the Difference It Makes", in: Richter, David H. (ed.): *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*. Boston, New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1576–1588.

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1986): *Phänomenologie des Geistes*. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp.

Holmes, Oliver Wendell (1861): "Sun-Painting and Sun Sculpture", in: *Atlantic Monthly* 8, 13–29.

Hunt, George P. (1968): "Editor's Note", in: *LIFE*, 3 (Nov. 22).

Jameson, Fredric (1972): *The Prison-House of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP.

McCoy, Beth A. (2006): "Race and the (Para)Textual Condition", in: *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 121.1, 156–169.

Meehan, Sean Ross (2008): *Mediating American Autobiography: Photography in Emerson, Thoreau, Douglass, and Whitman*. Columbia and London: U of Missouri P.

Mitchell, W. J. T. (1994): "Narrative, Memory, and Slavery", in: Ezell, Margaret J. M. and Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe (eds.): *Cultural Artifacts and the Production of Meaning: The Page, the Image and the Body*. Ann Arbor: The U of Michigan P, 199–222.

Mitchell, W. J. T. (1995): *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*. Chicago and London: The U of Chicago P.

Mitchell, W. J. T. (1995): "Representation", in: Lentricchia, Frank and Thomas McLaughlin (eds.): *Critical Terms for Literary Study*. Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 11–22.

Newhall, Beaumont (1982): *The History of Photography from 1839 to the Present*. New York: The Museum of Modern Art.

Sandweiss, Martha A., ed. (1991): *Photography in Nineteenth-Century America*. Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum and New York.

Searle, John (1979): *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

Sekula, Allan (1982): "On the Invention of Photographic Meaning", in: Burgin, Victor (ed.): *Thinking Photography*. London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 84–109.

Stauffer, John (2002): *The Black Hearts of Men: Radical Abolitionists and the Transformation of Race*. Cambridge: Harvard UP.

Stauffer, John (2006): "Creating an Image in Black: The Power of Abolition Pictures", in: McCarthy, Timothy Patrick and John Stauffer (eds.): *Prophets of Protest: Reconsidering the History of American Abolitionism*. New York, London: The New Press, 256–267.

Stauffer, John (1997): "Daguerreotyping the National Soul: The Portraits of Southworth and Hawes, 1843–1860", in: *Prospects: An Annual of American Cultural Studies* 22, 69–107.

Stauffer, John (2003): Foreword. *My Bondage and My Freedom*. New York: Random House, ix–xxviii.

Stauffer, John (2008): *Giants: The Parallel Lives of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln*. New York: Twelve.

Stauffer, John (1998): "Race and Contemporary Photography: Willie Robert Middlebrook and the Legacy of Frederick Douglass", in: *21st: The Journal of Contemporary Photography: Culture and Criticism* 1, 55–60.

Stepto, Robert B. (1984): "Storytelling in Early Afro-American Fiction: Frederick Douglass's 'The Heroic Slave'", in: *Black Literature and Literary Theory*. Ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. London: Methuen, 175–186.

Sweet, Timothy (1990): *Poetry, Photography, and the Crisis of the Union*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins UP.

Taft, Robert (1942): *Photography and the American Scene: A Social History, 1839–1889*. New York: Macmillan.

Tagg, Robert (1988): *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories*. Amherst: The U of Massachusetts P.

Thoreau, Henry David (1906): *Journal* Vol. 1. Eds. Bradford Torrey and Francis H. Allen. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Trachtenberg, Alan (1991): "Photography: The Emergence of a Keyword", in: Sandweiss, Martha A. (ed.): *Photography in Nineteenth-Century America*. Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum and New York, 17–45.

Trachtenberg, Alan (1990): *Reading American Photographs: Images as History, Mathew Brady to Walker Evans*. New York: Hill and Wang.

Warren, Kenneth (1990): "Frederick Douglass's *Life and Times*: Progressive Rhetoric and the Problem of Constituency", in: Sundquist, Eric J. (ed.): *Frederick Douglass: New Literary and Historical Essays*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge UP, 253–270.

Wood, Marcus, ed. (1991): *America and the Daguerreotype*. Iowa City: U of Iowa P.

Notes

¹ A slightly altered version of this essay will be published in print as the first chapter of my *Cultures of Emancipation: Photography, Race, and Modern American Literature*. American Studies: A Monograph Series. Heidelberg: Winter (forthcoming in 2012). The author and editors wish to kindly thank the editor of the series, Alfred Hornung, for agreeing to the publication of this version in *PhiN*.

² From the collection of Robert A. Weinstein taken by J. R. Eyerman.

³ The novel that is generally regarded the first piece of African American fiction, William Wells Brown's *Clotel; or, The President's Daughter*, also from 1853, was first published in England.

⁴ On the parallel lives of these two exemplary yet so non-exemplary common men, see Stauffer 2008.

⁵ My emphasis. Incidentally, the following issue, from November 29, 1968, that contains Part Two of the "Black Past series" (on the years of Reconstruction and repression), advertises the Polaroid Color Pack Camera on the inside of its cover: "The 60-second excitement: it's everywhere. Do you have your Polaroid Color Pack Camera? (Under \$50)" (emphasis in original). This very camera hangs around the neck of a happy father who shows off images to his children and other families flocking around him. All are rather uniformly dressed in red, black, and blue hats and other high-contrast garb at the base of a sledding hill.

⁶ Even though Douglass, unlike W. E. B. Du Bois, never goes as far as to explicitly call for black photographers in his work and seems content that he and the members of his race be photographed rather than take up the camera themselves, note how he might have named his hero Madison Washington not only after George Washington, as has often been pointed out, but after Augustus Washington, one of the few commercially successful black photographers of Douglass's time. In his essay on photography, W. E. B. Du Bois exclaims: "Why do not more young colored men and women take up photography as a career? The average white photographer does not know how to deal with colored skins and having neither sense of their delicate beauty of tone nor will to learn, he makes a horrible botch of portraying them.... Why are there not more colored photographers?" (Du Bois 1923: 249–250). On the differences and similarities concerning the question of freedom in Douglass and Du Bois, and on how Douglass's experience, as well as his literal and moral imagination, anticipated the concept of double consciousness in *The Souls of Black Folk* see Blight 1990: 301–319.

⁷ Like Meehan, Sarah Blackwood draws heavily on the "Pictures and Progress" speech yet leaves out the "Pictures" speech that, to this day, remains as unpublished as understudied. Despite Meehan's and Blackwood's meticulous attention to technology's place in Douglass's work, their more selective inquiry obliterates the significant role that thinking about photography plays in Douglass's outlook on identity politics and abolitionism in general, and in a greater number of his works than generally assumed (Blackwood 2009: 93–125). For a multi-genre approach, see also McCoy 2006: 156–169.

⁸ On the uses and functions of portrait photography in Douglass's time see also Newhall 1982: 9–72; Sandweiss 1991: 17–45 and 49–76; Stauffer 1997: 69–107; Taft 1942: 22–166; Trachtenberg 1990: 21–70; and Wood 1991: 1–26.

⁹ On the life-like quality of images see Freedberg 1989 and Sweet 1990. As Walter Benjamin recounts, an exemplary viewer of the first daguerreotypes in fact hesitated to look at the sharpness of the people in the pictures for too long, fearing that the "puny little faces of the people in the pictures can see him, so staggering in the effect on everyone of the unaccustomed clarity and the fidelity to nature of the first daguerreotypes" (Benjamin 1980: 203–204). Once this fear is overcome, however, the exchange of eyes in looking at a daguerreotype as a form of practicing egalitarianism opens up a fascinating democratic vista. Concerning this, Trachtenberg draws on Karl Mannheim who speaks of "the 'look' as a form of egalitarian 'ecstasy' – the ecstasy of identifying with the physical point of view of another, seeing through the other's eyes into one's own, as the psychological basis of a truly democratic culture" (cited in Trachtenberg 1990: 68).

¹⁰ For how seemingly binary oppositions such as presence and absence of humanity, self and the other, master and bondsman, black and white are signified by way of Douglass's specific use of language in the "Narrative," are turned upon their head, and ultimately collapse the binary of sameness and difference, see Gates 1987: 87–95.

¹¹ Mitchell specifies the matter of identity further when he says, "there are no slave narratives, only narratives about slavery written from the standpoint of freedom. It is not even quite accurate to say that slave narratives are 'about' slavery, they are really about the movement from slavery to freedom" (204).

¹² John Stauffer tackles the question of self-objectification in his essay "Creating an Image in Black: The Power of Abolition Pictures" (Stauffer 2006: 256–267).

¹³ Douglass's work could thus be placed in the historical cusp between what Walter Benjamin identifies as the "cult" and "exhibition" value of the unique work of art and the "political" value of mechanically produced and mass-distributed images (Benjamin 2001: 1166–1186).

¹⁴ Note how the image of the guiding star in "The Heroic Slave" stands as an image of the political guidance of Douglass's paper "The North Star."

¹⁵ For the Aristotelian tradition see Mitchell 1995: 11–12. For an illustration of the physiognomic context see for example the project of the acclaimed nineteenth-century ethnologists Josiah Nott and George Glidden who put images of guerillas and blacks next to each other to prove the affinity between them and to show the supposed inferiority of blacks in *Types of Mankind* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo & Co., 1854).

¹⁶ For more on the nature of revision in the three autobiographies see Dorsey 1996: 435–450.

¹⁷ For a discussion of the master-slave dialectic as it plays itself out in Douglass, see Cassuto 1997 and Gates 1998: 1576–1588. Both essays refer to Hegel 1986.

¹⁸ Narrative in general, Mitchell continues, is a hybrid form; but that only attests to Douglass's self-consciousness when it comes to writing literature.