PICTURES AND PROGRESS

EARLY PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE MAKING OF AFRICAN AMERICAN IDENTITY

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Frontispiece: Portrait of a woman with earring. Tintype, circa 1870s; detail.

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TWO

"Rightly Viewed"

THEORIZATIONS OF SELF IN FREDERICK DOUGLASS'S LECTURES ON PICTURES

Ginger Hill

Frederick Douglass, an esteemed if oftentimes-controversial orator, writer, and publisher, now remembered for a lifetime commitment to social justice and antiracism, was also a visual theorist. Through close analysis of Douglass's visual legacy, John Stauffer, Donna Wells, Colin Westerbeck, and others have demonstrated that the widespread circulation and familiarity of Douglass's visage is most likely a result of his willingness and probable resolve to be photographed according to a very particular, fastidious standard. The conventional portrait of Frederick Douglass, poised in an isolated, three-quarter view, with a serious facial expression and elegant, upper-class attire, is such a well-known image that even today his face often remains unhesitatingly recognizable.[1]

Frederick Douglass also gave multiple lectures between 1859 and 1865 celebrating the technological innovation enabling portrait photographs, linking the genius of individual invention to possibilities of shared human progress.[2] Variously titled "Life Pictures," "Age of Pictures," and, the best known, "Pictures and Progress," these lectures on pictures reworked reigning theories of what defined human interiority, relaying complex ideas engendered, in part, by response to the new and ubiquitous medium of the photograph. Douglass's musings on pictures served as a starting point for his more general and urgent concerns of human experience and social change. His ideas *about* pictures, I contend, should be considered just as important to histories of visuality in the United States as his sitting *for* pictures.[3]

Douglass spoke of pictures as a metaphor for, and expression of, human interiority. Most remarkably, his lectures on pictures explored the *constitution* of human interiority in photographic terms. Douglass celebrated photography because in viewing photographs, one had to grapple with the complexity of what it means to live an embodied existence. Douglass's lectures were concerned first and foremost with processes of exchange: the confrontations, accommodations, and accumulations that forge and transform sensate beings into something of a self. Douglass proffered a schematic description of an additive process, building from embodied existence a perceptual repertoire that, in turn, enables the possibility of self-creation. Two conclusions drawn from these compelling insights of Douglass's lectures on pictures are the focus on this chapter: First, the exclusion of persons from humanity based on racial criteria, though scientifically incorrect and epistemologically unsustainable, is maintained in large part through socially habituated visual perception, and may be challenged through both visual objects and, more importantly, *scrutinizing habits of looking*. Second, the complexities of how visuality functions in *creating* a self suggest that transcendentalist understandings of self-consciousness as unfettered by materiality are severely limited.[4] Explorations of these limits challenge both reigning definitions of human essence and the necessary conditions for realizing black social progress in nineteenth-century America.[5]

The individual image, as discussed in Douglass's lectures, is as limited as a solely transcendentalist focus on disembodiment. Douglass creates a visual metaphor of *serial* collecting and viewing of pictures as human interiority itself. "Rightly viewed," Douglass says, "the whole soul of man is a sort of picture gallery[,] a grand panorama, in which all the great *facts* of the universe, the *tracings* of *time* and *things* of eternity are painted."[6] More complicated than passive imprints, these internal pictures are the fodder for human engagement with, and transformation of, the now-distinct world. This internal gallery is a shifting seriality, from image to image, "which sets all the machinery of life in motion." It generates human interiority, enabling its proprietor to be an agent of creation: "The process by which man is able to *posses[s]* his own subjective nature outside of himself—giving it forms, color, space, and all the attributes of *distinct* personalities—so that it *becomes the subject* of *distinct* observation and contemplation *is at bottom of all efforts*, and the germinating principle of all reform and all progress."[7]

Douglass's own constant sittings for portrait photographs suggest a strict concern with visual reform. His precise public image conforms to monotonous, middle-class standards of legible self-possession and proper—which is to say, propertied—public standing.[8] Delivered during the vola-

tile war years, Douglass's lectures on pictures espouse a theory of the self as a contemplative interiority manifested through self-possession. Like his photographs, such notions adhere to a conventional definition of selfhood. In this liberal formulation, "the human essence is freedom from dependence on the wills of others, and freedom is a function of possession."[9] Thus, self is determined by the right to self-possess and possess rights.

Through descriptions of familiar experiences of perception, moreover, Douglass proposed that the self, rather than existing as an a priori autonomous subjectivity simply awaiting expression, is made by, and dependent upon, materiality. Subjective perspectives, what Douglass calls "individual truths," are formed via sensorial engagement with phenomena. That *newly* formed self acts upon and transforms his or her world.

Critically, though all subjective human experience grapples with the condition of being thrown into worlds not of our making, we are thrown differently according to *social* systems of value and relations of power.[10] To change habits of viewing, Douglass suggested, is more than an issue of the *content* of images. A new valuation must be placed on the viewing and creating of pictures, in order to accumulate internal, rich picture galleries of the soul. More simply put, the constant interdependence of human existence is both the most threatening and potentially liberating condition of possibility, wherein habits of humanity that "either lift us to the highest heavens or sink us to the bottomless depths" involve seeing and being seen.[11]

The initial response to these abstract arguments of lectures like "Pictures and Progress" is difficult to gauge, but it seems to have been tepid at best. Though the *Liberator* pithily stated it was "creditably written and warmly applauded," another reporter declared the lecture "came near being a total failure." The speech was salvaged only when Douglass switched from the topic at hand—pictures—to address slavery and the American Civil War, which then "gave evidence of some of Douglass's old power" and "relieved the audience from what they feared would be . . . an evening without result."[12] If Douglass's immediate listeners were unresponsive to his theorization of outer and inner representations, and instead looked for his speech to conform to their usual expectations of political excitement, only then rousing their "listless and unattentive body" to an "attentive and enthusiastic" state, his audience unknowingly conformed to the very behavior Douglass was trying to describe. "Pictures are decide[ed]ly conservative," he said, and once the public has a conception of a man by way of a picture, he must conform to it, for it is all they can see.[13] In "Pictures and Progress," by departing from his audience's expectations, Douglass had asked his lis-

teners to see him anew, with hopes of bringing them to see themselves differently as well. Douglass's lectures on pictures required more of his audiences than simply considering the content of a different view; they addressed the very process through which one arrives at a perspective.

In addition to their divergent content, Douglass's lectures on pictures also diverged from his better-known styles of authorship. His first narrative, both a political and literary achievement, succeeded through a laconic style. But as a public speaker, Douglass was "majestic in his wrath."[14] Still more differently, Douglass's lectures on pictures were often ambulatory, sprawling, difficult to follow, and, at times, self-contradictory. The audience's desire for Douglass's "old power" suggests a criterion of direct, youthful vigor, rather than the nuanced, speculative nature of "Pictures and Progress."[15] Ironically, these abstract, philosophical orations were most fully developed during moments of immediate threats of violence to his person (because of his ardent antislavery speechmaking). That Douglass was seeking to advance highly theoretical ideas about human interiority in this context of heightened vulnerability is a sign of the material and psychic urgency Douglass saw in the political potential of photography.

Douglass valorized the notion of the "self-made man" and used photography to this aim. Douglass's use and celebration of photography, though attempting to secure possessive individualism, actually divulges the contingency and failures of such a conception of selfhood. Douglass's lectures on pictures redefined the essential traits of humanity in order to dislodge racist views of both the American School of Ethnology and more commonly held popular assumptions. In explaining these processes, these lectures provide a more general theory of subjectivity that insists upon embodied perception and socially habituated practices. Douglass's explanations of the role of pictures in relation to appearance, experience, and truth are presciently similar to ideas developed in the much later work by the philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Such continuities underscore that Douglass constructed a composite definition of truth and explained selfhood as embodied, limited, and interdependent. These ideas complicate any espousal of disembodied transcendentalism. It remains important, however, that the violent historical context surrounding these lectures not be overlooked. Douglass's notion of "thought pictures" evokes a fugitive, vexed status between person and thing, interior and exterior. The most urgent significance of these lectures lies in their recurrent emphasis on the perpetual constitution of interiority, and Douglass's call for attentive consideration of the exchanges between human imagination and habit.

Douglass's original audiences may have felt impatient with these abstract ideas. As present-day scholars have warned, grappling with the conceptual challenges of the realities of slavery by way of philosophy risks "intellectual evasion," a bad faith sublimation running in the face of horrific facts.[16] Having long lived in a state of urgency due to conditions not of his making in slavery, and having endured continued threats to his life and limb at every turn of his resistance as a freeman, Frederick Douglass now pondered pictures and human subjectivity in an attempt to fully engage and counter the transcendentalist urge to leave behind lived experience and the concrete banality of everydayness. The difficulty of these lectures, then, fraught with complexity, lyricism, and contradiction, might reflect the gravity, necessity, and impossibility of their aim, no less than challenging definitions of the human to maintain hope for a collective future.

Properties of Freedom: Looking Out

Many of Douglass's lectures celebrate exceptional individuals, the "self-made men" who, through their own striving, rise above their conditions and surpass their peers to accomplish great deeds. In the lectures on pictures this theme appears in the figure of Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre, the genius credited with the invention of photography. Douglass claims Daguerre's ingenuity benefited the entire age, and he implores his listeners to recognize Daguerre's labor in the modern marvel of photography: "We drink freely of the water at the marble fountain, without thinking for the assessment of the toil and skill displayed in constructing the fountain itself."[17] In admonishing his listeners to acknowledge individual achievement, Douglass suggests that praising the object of Daguerre's creation is insufficient to repay society's debt to him. Praise sustains the individuality of the person and refuses to subsume his memory into the object of his invention. The divide between personhood and object remains distinct.

Taking up Daguerre's invention and subsequent photographic innovations, Douglass underscored his own individuality and propriety through circulating numerous photographic portraits of himself. Douglass was highly invested in presenting a conventionally legible, believable portrait that would suggest a very *particular* sense of his character to solidify his claims to nothing less than full humanity. These visual affirmations were more than issues of vanity or celebrity; projecting an image of veracity and respectability was the foundation upon which any man could claim citizenship and the protective and protected natural rights attached to that

legal designation. Similar to the panegyrics to Daguerre, Douglass's portraits are visual arguments for a liberal conception of freedom that prizes individuality.

Since the eighteenth century, the political rights of the liberal citizen-subject, according to the political theorist C. B. Macpherson, can only be claimed by an autonomous, self-contained individual. This status relies upon property ownership, self-sovereignty, and the law, characteristics that Macpherson collectively calls "possessive individualism."[18] The historian Lynn Hunt recently extended this understanding beyond political and legal discourses and into habitual, daily practices. She demonstrates that the idea of the autonomous person claiming rights required a new, quotidian presentation of self-containment and control to differentiate self from others. This delineation presumes a highly developed individual interiority and also relies upon recognition from others. Citizenship, then, is not just a matter of political theory but an emotional capacity and lived experience of shared processes of identification.[19] Frederick Douglass's insistence upon honoring self-made men like Daguerre underscores that self-development, and its expression via material accomplishment must be affirmed by others. Paradoxically, these paeans to Daguerre reiterate the social exchange necessary for autonomy. Photographs were another means to establish emotional identification and political recognition.

As Douglass's writings expanded in scope and length, so did the production and circulation of his photographic portraits, especially after 1860. These widely disseminated images claim and proclaim his complex interiority and his status of self-possession in an easily recognizable visual rhetoric, adding truth-value to his public persona and increasing its dissemination and currency. Though he sat for photographs often, and was in the habit of giving away his pictures during his constant travels, Douglass never wrote about his personal experience as a photographic subject. What is known from the extant visual documents is that he posed for numerous sessions before multiple operators over four decades.[20] By scattering daguerreotypes, ambrotypes, cartes de visite, and cabinet cards during his travels, Douglass left a material reminder of his presence.[21]

And yet it was not so easy for Douglass to claim the status of rights-bearing autonomy through an increased empathy formed by way of portraits. If propagating photographs of himself became one means to signify and ensure Douglass's claim to rights, including liberty, it simultaneously invoked the historical specificity and limitations of such liberally conceived freedom. This use of photography, the medium that was often conceived

as fixing fleeting appearances into stable, delineated images, complicated any easy divide between person and thing, proprietor and property, freedom and slavery. Though no longer a fugitive slave, and irrespective of his monumental individual achievements, Frederick Douglass's social standing remained in question because of the ways assumptions about race have historically structured claims to citizenship.

Liberal democratic perspectives, such as those of Hunt, assert that the subject of human rights simply needs to be expanded to those who were formerly excluded. The literary theorist Samira Kawash, however, challenges this method of addition, showing that the free subject of rights exists through defining itself, fundamentally and inextricably, against slave status. By the late eighteenth century the visibly white body became a sign for such self-possession within the social system of racialized slavery in the United States; the black and now-presumed enslaved body, in contrast, existed as that which was not-citizen-subject, property of another.[22] Whereas slavery was the submission of one will to another, the free citizen was not defined by the opposite, a complete lack of restraint, but by an internalized self-containment. This self-mastery is what Frederick Douglass repeatedly attempted to document visually.

Within racial slavery and its aftermath, persons associated with blackness were considered inherently incapable of the self-restraint so necessary for freedom. Within liberally conceived freedom, freedom was for those who possessed. One's self-possession entitled the free subject to own property that, coterminously, must be recognized by others. Tautologically, exterior property was supposed to confirm one's interior personhood, full claims to humanity, and protections of citizenship.[23] In actual practice the citizen-subject's natural rights were thus culturally inscribed, granted to some through recognition of possession, while withheld from others through violent force.

If to be a citizen-subject, then, is to be free, and freedom is the unquestioned and legally protected right to property possession, then such freedom is not the same as physical escape for a fugitive slave. Kawash's most important insight is that the status of a fugitive slave divulges the limits of freedom conceived and practiced within liberal confines because the fugitive is neither slave nor free, neither a thing as property (since one has stolen oneself), nor a person with property (since one has no right to possession).[24] Structuring violence is not stopped by flight from slavery (nor, it should be remembered, through legal emancipation). Remaining under constant threat, fugitivity is unsustainable. It must dissolve, either through

re-enslavement, purchase, or death. Though it does not entirely destabilize or overhaul the presiding social order, fugitivity divulges that freedom is nonequivalent with an autonomous free will or natural rights.[25]

In 1846, under the threat of a forcible return to slavery, the fugitive Frederick Douglass chose freedom through economic purchase. Against the wishes of Garrison's American Anti-Slavery Society, Douglass allowed his supporters in England to buy his legal emancipation.[26] Strategically assembled portraiture confirmed this free status, accumulating the trappings—the properties—of the citizen-subject: self-control, bourgeois fashion, genteel sensibilities. Adhering to middle-class portrait conventions, these were visual appeals for recognition from the viewer. What can be inferred from visual evidence is that Douglass or the operators preferred the half-length or isolated bust format, furthering connotations of autonomy.[27] Furthermore, in contrast to images such as Mathew Brady's famed pictures of the standing Abraham Lincoln, Douglass's formal studio portraits from the 1850s to 1890s most often leave out the studio surroundings and focus on his characteristic serious facial expression. Visual portraits confirm biographers' speculations that Douglass paid rapt attention to his clothing, often wearing stylish yet somber suits, and well-pressed shirts and cravats, guarding a presentation of bourgeois respectability.[28] Douglass was so insistent on this image of order, esteem, and propriety, that while on the lecture circuit, his wife, Anna, ensured that a freshly pressed shirt awaited his arrival at each destination.[29]

A daguerreotype by Samuel L. Miller, dated approximately 1852, exemplifies this visual formula that Douglass would follow for the next forty years (fig. 6).[30] Here Douglass wears a luxurious tie, paired with a vest intricately embroidered with floral designs. Despite this sumptuous detail, it is an image of solemnity, as one side of Douglass's visage is in dark shadow while light accentuates his extremely furrowed brow. The coat and shirt collars are raised high on the neck, a style common during the mid-nineteenth century and a sign of moral rectitude.[31] The prominent side part of the hair was the accepted gentlemanly fashion, in contrast to middle parts of women's hair.[32] The head and shoulders fill most of the compositional space. The figure appears not only stately but imposing; even when viewed at eye level, the eyes seem to be looking down upon the viewer and commandeering the space between the image's surface and the point of the spectator.[33]

Douglass is photographed this way again and again, displaying this specific social standing for decades. The circulation of these pictures helped create and guarantee his citizen status, visually proclaiming Douglass's

6. Samuel J. Miller, American, 1822–1888, *Frederick Douglass*, 1847–1852.

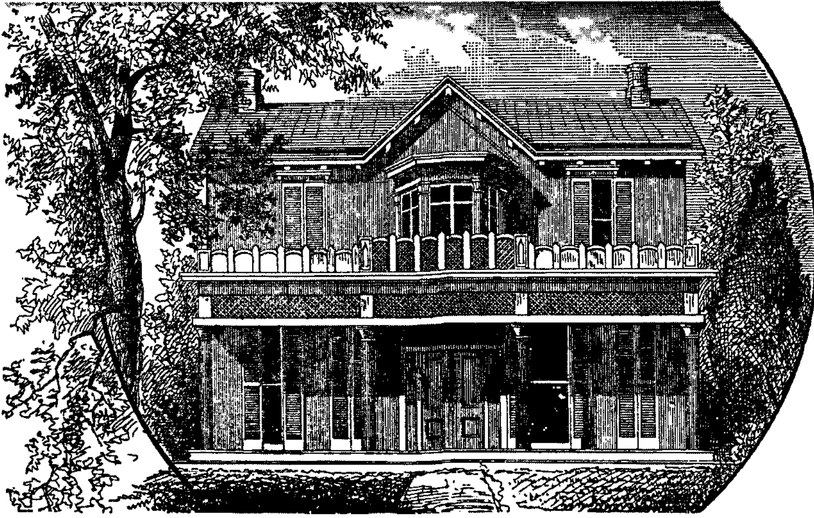
Cased half-plate daguerreotype 14 × 10.6 cm (5 1/2 × 4 1/8 in.). Major Acquisitions Centennial Endowment 1996.433. The Art Institute of Chicago.

"natural right" to own property and thus be seen as equal, which is to say autonomous and free. Both the attention to detail within each act of self-presentation and the repetition of that act foreground Douglass's precarious claim to such social status of equality and also the fact that he understood such states of possession and recognition as systems of accumulation. One is not just seen as autonomous, but autonomous because he displays multiple properties and continues to display and to be seen displaying such properties.

Such repetition and accumulation expose the limits of a freedom conceived as possession. Like fugitivity, the need to constantly reiterate in an object of representation what is allegedly natural for any self-possessed person "upsets the foundational divide between subject and thing."[34] These photographs blur the divide between proprietor and property; Douglass's own self-possession is visually asserted most when others own and recognize this image. In addition, the photographs assert self-possession and citizen propriety at the very locale that it is allegedly absent—upon a black body. That the body deemed black has difficulty sustaining citizen status,

credibility, and acceptability foregrounds both the violently enforced divide between slave and citizen and the belated constructedness of natural rights. The very instability and unsustainability of these divides help account for the repetition of this image. By making himself an object of the photographic gaze, Douglass's numerous portraits tacitly underscore that *all* standings as citizen-subject depend upon the affirmation of others. The incessant necessity to reproduce and distribute such precise images belies the tenuous and vexed relations to and of freedom. The fugitive slave challenged the free-slave binary by being neither property nor citizen-subject. Considered collectively, photographs of Douglass-as-image similarly highlight this vexation at the core of liberally conceived freedom; one is autonomous only through recognition from others, but this creates a prescribed debt or expectation. Douglass himself noted that once a man's picture became widely known, the public enforced conformity to that image. He is considered "a fixed fact, *public property*."[35]

For Douglass, self-possession was proven, paradoxically, by becoming just such a public icon. This hypervisibility of Douglass's upstanding citizen photographic portraits contrasts with an important trait of fugitivity, its unrepresentability.[36] In his *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* of 1845, Douglass explains for over two pages that he cannot represent the central event of his escape because to tell would bring untold harm to others.[37] This textual and visual evasion of how he escaped slavery continues ten years later in *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855). In his final autobiography, *Life and Times* (1881, rev. 1892), Douglass finally details his escape. Unlike his first two autobiographies, this work contains many illustrations of specific scenes narrated in the text; but tellingly, a visual substitution is used for his flight from slavery. This event is narrated a third of the way into the book, and former and latter chapters are accompanied by illustrations of life events that parallel what is told in the immediately accompanying text. Instead of his escape of 1838, this illustration is of his home purchased in 1887, a full forty-nine years later, and the label reads, "His Present Home in Washington" (fig. 7).[38] The articulation between freedom and property ownership could not be made more vivid; the endpoint of *Life and Times*—at home in Anacostia—is pictorially moved to this pivotal, earlier scene of escape in order to affiliate his freedom with the eventual and conventional trappings of accumulated proprietorship. Visually the illustrated home secures a sense of order and grandeur. It is portrayed in frontal, rectilinear form, as if the spectator looks from below the imposing property, made an even more legible possession through framing trees to the left and right,



7. *His Present Home in Washington*, from Frederick Douglass, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, Written by Himself* (Boston: De Wolfe and Fiske Co., 1892).

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contrasting the straight, uniform lines of the building.[39] The flight from the chaos and immorality of slavery to self-possession and self-imposed order and ownership is visually legitimated by his possession and maintenance of property.

A similar orderliness of self-presentation permeates most of Douglass's portraits. Douglass's visual assertion of his will remains legible only within the discourse of the sovereign subject as self-possessed and possessing. Douglass's radical subversion, then, is not quite located or locatable in his acceptance and appropriation of a conventionally middle-class visual standard but in the contingency and necessity that the very repetition and circulation of these portraits suggest. The formulaic photo format of most of Douglass's portraits stands out against the diversity of poses and guises taken on by contemporaneous celebrities such as Walt Whitman, whose theatrical, sensual images never foreclosed the social status always already assumed.[40] Even the somber images of Abraham Lincoln show more diverse postures, from full-standing figure, to sitting or standing with an array of books, to quiet repose in a studio parlor stocked with dainty Vic-

torian furniture.[41] Though Lincoln also used photography to circulate an image of statesmanship, ability, and order, subtle changes in his visual presentation would not alter his presumed right to citizenship.

Often adhering to claims of liberal autonomy, Douglass's lectures on pictures consistently elide an indispensable component of portrait photography, the photographer or operator. Given Douglass's numerous photo sittings before many operators, he was probably well aware of the commercial transaction of portrait photography. The lectures on pictures refer to market society by way of consumer desire. Douglass says Daguerre "supplied a deep seated want of human nature." Then, by way of none other than the Scottish philosopher of morality and political economy, Adam Smith, Douglass alludes to the increasing production of such desire via an abundance of pictures made possible by photography. Says Douglass, "The old commercial maxim, that demand regulates supply is reversed here. Supply regulates demand."[42]

In Douglass's "Pictures and Progress" lecture, the photograph as commodity is a natural progression from earlier technological innovation, and this refined and refining technology is made available through simple, nearby shopping. Douglass provides a terrifically detailed account of the itinerant operator's gallery, not an established, urban studio. Photography becomes a quotidian and, here, mobile site for the consumer to produce himself. The sitter he describes knows photography as a disembodied item for sale, produced by his own need for things and interaction with technology. The buyer's reliance upon the operator's labor and the face-to-face negotiation between operator as salesman and sitter as dependent consumer are suppressed. The "inevitable" gallery is granted a movement of its own, driven only by the sitters' demand and not by the daguerreotypist's financial necessity or creative decision. It awaits "perched" and "ready to move in any direction wherever men have the face to have their pictures taken."[43] It is familiar and routine:

> The smallest town now has its Daguerrian Gallery; and seven at the cross roads—where stood but a solitary Blacksmith shop . . . you will find the inevitable Daguerrian Gallery. Shaped like a baggage car, with a hot house window at the top—adorned with red curtains resting on gutter-percha spring and wooden wheels painted yellow. The farmer boy gets an iron shoe for his horse, and metallic picture for himself at the same time, and at the same price . . . the ease and cheapness with which we get our pictures has brought us all within range of the daguerrian apparatus.[44]

Commercial transactions become signs of civilization's progress, portrayed here as the exchange between buyer and object. Though an independent operator makes no appearance in Douglass's lectures—even Daguerre is lauded as an inventor, not photographer—the sitter's experience certainly does. Douglass describes the self-absorbed anxiety of self-presentation, "A man is ashamed of seeming to be vain of his personal appearance and yet who ever stood before a glass preparing to sit or stand for a picture—without a consciousness of some such gravity?"[45] He assents that the medium does produce overly detailed and somewhat harsh results, and hence "might deter some of us from operation." Though subjects are aware of "that girlish weakness" called vanity, Douglass recoups such a sitter's self-possession and autonomy by ignoring any role of an outside operator, tacitly presuming consumers are the producers and owners of their photographic image.[46]

Douglass's lectures on pictures were certainly intent on another kind of production. This specific object of property, the "metallic picture for himself," becomes a way to accumulate characteristics of self-possession. It does not reflect but *makes* a self. Photography's ease, ubiquity, and affordability provides the possibility—not inevitability—that sitters, rather than being objects of another's vision, could be in literal self-possession of their own pictures. The poor, for instance, could—in theory—not only make but also *own* and therefore control and revel in their own self-images. Notably, Douglass does *not* say that these picture owners can now own pictures of themselves as they want to be seen; instead, "Men of all conditions may see themselves *as others see them*." He also expresses concern for how subjects will be seen by future generations.[47] The lectures underscore interdependence and influence, not solely self-possession but a possession of and by others. To be self-possessed is not just to present one's own image but to be intruded upon, aware of how one is perceived by others. This requires recognition from others. To achieve such recognition, one must participate in a self-objectification, become one's own object of scrutiny. Photographs are supposed to facilitate this process. Thus Douglass intimates that to be fully actualized, there is an objecthood status essential to all selves.[48]

Through a market transaction, even the "humbled servant" now "possesses a more perfect likeness" than those of previous aristocrats. The promise of photography, however, is not simply self-possession. There is already an incursion of fugitivity here, the disturbance, between person and thing, liberty and dependence. Challenging liberal notions of labor as the only form of property that rightfully blurs distinctions between self-

hood and things, portrait photography, unlike any previous medium, now allows one to own one's self as a visible object, not as an inalienable, embodied personality. Douglass's unusual phrasing does not suggest that self-sovereignty is a result of ownership of a physical representation of a self. Instead, the portrait is valuable because what one possesses is the *view of the other.* Complexly, Douglass argues that what one sees and holds in the photograph is not one's authentic, isolated, or autonomous self as the sitter understands himself or wants to be understood. It is the unprecedented possession of the *sight of others* that lends precious value to portrait photography. This relays the contradiction of possessive individualism, as indicated by Kawash. Rather than document or secure self-possession, portrait photography shows that self does not reside within and subsequently look and emanate outward. Photography attempts to fix the fugitivity of personhood, the evanescent qualities of embodied existence. Yet in attempting to document fugitivity, what continually emerges is the suggestion that the interior so often synonymous with "self" is always, to some extent, formed from exterior forces looking in. There is no prior interior to possess and express outward prior to (dis)possession. For Douglass, picture galleries are not just visual metaphors for human interiority but metaphors for how interiority is constituted.

Properties of Self: Looking In

Frederick Douglass not only exploited portrait photography to form a specific public identity; his numerous lectures on pictures used pictures as a trope to resituate acts of looking. They argued that appreciating and making visual images is an essential yet under-appreciated human trait. Viewing pictures causes delight and, he suggests, changes viewers' comportment.[49] Hence pictures do *not* automatically reflect one unified truth but might certainly influence the *performance* of actual bodies. In contrast to audiences that heralded photographs as fixing and divulging a hitherto unseen and inaccessible truth beneath the surface, Douglass stressed the idea that looks were deceiving and that intentions or essential character could not be made fully transparent by visual means alone.[50] In lauding self-made men, these lectures lauded autonomous possessive individualism. Discordantly, they just as consistently presented interiority as formed, informed, and sometimes reformed by outer circumstances. There is not an evil or pure core or essence of individual character for photography to divulge visually.

This theme in Douglass's lectures on pictures is nothing less than a

multifaceted theory of subjectivity. He broadened the conventional parameters defining "man," in direct response to, and refutation of, the popular theories of the American School of Ethnology, consisting of certain respected, influential scientists who were known for their espousal of polygenesis. Their methods centered upon empirical measurement. Craniometry, for instance, used measurements of skulls to group human types, whereas phrenology catalogued physical traits of the skull assumed to correspond to mental capacities. All of these theories were applied to categorize and then rank human races, with people of African descent posited as the lowest form of humanity.[51] Douglass's theory of pictures challenged such groupings and hierarchies by reorienting the traits deemed essential to define humanity. He claimed that men and women could be distinguished as human by their ability to think representationally, to internally imagine forms, and to appreciate and interpret forms in the exterior world. Rendering forms outwardly, as an externalization of thought, was a secondary faculty, constrained or nurtured by one's social structures, relations of power, and resulting material resources. In addition to challenging the idea that Africans were somehow closer to brute creation than intellectual Europeans, Douglass's lectures also demythologized the romanticization of Europeans as lofty, disembodied minds and spirits.

"Pictures and Progress" states that the drive to make pictures and the ability to delight in images is proof of one's humanity. Douglass called this capacity, that which distinguishes man from beast, "thought pictures." This neologism evokes imagination as a function of interstitial permeability, forging and linking self and world.[52] This concept critiqued Western intellectual traditions that defined man by a limited purview, specifically mastery of written text and a certain legibility of reason.[53] For Douglass, the appreciation of images is a universal vernacular, an object-seeking drive, an ability for knowledge acquisition that does not require institutional schooling.

"Pictures and Progress" lambastes over-valorization of reason: "Reason, is exalted and called Godlike, and sometimes accorded the highest place among human faculties," even though it is "not the exclusive possession of men. Dogs and elephants are said to possess it." Far worse, reason has been used to delineate who supposedly is and is not human: "Ingenious arguments have been framed in support of this claim" that reason is the marker of humanity, in order to exclude those deemed "brutes."[54]

Douglass names a desire, rather than reason, as gesturing toward the human: "Still more grand and wonderful are the resources and achievements of that power out of which comes our pictures and other creations

of art." This "picture passion" is present in both childhood and the "savage."[55] These explanations adhere to a standard teleology categorizing the figure of the savage as childlike and thus inferior to Western civilization, but here it is not entirely pejorative, deterministic, or a function of essential differentiation. He uses the figure of the savage to claim a universal *affinity*, irrespective of nation, culture, or race. Douglass declares this predilection for pictures is also found in the elderly, those possessing the most wisdom. Douglass recounts the tale of savage men painting or tattooing European coats on their bodies, a story often used as proof of uncivilized stupidity. "Pictures and Progress" then demythologizes Europe by paralleling this story to "examples all around us," the pomp of church, state, religion, refinement, and learning.[56] In other words, the ability to think via images and take pleasure in them is the capacity from which all other faculties develop in the individual. This ability is shared by all and is the foundation of all social institutions of progress as well. Hence it is hardly reducible to the merely infantile, ultimately to be surpassed and renounced.

As a universal font of humanity, the ability to imagine through images is, for Douglass, "the Divinest of all human faculties."[57] The force that this theory would have had in 1861 is paramount, as it was *against* the assumption of literacy as sine qua non of humanity. It was also—without a doubt—in explicit conversation with contemporaneous pseudoscientific theories that aimed to prove a biological hierarchy of racial groups and the alleged inferiority of African descent. As early as 1854, Douglass censured Josiah Clark Nott, George Robert Gliddon, Samuel George Morton, and photography's own Louis Agassiz by name, all scientists who peddled theories of scientific racism.[58] Douglass updated this critique in his lectures on pictures. The "passion for pictures," he argued, should be explained "to the Notts and Gliddons who are just now puzzled with the question as to whether the African slave should be treated as a man or an ox."[59] These lectures aimed to undo writings that claimed bodies were already written by race.

Douglass's theory of "thought pictures" was a means of contesting scientific racism and, even further, underscored processes of *self*-development. Frederick Douglass's interest in photography centered upon what it revealed about acts of vision more broadly conceived. He argued that people do not simply see physiologically but as they have been socially conditioned.[60] Sight, therefore, is, in part, always projection of the perceiving subject: "Each picture is colored according to the lights and shade surrounding the artist. To the sailor, life is a ship. . . . To the farmer, life is a

fertile field. . . . To the architect, it stands out as a gorgeous palace. . . . To the great dramatic poet, all the world is a stage . . . but to all mankind the world is a school."[61]

In these romanticized equations between one's vocation and vision, Douglass suggests what one sees is shaped by one's habits, training, and intention. Douglass insists upon the pressure exerted by the matter upon which men labor: "A man is worked upon by what he works on. His occupation unites its history in his manners and shapes his character."[62] As Maurice Lee has demonstrated, Douglass relied upon the work of Scottish realism to emphasize "common sense" and "untutored individual perceptions."[63] These associations critique transcendentalism's lofty abstraction that sought to escape everyday realities.

Douglass extends these examples by arguing practices of vision are formed and informed within discourses of race and its corporeal enforcement. The stigmas attached to African-derived peoples are not due to "characteristics of the Negro race" itself, an ontological status, but originate from "the *peculiar standpoint from which we have been viewed* by those who have sought to investigate our true character and to ascertain our true position in the scale of creation," an issue of epistemology and embodied policing.[64] In the 1880s Douglass further elucidated how visuality is habituated through society's "schooling" in race and the gravity of such tendencies: "[Prejudice] paints a hateful picture according to its own *diseased imagination*, and distorts the features of the fancied original to suit the portrait. As those who believe in the visibility of ghosts can easily see them, so it is always easy to see repulsive qualities in those we despise and hate."[65]

It is the lens of the *viewer* him- or herself that creates what is seen. This predisposed, or one might say pre-*ex*posed, vision was precisely the kind of viewing practiced and perpetuated by phrenologists and polygenists. Douglass maintained that these scientists made the repeated mistake of interpreting behaviors enforced by power relations—such as a black man speaking softly to a white man in U.S. society—as essential biological differences. Douglass argued that one's surface appearance was influenced by conditions such as poverty, hard labor, and denial of education. By 1861 Douglass stressed the vision, not of the person-made-object but of the skewed sight of the seers themselves. "Age of Pictures" focused on the vocational vision of phrenologists, describing it just after the discussion of mathematic vision of architects and just before the self-satisfied and dubious visions of spiritualists and the jesters' willed ignorance.[66] The suggestion is that though phrenologists claim scientific veracity, they are

closer to charlatans. "Pictures and Progress" defies the idea of surface legibility of one's inner character more overtly and repudiates the methods of the School of American Ethnologists. It proclaims, "man is not a block of marble—measured and squared by rule and compass—so that his inches can be set down on a slate."[67]

In the face of scientific racism wielding visual scrutiny and even cameras, photography might also be used to confer respect upon disenfranchised individuals and groups. Douglass explained images could be manipulated for public esteem: "You may put a prince in a pauper's clothes, and . . . the world will take him for a pauper . . . you may put the brightest gems of thought and feeling on a blurred and ragged sheet, and they will be flung down as trash by the masses." He then argued, "the respectability and dignity of colored Americans must be upheld."[68] Visual presentation was heralded as a means of persuasion against ideas of scientific racism and notions of surface legibility.

In spite of his warning about the very real abuses of representation and his faith in democratic potentials for photography, Douglass also had a humorous, cynical side and poked fun at the role of portrait photographs in polite parlor culture.[69] Photography could unmask privilege, revealing middle-class parlor culture and its physical deportment as less aggrandized, merely mundane, and even ridiculous. He joked that there could be too much of a good thing, even photographs: "Pictures can be made the greatest bores . . . they are pushed at you in every house you enter, and what is worse you are required to give an opinion of them." No honest opinion about a photograph could be given when its sitter "is right at your Elbow" awaiting your response: "To say anything is positively dangerous—and to say nothing is more so. It is no kindness to a guest to place him in such circumstances."[70] These lighthearted yet sardonic comments hardly suggest a strict adherence to the promise and infallibility of photography, as if it could expose the soul or create freedom for all.

While wryly critiquing parlor social life and persnickety public opinion, Douglass also valued its investment in sentimentality. The best pictures, he claimed, combined minute, detailed empirical information *and* emotional appeals. Douglass associated the love of pictures more with passions than with the mind, thereby complying to the conventional binary opposition of irrationality and rationality. However, "Pictures and Progress" also professes an amalgamated definition of truth, one in which the messy, material, immediate, emotional, and sensual qualities experienced in the process of looking are a necessary, constitutive part.

"The Inside of the Outside and the Outside of the Inside": The Phenomenological in Douglass's Lectures

At the outset of "Pictures and Progress," Douglass conceded that this era was one of "passionless utilitarianism," of which the advancements in the science of picture making played a definite part.[71] Yet pictures, he argued, can arouse feelings, incite the imagination, and strengthen ideas. Photographs are thereby valuable beyond just proving technological innovation. The newfound ubiquity of images helped fuel an immanent ability in all humans, their processes of making meaning and building new worlds. The appreciation and creation of images cannot be excluded in the search for truth, which for Douglass is nothing less than the continual movement of progress itself:

> With the clear perception of things as they are, must stand the faithful rendering as things as they seem. The dead fact is nothing without the living impression. Niagara is not fitly described when it is said to be a river of this or that volume falling over a ledge of rocks two hundred feet, nor is thunder when simply called a jarring noise. This is truth, but truth disrobed of its sublimity and glory. A kind of frozen truth, destitute of motion itself—it is incapable of producing emotion in others. But on the other hand to give us glory as some do *without the glorified object* is a still greater transgression and makes those who do it as those who beat the air.[72]

The empirical notation about the object—its measurement—is an element of description that contributes to understanding, but it is a fragment, rather than a representation of total knowledge. An idealist argument that claims to reach truth without any materialist grounding is just as, if not more, dangerous. In Douglass's lectures on pictures, truth is figured as a constant revelation, a process of perpetual movement. Within this system, the notion of fixity—so often prized in photography—is equated with death and, perhaps worse, evading or misrepresenting truth. For Douglass, this merging of the knowledge of facts with the awareness of animated emotions was a closer rendition of "truth" than that achieved with mere notations, even those rendered by the greatest technological innovation, the camera.

Frederick Douglass's lectures on pictures convey an emerging tenor wherein the absolutism of empiricism is questioned, while the autonomy of transcendental idealism is also challenged and circumscribed.[73] As an

empiricist, Douglass wanted to effectively describe objects in the world and the measures of mechanical, technological progress, like that realized by Daguerre and photography more generally. But empirical data are necessary but not sufficient means for understanding the development and transformation of human will and morality into ideals and truth, none of which can be achieved without a commitment to a certain worldliness, a recognition of the existence of things, others, and others-as-things. These lectures set up (at least) a tripartite system of knowledge acquisition. This structure suggests an interrelation and interdependence between passion, reason, and ideals, rather than simply an absolute split between mind and body, and a recognition of others' realities, rather than an absolute truth possessed by an autonomous human mind. Douglass introduces a fourth, mediating term, whose equivocal status allows it to circulate among all three paths toward knowledge: imagination. At once part and parcel of passion and yet a necessity for gaining empirical knowledge through secondary faculties of reason and also for actualizing ideals, Douglass's "thought pictures" summon this idea of intercession. He adds *another* evanescent, provisional medium neither wholly rational nor emotional: habit. Habits constitute and inextricably bind interior and exterior through embodied performances.

Mental images and physiological sight form and inform distinctions between world and self. Though, like idealism, Douglass suggests that the world cannot ultimately be known as it is, he refuses to sever perception and judgment from materiality as it is experienced through the body in a myriad of common gestures. Douglass's emphases on imagination and habit in his meditations on pictures are presciently akin to later concerns of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, whose studies concerning phenomenology accent the mediating role of embodiment in the process of human perception. To say that Douglass's ideas are similar to phenomenology is to say that he returns to ordinary, quotidian experiences and underscores that the world is always perceived from a particular, lived vantage point. This influences the production of knowledge, both about the world and self, as well as possibilities imagined within and out of both.

Douglass's work often questioned and revised ideals via everyday, lived experience. Similarly, Merleau-Ponty argued perceived objects have an identity that exists independently of the attitude or beliefs of subjects who see the object. And yet it makes no sense to speak of objects outside of human experience; mediation of any and all understanding is inescapable. The perceiving subject cannot be detached from the world, nor from its

perceiving body, and if one presumes the subject is completely autonomous, or that one's view is totalizing, ethical dilemmas result.[74]

Douglass argued, as Merleau-Ponty would similarly assert a century later, that perception as realized through the body is not truth but a portal, the means of access to an attitude toward truth. Douglass contended, "Truth has a distinct and independent existence, both from any expression of it, and any individual understanding of it."[75] According to Douglass, all existence in the world followed truth, and man is one object among many in this configuration. If the world is not the result of a thinking subject but its precondition, this shifts the understanding of objects within it. The idealism of "I think therefore I am" avers that the thinking "I" has a totalizing access to all, including the other. In contrast, a phenomenological reconceptualization proposes that the thinking "I" includes an external, visible skin and an unseen, inaccessible interior. "I" exist for myself, but there is also an "I-for-others," an outward appearance. The other who sees does not necessarily see me but instead sees an exterior, and likewise, I do not fully see the other but the other's exterior. The other also has a for-herself or for-himself that is not fully transparent to me.[76] Within this system, one cannot fully possess another through vision.

An anecdote in "Pictures and Progress" evokes just such an experience of this for-himself and for-others:

> When I come upon the platform the negro is very apt to come with me. I cannot forget: and you would not if I did. Men have the *inconvenient habit* of reminding each other of the very things they would have them forget.
>
> Wishing to convince me of his *entire freedom from* the low and vulgar prejudice of color which prevails in the country[,] a friend of mine overtook my arm in New York saying as he did so—Frederick I am not ashamed to walk with you down Broadway. *It never once occurred to him that I might for any reason be ashamed to walk with him down Broadway.* He managed to remind me that mine was a despised and hated color and his the orthodox and Constitutional one—at the same time he seemed endeavoring to make me forget both.
>
> Pardon me if I shall be betrayed into a *similar blunder* tonight and shall be found discoursing of negroes when I should be speaking of pictures.[77]

This vignette insists exterior appearances as perceived by others are not just emanations of one's true character—as much discourse on photogra-

phy contends. Similarly, phenomenology's postulate that one cannot fully possess another because one cannot fully know the other might suggest an irreducible path toward freedom. Douglass's understanding, in contrast, reminds his audience that another's perception of his external self-for-others is never free of that seeing subject's vision, whether or not it corresponds to his own self-understanding. Here, his for-others is seen through a visuality informed by assumptions of racial hierarchies of value and putative ontology.[78]

Douglass's strategy of narration is just as telling as the incident he conveys. In relaying how a friend circumscribed Douglass's visual body through a racist understanding, Douglass first frames the tale by calling attention to his presence on the platform, and then, after the story, he refers back to his role as orator. This strategy points toward the likelihood that his listening audience sees him on the stage through the same habits of viewing as Douglass's companion. Douglass's self-conscious reference to being so seen, however, does not allow him to fully repossess his body; it reveals that he, like everyone, can never fully escape others' perceptual habits conditioned by mental pictures. Though everyone is limited, some are more limited—via force, not essence—than others, as in the imposition of racial hierarchy. Douglass's rhetorical setup further suggests that his listeners, like the man in his tale, thus far cannot help but see through these habits. This lens constrains their own "thought pictures" concerning Douglass, thereby limiting what Douglass can communicate. With the phrase "it never once occurred to him," Douglass emphasizes that such lines of perception are neglectful of Douglass's for-himself; he has his own thought pictures to be externalized, visions of his companion and, by implicit comparison and extension, his "Pictures and Progress" audience.[79]

Douglass's friend "blundered" by saying race, metonymically represented here as color, was inconsequential. In making that statement, he proved the contrary. Douglass suggests that he, too, "blunders," speaking of one thing when he should speak of another. What Douglass's apology for his own alleged diversion suggests, though, is not that he has digressed but that to speak of racial identification always includes pictures, the mental projections that become irreducible components of perception. The label of "Negro" is real here—it exists but not as an ontological fact of Douglass's interior being. Rather, race is his companion's limit, one that conditions his perceptions that then structure the material reality of both men. To speak of how he is constantly misperceived by such habituated viewing subjects, Douglass *is* indeed discussing pictures. Douglass's friend attempted to speak the language of anti-prejudice but relied upon racial prejudice to make this

claim. Similarly, Douglass claims to be speaking solely of the Negro, but he cannot do so without a reference to pictures. The man tried to have Douglass forget his scorned racial assignment and in doing so only re-created it; Douglass tried to speak of pictures but could only do so with recourse to race as conditioned perception.

By paralleling his so-called blunder with that of his white counterpart, Douglass suggests that social acts of vision realized in individual practice are what create the sight of, the identification of, the "Negro," not what Douglass himself is. Coterminously, the friend's view is constructed as "white" through that very same practice of seeing and naming the "Negro."[80] The man cannot speak of his magnanimity without recapitulating the system of prejudice; Douglass can discuss pictures only through recapitulating this economy of race-as-picture. Just as the man's attachment to his own whiteness and ethical goodness could only be told within his ascription to the thing he claimed to resist, thereby showing that they were one and the same thing, Douglass suggests that the conception of the Negro—whether hated or accepted—is, finally, a system of pictures. This system structures whiteness-as-approved and the agent of approval, a perceptual system with dire material and psychic effects.

That projections from the other are inextricably part of one's for-others, the exterior seen by others, does not preclude that the for-oneself also creates, in part, the for-others.[81] Douglass describes "thought pictures" as "the process by which man is able to invert his own subjective conscious, into the objective form."[82] Embodiment is necessary as the porous medium between inside and out, a drawing in of the world only to be sent back again as offering. Subject and object are thus interdependent and require a constant permeability.

Douglass tempered assessments that dismissed pictures as merely fanciful saying, "Pictures, images, and other symbolical representations, speak to the imagination . . . revealing the profoundest mysteries of the human heart to the eye and ear by action and utterance."[83] Though long denigrated in Western philosophy as copies of things in the world, pictures are "the inside of the outside and the outside of the inside," the for-itself connected to and externalized into the for-others. This exchange relies upon sensation and its corollary of representation in the imagination.[84] Douglass claimed that thought pictures are "the element out of which our pictures spring." Analogously, Merleau-Ponty states, "things have an internal equivalence in me," correspondences that "in turn give rise to some [external] visible shape" that is recognizable by other perceiving subjects.[85]

"Thought pictures" are not just transcriptions of the external forms of

the world, nor are they fictional images entirely independent of external actuality. Douglass argues that imagination is the necessary "source of all progress," while it "is nevertheless the least safe of all our faculties for the discernment of truth."[86] Thought pictures are a dynamic process that functions as a counterpoint to external forms of things. As such, they facilitate the emanation of one's for-oneself into their own for-others. This act of bringing toward the world the accumulation of internal pictures is not just a means of understanding the world, nor expressions of an a priori interiority. This process forms one's self *and*, just as crucially, places one's thought pictures in the world, transforming material through setting forth "inward traces of vision," which are offered externally to *other* viewers so that they might "*join with* them."[87]

In other words, for both Douglass and Merleau-Ponty, a picture of the world, rather than a mere copy, is an image of the internal for-oneself by way of the perception of the world through the body of its maker. To say that an image *in* the world—a painting, a drawing, a photograph—is "the inside of the outside, and the outside of the inside" is to say that one does not see an external object merely empirically but *with* the vision of the creator.[88] Yet Douglass emphasizes that in viewing a photograph one is seeing how he is seen by others. Given Douglass's insistence that once one is aware of others' view of him the sitter conforms to a visual expectation, it might also mean that seeing with a photograph references one's own performance—did I objectify myself, show myself the way I want to be seen? The value of possessing the image of self "as others see him" might be in future offerings to that other's vision in hopes of changing it.

"Thought pictures" are more elusive than photographic portraits.[89] They develop an understanding of the world and facilitate creation of the self, a bringing forth of a newly formed interiority. This requires embodied interaction. Douglass exclaims, "All wishes[,] all aspirations, all hopes[,] all fears, all doubts[,] all determinations grow stronger by action and utterance, by being rendered objective."[90] These externalized thought pictures, neither entirely intangible nor wholly objective, are embodied habits.

Frederick Douglass elaborated these highly philosophical ideas at the very time that most U.S. inhabitants were feeling an urgency he had learned while still a young child. Given during the initial and bloody throes of officially sanctioned war, these lectures insisted that reason does not define the parameters of humanity, nor is reason the only or even predominant means of making meaning. "Pictures and Progress" vehemently contended that reasoned argumentation does indeed fail, citing the charge of Fort Sumter as a case in point. Furthermore, such worldly events change the limits of

what is deemed rational. In other words, interpretive shifts are often inaugurated not by the essence of an action or object but by broader contexts, whether idealist or material or some combination. Put another way, what happened yesterday might mean something else today. This lack of stolid, unwavering foundations was not a new fact causing panic for Douglass; if the war brought this shattering knowledge to some, it was only because their quotidian worlds were previously shielded from violence. At the precise historical moment when violence was more of an immediate possibility for the majority of the U.S. population, Douglass wielded his philosophy of the human imagination and habit to challenge dry empiricism as well as transcendentalism. These lectures underscore that human striving for truth is dependent upon the contingency and irreducibility of vulnerable embodiment.

Slavery, Freedom, Fugitivity: Inescapable Materiality

This truth of lived experience, the permeability of world and self, "things as they are" and "things as they seem," came from both Douglass's not-so-distant past of enslavement and the incessant terror in his post-emancipated world. Douglass worked through these ideas of embodied truth through the lofty language of Enlightenment discourse in the immediate aftermath of John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry. For Douglass, this political insurrection was also the loss of a dear companion and a new flight into his own fugitivity; he had to surreptitiously escape a warrant for his arrest as a co-conspirator.[91] A telegraph operator helped Douglass evade a sheriff's posse by withholding orders that came over the wire to capture Douglass and, instead, informed Douglass, allowing him a head start. Eventually Douglass arrived in England and later described these days as "*anxious*," with dire feelings of "exile" and "permanent banishment."[92]

The biographer William McFeely argues that Douglass's initial lectures in England toned down his earlier revolutionary rhetoric—lest he be read as committing treason—until Douglass gave his first speech on John Brown in Edinburgh, Scotland.[93] Carefully indicating the limits of reason, this lecture prefigured ideas in his lectures on pictures. Douglass announced to his audience that they could not possibly imagine the degradation of slavery because of their lack of direct experience, while, simultaneously, he proceeded to use verbal imagery to do just that—facilitate imagination. As he drew others in and brought his interior knowledge outward and explained the necessity of such a reach, to see according to or *with* it, Douglass simultaneously reminded them of the limits between self and other.[94]

The context of the lectures on pictures was complicated by more than just his exile and loss of Brown, however. Douglass returned to the United States due to yet another loss, the death of his youngest child, Annie, and he did not resume public talks for months. When he did, the podium at Tremont Temple where he delivered "Pictures and Progress" was a particularly vexed site. Just a year prior, Douglass had been scheduled to speak there but canceled to escape overseas. At his first scheduled appearance there since his return, hecklers verbally assaulted him and finally broke into a riot, despite Douglass's rational argumentation. Douglass was "handled roughly" by a crowd so malicious they cried, "blood of some abolitionist must be shed."[95] This chaotic scene became widely known through an illustration in *Harper's Weekly*.[96] "Pictures and Progress" was given one year later on that same stage. This highly philosophical lecture on humankind's forging of interiority and exteriority, then, was explicitly linked to the physicality of Brown's ultimate sacrifice and to the losses and threats suffered by Douglass. Its discussion moves from itinerant daguerreotypists and their hoi polloi patrons, to polite parlor culture, to abstract theories of mind, back again to immediate warfare, and, finally, to the very stage Douglass occupied. Douglass asked, "Where is that mob tonight? Some of them are doubtless in the regiment from Massachusetts which recently marched to Virginia singing the hymns to the memory of John Brown. Where are the men who incited that mob? Urging upon the government to finish the very work which John Brown nobly began."[97]

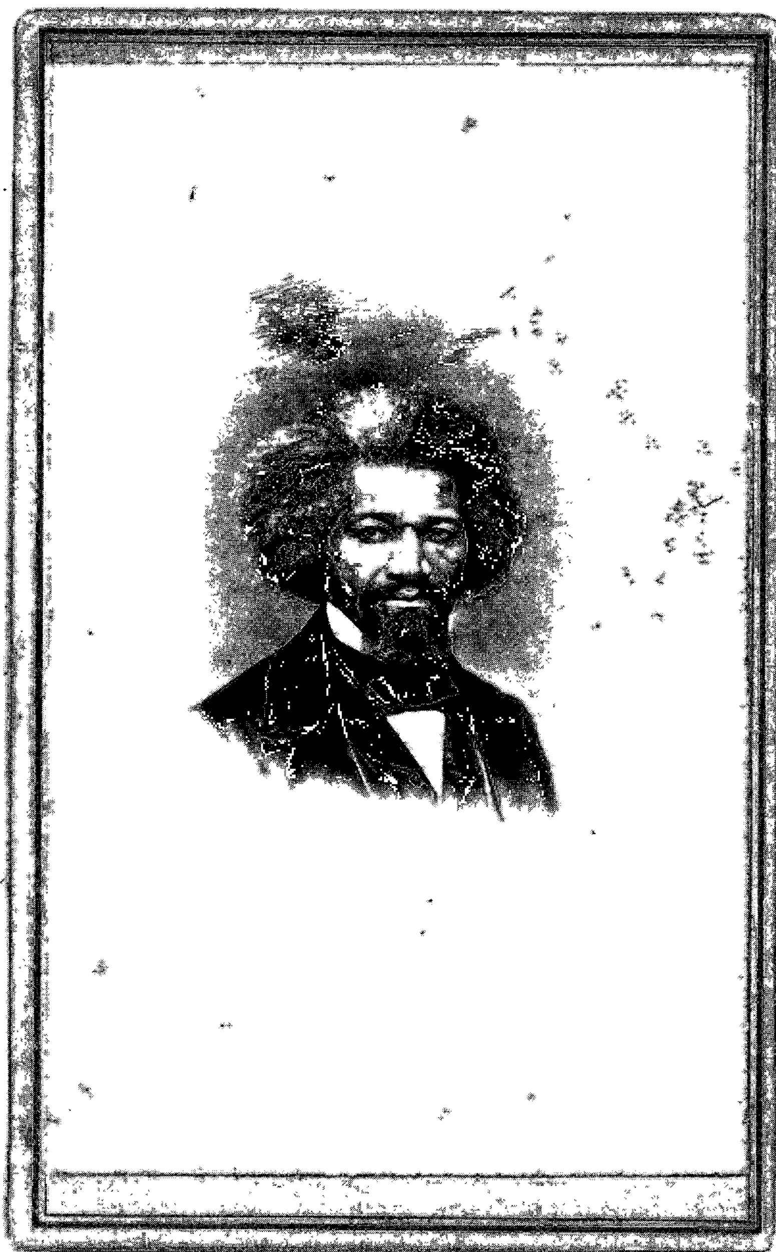
Brown's anguished, bloody body and knowledge of impending death are carefully detailed, and his taunting inquisitors named as the same treasonous senators now imprisoned by the Union. At this point, the lecture takes an incredible turn, away from the interdependence of permeable interiority and exteriority, for-oneself and for-others, and, instead, toward the very transcendental justification it had so meticulously tried to abate and bring toward worldliness. In order to map the massive turnabout of public opinion, Douglass argues that an inevitable spirit brought such change, an indubitable progress toward a universal truth, unknowable to any individual man. This intellectual maneuver, however, while lessening the role of human action and exchange, still pivots upon profound recognition of a specific interiority made external, the convictions of John Brown. Verbal imagery of Brown's torn and open body forge imaginative bonds between Douglass and his audience.

Frederick Douglass's lectures on pictures used photography to celebrate technological invention and social progress, but, even more significantly, the lectures used photography for philosophically limning human interi-

ority and vulnerability. Time and again in these lectures this great invention that "studs the world with pictures" is bound to bodily susceptibility, traumatic loss, and the limits of visibility.[98] Douglass repeatedly described the everydayness of Brown's physical appearance and how a visual survey gave no indication of his extraordinary and revolutionary interior. Still, for Douglass, the visible image of this man remained poignant. Years later at his Anacostia home, he would hang more portraits of John Brown than any other of his public friends or private family.[99] In his final autobiography, Douglass reprinted an austere portrait of Brown, in much the same format as Douglass's own frontispieces.[100] This calm image of legible respectability mirrored Douglass's own perpetual creation, manipulation, and circulation of his photographic images as self-possessed citizen-subject.

As for his own photo sittings, Douglass's most widely disseminated pictures came from this same period. Now, multiple photographs could easily and cheaply be reproduced on albumen paper and mounted onto small cards. This format, known as the cartes de visite, first arrived in the United States in the same year Douglass fled after Harpers Ferry, 1859. By 1861, the year of Douglass's "Pictures and Progress," cartes de visite had replaced daguerreotypes as the most widely available and sought-after portrait photography.[101] Sitters' manuals focused on properly inhabiting prescribed social roles, especially that of masculine individualism.[102]

A photograph of Douglass printed by J. W. Hurn, the same telegraph operator who helped Douglass evade capture, was made roughly the same time as the lectures on pictures (fig. 8). It follows the formula established by the earlier daguerreotypes: stern facial expression, high collar, and masculine side part. Douglass wears a plain black suit, vest, and necktie and one sober gold chain.[103] This image discloses a poignant discrepancy between Douglass's lectures on pictures and his own formulaic portrait. Conceivably, this photograph might be experienced by the viewer as reaching into their own time and space. However, the standard shading directly encircling the head and shoulders of the figure, combined with the dominating empty space within the framing lines, work to distance the sitter from the viewer. Douglass's floating bust seems inaugurated into a pantheon of great worthies. This longstanding convention of the ethereal head portrait, now made attainable in photography through technical innovations, seems anything but phenomenological; the figure is removed from quotidian, banal realities, and appears absolutely autonomous. It relies not on the viewer's engagement with the extraordinary detail and intimacy of the daguerreotype but on the viewer's recognition of generalized distance. Whereas Douglass's lectures on the appearance of things as experienced



8. J. W. Hurn, *Frederick Douglass*, circa 1860s.

From the collection of the Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College.

from an individual, embodied perspective accent contact and interdependence, this solitary portrait reinstates the myth of possessive individualism.

"Pictures and Progress" argues that pictures are incredibly important *not* because they reveal a truer depth, drawing to the surface an unassailable authenticity available to scrutiny and preservation. To believe in this function of pictures would be to ascribe to the idea that men and women can be fully known through empirical measurements. Douglass's lectures on pictures reference photography because it is proof of a process of thinking through potentialities, a method of comparing empirical fact with internal images. This is a creative, intuitive, almost mystical understanding that is all the more powerful because it is still reliant upon interaction with the material world. Photographs objectify the ever-moving context of phenomena. "Pictures and Progress" foregrounds the question of how truth is to be made material. Douglass argues that this process of taking in exteriority, forging and transforming interiority and sending the interior to the exterior, and the moments of a blurred division between the two, are all required for the attainment of truth. Douglass figures truth as formulated by and through sensate, embodied beings. The importance of visual experiences originating from the outer world is so fundamental and, further, fundamentally embodied, he argues, that to interrupt a person's rapt contemplation of forms in and of the world is nothing less than sacrilege. Self-revelation, here, is learning forms from external objects, and comparing and developing those internally. In perceiving the world and creating thought pictures, one experiences "a new birth . . . a new life . . . [a] discovery of every new agency. . . . The child experiences one with every new object, by means of which [he] is brought into a nearer and fuller acquaintance with [his] *own* subjective nature. With every step he attains a larger, fuller and freer *range of vision*. . . . [Pictures] speak to him in his own tongue."[104]

Pictures are both a lingua franca and a constantly new revelation. Douglass's premier and representative example of the production of thought pictures elucidates the continual relation between exterior and interior, self and world. He describes a young boy looking at clouds and projecting his own interpretation of forms onto the clouds. "At this altar," he exhorts, "man unfolds to himself the divinest of human faculties, for such is the picture conceiving and picture producing faculty of man—or flower of the human soul. This devotion is the prelude to the vision and transfiguration, qualifying men and women for the sacred ministry of life. He who had not bourne some such fruits—had some such experience in child[hood] gives us only barrenness in age."[105]

Douglass struggles to link inner and outer via reverie of images and insists that looking is the ultimate primer for the autodidact. Through the experience of looking, one encounters self and the world and thereby builds an understanding not only of the world but also of continual *self*-understanding. The child and, by extension, all people develop their understanding of self by perceiving objects in relation to their previous experiences with objects now internalized—the cities and ships seen in the clouds.[106] This development, these "thought pictures" are requisite for acting in the world, for not only looking at images but creating new ones, for imagining possibilities of organizing forms in and of the world.[107] Without a comparison between the exterior world and interior picture gallery, there is an inability to act in the world as a formed and informed agent.

Douglass's idea of "thought pictures" is a visual theory, a theory about systems of representation—the role of pictures in human creation—broadened into nothing less than a theory of subjectivity—how self-consciousness is constituted from without as well as from within, and how these processes subtend one another, endlessly. Douglass insists it is a "mistake" to assume this self-creation "can only happen to man once in a life time" because "the whole journey of life is a succession" of such "self revelation" enabled through perceptual engagement.[108] His lectures outline a picture *of* progress, posing the following arguments. First, even perceived objects have their own mode of givenness, and for humans perceived in the line of sight of others, for humans as *objects*, this means those viewed have their *own internal intentionality*, whether or not it is recognized as such by the viewing subject. Furthermore, all humans, contrary to the thinking of racial pseudoscience, possess the faculty of thought pictures, to imagine forms. These theories of perception and imagination specifically address the constitution of knowledge of the world and the self and the continual distinction and permeability between the two. How and what we as viewing subjects see in the world is experientially conditioned, via circulating, possessing, and accumulating representations. Just as significantly, in dealing with other people—who are also only known to us through our own mediated perception—we must always consider our own habits of viewing, how they influence others, and how they also determine our continual self and societal development. Finally, this theory of self formation is bound to theological and transcendental concerns. Douglass expands the definition of the human beyond mere reason—understood by some as only certain intelligences, like reading and writing—in order to divulge the wrongheadedness of racist theories. But he does adhere to an ultimate arbiter, a vision that outlasts and expands an embodied purview.

Douglass claims that those who adore pictures do so because their own human self-creation takes place via pictures, as does all human progress: "It is by looking upon this picture and upon that which enables us to point out the defects of the one and the perfections of the other. Poets, prophets and reformers are all picture makers—and this ability is the secret of their power and of their achievements."[109] This imaginative act of comparison is an act of quantification—how much is this like that?—and hence it is bound to acts of assessments of accumulative self-possession—does self-as-object display enough of the standards of respectability and recognizability? How does one measure, then, if the pictures of perfection realized by poets, prophets, and reformers are pictures of the limits of liberal freedom, as Kawash suggests, or of progress, which, as Douglass desired, is the constant and inevitable move toward an as yet unrealized freedom? Conceivably, these two stances are not so much opposed as analogous. Douglass's theories imply that the inevitable march of progress can only provisionally be comprehended by the self-possessed subject and certainly not measured by that same subject. As Douglass expands the definition of man, and posits the possibility of a fuller truth, he then limits the possibility of its whole possession: "The great philosophical truth now to be learned and applied, is that *man is limited by manhood. He cannot get higher than human nature* even in his conceptions. Laws, religion, morals, manners, and art are but the expressions of manhood and begin and end in man."[110]

Later lectures pithily explained that truth, "contemplated as a whole, is too great for human conception or expression."[111] Photography is one example of a limited expression. Douglass's lectures on pictures maintained the hope that photography could be wielded to assist the need for a productive self-representation, especially for those whose interiorities are so often denied. Perhaps Douglass also thought such pictures could be used to forge group identity and striving, a personal and political gesture. From some twenty-first-century standpoints, this reliance upon iconicity is hopelessly suspect. But it was a hope, not in spite of but in the face of the tragic. Perhaps the lectures' message most urgent for today lies not in the persuasive power of photography but the necessity that the function of images in mental and perceptual habits be constantly questioned and revised. Truth, as Douglass explained, requires imagination because it is a constant negotiation between "a clear perception of things as they are" and "things as they seem." It depends no less upon recognizing the limits of knowledge, of the range of knowability of the self and of the other. Attentively, assiduously, and critically *looking* is required. Such looking must happen by way of imagining. And imagining, figured here as a kind of fugitivity, is nec-

essary but only ever provisional and ultimately unsustainable. Perceived in significant and yet evanescent possibilities of something else, a fleeting presence, it cannot be synonymous with self-possession and control: "This picture making faculty is flung out into the world—like all others—subject to a wild scramble between contending interests and forces. It is a mighty power—and the side to which it goes achieved a wonderous conquest." Thought pictures, then, are just as fundamentally about repetitions of embodied labor: "For the *habit* we adopt, the master we obey in making our subjective nature *objective, giving it form, colour, space, action and utterance*, is the all important thing to ourselves *and to our surroundings*."[112] Simultaneously independent and shared, internal and external, thought pictures might be utilized for pursuit of an ongoing search for truth but only if conjoined with new gestural habits. As a dynamic method, thought pictures might help re-envision that fuller truth ever on the horizon, "a universality to come."[113] This striving, as evidenced by Douglass's struggles with representation, must *be* continual, singular, and collective.

Notes

The development of this project is greatly indebted to the generous intellectual engagement of Sally A. Stein, Maurice O. Wallace, and the readers at Duke University Press. Archival research was made possible through a generous grant from the School of Humanities, University of California, Irvine. This chapter was completed during the immediate aftermath of the loss of my mentor, Dr. Lindon W. Barrett, and is dedicated to his life and legacy. His untimely death has forced me to consider legacies and continuities. If I am at all fortunate, I might be capable of passing on fragments of the thinking through which he so generously walked me. Douglass's project of carving out forms and spaces for newly imagined freedom is still a pressing necessity; however, unlike the solutions posed in Douglass's lectures on pictures, Dr. Barrett taught that these freedoms are already present—they just need to be fiercely taken up, nurtured, and expanded. Perhaps Douglass, whose breadth of scholarship and lived striving attest to a profound engagement with living and loving, would have agreed. I am indebted to Dr. Barrett's scholarship and his unflappable commitment to affirming that which brings joy, solace, and pleasure.

1. For analyses of how Douglass's portraits were manipulated to exert a specific public persona, see Lynn A. Casmier-Paz, "Slave Narratives and the Rhetoric of Author Portraiture," *New Literary History* 34, no. 1 (Winter 2003), 91–116; Peter A. Dorsey, "Becoming the Other: The Mimesis of Metaphor in Douglass's *My Bondage and My Freedom*," PMLA 111, no. 3 (May 1996), 445–47; Gregory Fried, "True Pictures," *Common-Place* 2, no. 2 (January 2002), www.common-place.org/vol-02/no-02/fried/; Rebecca Gardner, "The Face of a Nation: The Representation of

Ramses II in U.S. Debates over Race and Slavery" (MA thesis, University of California, Irvine, 2002); Ginger Hill, "In the Spirit of an Ongoing Search for Truth: Frederick Douglass and Representation" (MA thesis, University of California, Irvine, 2006); John Stauffer, *Black Hearts of Men: Radical Abolitionists and the Transformation of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 45–56; Donna M. Wells, "Frederick Douglass and the Progress of Photography," *HUArchivesNet: The Electronic Journal MSRC-Howard University*, no. 3 (February 2000), http://www.huarchivesnet.howard.edu/0002huarnet/current.htm; and Colin L. Westerbeck, "Frederick Douglass Chooses His Moment," *African Americans in Art: Selections from the Art Institute of Chicago* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 8–25.

2. These lectures will hereby be referred to collectively as "lectures on pictures" or synecdochally as "Pictures and Progress."

3. Summary of Boston correspondent for the *Republican*, quoted by John W. Blassingame, in editorial précis to Frederick Douglass, "Pictures and Progress: An Address Delivered in Boston, Massachusetts, on 3 December 1861," in *The Frederick Douglass Papers: Series One, Speeches, Debates, and Interviews; Volume Three*, ed. John W. Blassingame (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 452.

4. These analyses of transcendentalism in relation to Douglass's oeuvre are greatly influenced by Jeannine De Lombard, "'Eye-Witness to the Cruelty': Southern Violence and Northern Testimony in Frederick Douglass's 1845 *Narrative*," *American Literature* 73, no. 2 (June 2001): 245–75.

5. Douglass defined progress as "making the world better." See Frederick Douglass, "It Moves," Folder 5 of 5, Frederick Douglass Papers at the Library of Congress: Speech, Article, and Book file, 1846–1894 and Undated; American Memory, Library of Congress Manuscript Division, available online at http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/doughtml/dougFolder5.html, ms. page 4. It should be noted that though Douglass most often uses the term *progress* in his lectures on pictures, in this later series of lectures, "It Moves," he foregrounds the term *reform*. This common parlance connotes the essential role of *form*, suggesting that the intention of all reform cannot be severed from material bodies, whether individual or societal. Today one of the most well known analyses of the processes of reform through productive, repetitive gestures is probably Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. A. Sheridan (London: Penguin, 1977). The suggestion being made here is that Douglass's lectures on pictures are earlier examples of analyzing the productive relations of power engendered through practices, what Douglass would call habits.

6. Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," 459 (emphasis added).

7. Frederick Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," Frederick Douglass Papers at the Library of Congress: Speech, Article, and Book file, 1846–1894 and Undated; American Memory, Library of Congress Manuscript Division, available online at http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/doughtml/dougFolder5.html, ms. pages 19 and 18, respectively (emphasis added). Please note that the original manuscript has page numbers hand-written on it, and there are two pages labeled 19 (the first should be page 18), and that the quote on ms. page 19 is crossed out in the manuscript.

8. For "standing" as foundational to citizen-status, bound inextricably to recog-

nition from others, forged in and as racial hierarchy (thus suggesting why Douglass's claim might be so precarious as to need constant reiteration), see Judith N. Shklar, *American Citizenship: The Quest for Inclusion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 2–16.

9. C. B. Macpherson, *Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 3.

10. Douglass suggests that this is the case in even the most innocuous of examples, such as a child gazing at the sky. That some youngsters can sit uninterrupted on grassy knolls and read stories into clouds requires not just an innate appreciation of nature but leisure time and the indulgence and encouragement from others to contemplate ("Pictures and Progress," 460).

11. Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," 461.

12. "The lecture of Frederick Douglass," *Liberator* 31, no. 49 (December 6, 1861), 195; Boston correspondent for the *Republican*, quoted by John W. Blassingame in Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," 452.

13. Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," 455.

14. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, quoted in William S. McFeely, *Frederick Douglass* (New York and London: W. W. Norton and Company, 1991), 383.

15. That these lectures are not as concise and overtly political as much of Douglass's oeuvre and, instead, focus on broad, abstract ideas of human interiority and agency prior to addressing abolition might also help account for why more recent scholars have ignored them more often than not. The resurgence of interest—including this current study—speaks to academic disciplinary shifts that belatedly address ideas already explored by earlier scholars such as Douglass.

16. Maurice Lee, *Slavery, Philosophy, and American Literature, 1830–1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 13.

17. Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," 454. A line crossed out in the original manuscript also emphasized individuality and recognition, "Daguerre might have been forgotten but for incorporating his name with his wonderful discovery." Rather than a common, forgotten worker, Daguerre is singled out as a pioneering creator. Douglass's insistence upon acknowledging Daguerre's labor strangely parallels the notion that commodity fetishism elides the labor necessary to fashion the commodity. That acknowledgment of labor might be of particular concern because of the characteristic theft of labor under racial slavery.

18. Macpherson, *Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, 3; see also Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," *October* 39 (Winter 1986): 7–8.

19. Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights* (New York and London: W. W. Norton and Company, 2007), 27–34.

20. Given that photographers often copied others' prints, it is difficult to know precisely when and where Douglass sat for each of his portraits, but it is incontrovertible that he posed for many different sittings on a wide variety of occasions. Studios that produced portraits of Douglass during this period include: Benjamin F. Reimer of Philadelphia; George Kendall Warren of Boston; J. C. Sundelin of Flemington, New Jersey; Augustus Morand of Brooklyn; Samuel Montague Fassett of

Chicago; Samuel J. Miller of Akron, Ohio; Charles C. Giers of Nashville; Gibbs of Ottawa, Illinois; J. E. Small of Berlin, Wisconsin; A. Kracaw of Washington, Iowa; Luke C. Dillon of Washington, D.C.; Benjamin E. Hawkins of Steubenville, Ohio; studios in Michigan and Vermont, and many, many more, including the famed Mathew Brady Studio. This selection of studios is taken from the photography archives at the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site in Anacostia, Washington, D.C. Special thanks to the curator, Cathy Ingram, for her time and assistance. Douglass's stops in Michigan and Vermont are noted by Ross J. Kelbaugh, *Introduction to African American Photographs, 1840–1950: Identification, Research, Care and Collecting* (Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, 2005), 45.

21. Each photograph, as Sojourner Truth would call it, was a shadow, not the substance of the man, and thereby allowed the embodied Douglass to expand his realm of influence while remaining safe from physical harm and unwanted scrutiny. For Sojourner Truth's use of portrait photography, see Nell Irvin Painter, "Representing Truth: Sojourner Truth's Knowing and Becoming Known," *Journal of American History* 81, no. 2 (September 1994): 461–92.

22. Samira Kawash notes that the existence of free people of color did not fully challenge this structure; all people identified as white were presumed to possess freedom inevitably and inalienably, whereas a person seen as black always had to prove his or her free status. See Kawash's *Dislocating the Color Line: Identity, Hybridity, and Singularity in African-American Narrative* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 43.

23. Kawash, *Dislocating the Color Line*, 49–50.

24. Ibid., 81.

25. As Kawash (ibid., 81–84) explains, this means that the state of fugitivity should not be celebrated as an unfettered or liminal spatial or temporal escape.

26. Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855; New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 275–77.

27. The few surviving full-length photographs of Douglass in a formal studio context were most often later family portraits of the 1890s, and even here Douglass is shown sitting. See, for example, the images in Frederick S. Voss, *Majestic in His Wrath: A Pictorial Life of Frederick Douglass* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 20, 84, and 88. As Maurice Wallace has recently observed, "literally he sat for his likeness on every occasion" ("Riveted to the Wall: Coveted Fathers, Devoted Sons, and the Patriarchal Pieties of Melville and Douglass," in *Frederick Douglass and Herman Melville: Essays in Relation*, ed. Robert S. Levine and Samuel Otter [Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008], 320). That Douglass sits for his portraits connotes an unflappable solidity. It also associates him more with men of science and learning.

28. McFeely, *Frederick Douglass*, 125, 140.

29. This according to Ka'mal McClarin, a park ranger at the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site and a PhD candidate at Howard University.

30. Colin Westerbeck ("Frederick Douglass Chooses His Moment," 9) and Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw (*Portraits of a People: Picturing African Americans in the Nine-*

teenth Century [Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006], 12) date the image sometime between 1847 and 1852, while Ross J. Kelbaugh (*Introduction to African American Photographs, 1840–1950*, 6) dates it as 1852.

31. Joan L. Severa, *My Likeness Taken: Daguerrian Portraits in America* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2005), xviii, 3, and 58.

32. Severa, *My Likeness Taken*, 28. A manual for sitters, written by a photographer two decades after this daguerreotype, even poked fun of pretentious young men who dared sport a middle part, resulting in a portrait of the utmost stupidity, "It would require a keener eye than a Voightlander or Dallmeyer lens, to discern the appearance of any brains in such a head, even if it was photographed from all points of the compass" (H. J. Rodgers, *Twenty-Three Years under a Skylight, or Life and Experiences of a Photographer* [Hartford: H. J. Rogers, 1872], 92; see also 100 and 152).

33. The art historian Colin Westerbeck ("Frederick Douglass Chooses His Moment," 13–15) has suggested that this daguerreotype was probably made for a friend or supporter, not for Douglass himself. This coincides with a statement made by Douglass's recent biographer, William McFeely, that Douglass often gave his portrait photographs to his admirers (*Frederick Douglass*, 274).

34. Kawash, *Dislocating the Color Line*, 81, 48.

35. Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," 455 (emphasis added).

36. This unrepresentability is not synonymous with invisibility; it is not so much that fugitivity cannot be seen, but that formally any visual image of it is fleeting. If its image was to be caught, as in a fixed photographic image, this risks (re)enslavement.

37. By refusing to narrate his escape, Douglass leaves the reader and slaveholder at a loss, thereby transferring the paranoia and threat back onto the slaveholder rather than the fugitive (Kawash, *Dislocating the Color Line*, 51–52).

38. Frederick Douglass, *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass in His Own Words* (1881; New York: Citadel Press, 1983), 197.

39. That freedom is bound to claims of possession is made even more poignant when one compares the formal elements of this image to images of plantation "big houses." In his analysis of landscapes portraying southern plantations, the archaeologist and historian of architecture and art John Michael Vlach has shown that these images often followed a perspective that placed the viewer seemingly below the presiding homes, in contrast to the more common landscapes that placed the viewer above the scene looking downwards. See Vlach, *The Planter's Prospect: Privilege and Slavery in Plantation Paintings* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

40. For the bevy of poses taken of Walt Whitman, see Ed Folsom, *Walt Whitman's Native Representations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 127–77.

41. For the most famous image of Lincoln by the Mathew Brady Studio, see Robert Hirsch, *Seizing the Light: A History of Photography* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2000), 83, figure 4.11. Douglass was well aware of the political influence of visual images, creating both favor and recoil: "In the making of our Presidents, the political gathering begins the operation, and the picture gallery ends it" ("Pictures and Progress," 457). Referring to illustrations in *Harper's Weekly*, he declared, "In the last

election the President of this Republic was made by pictures, and the whole Liberal Republican party was unmade by pictures" ("Collection of Funds for Sumner Portrait: An Address Delivered in Washington, D.C., on 11 December 1873," in *The Frederick Douglass Papers: Series One, Speeches, Debates, and Interviews; Volume Three*, ed. John W. Blassingame [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985], 358).

42. Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," Frederick Douglass Papers at the Library of Congress, ms. page 9; and Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," 454.

43. Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," Frederick Douglass Papers at the Library of Congress, ms. page 9. It is remarkable that Douglass chooses the humble, itinerant gallery, rather than the more formal urban establishments, given that most of Douglass's own portraits were made in urban photography studios and that the audiences of these lectures were most likely the relatively well-to-do of the urban northeast. Presumably, this choice asserts the ubiquity and accessibility of this new technological—and social—marvel.

44. Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," 454. That the studio replaces the blacksmith's shop suggests the progress of civilization as outlined by Adam Smith. See David Solkin, "Joseph Wright of Derby and the Sublime Art of Labor," *Representations* 83 (Summer 2003): 176–79.

45. Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," Frederick Douglass Papers at the Library of Congress, ms. page 9.

46. Perusing the copious extant copies of Douglass's own photographic portraits might lead one to believe that Douglass was not a passive model before the photographer's gaze. Recent scholars emphasize Douglass's agency in his own image production. The formulaic quality of these photographs over decades of time, coupled with the fact that such similarity was produced within multiple studios, makes this interpretation likely, though it is just as plausible that various photographers collaborated or helped impose such visual standards of social propriety. Perhaps by jumping to the conclusion that Douglass's public persona was by and large self-consciously crafted, today's readers and viewers unintentionally mimic what Douglass did in his own lectures on pictures: ignore the social exchange at the sites of production and uncritically accept possessive individualism. These considerations of the role of the operator are indebted to Maurice Wallace's keen feedback to earlier drafts of this chapter.

47. Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," 454.

48. Ibid., 454, 456–57.

49. Ibid., 455.

50. Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," Frederick Douglass Papers at the Library of Congress, ms. page 19. For the argument that the earliest viewers understood photographs as absolute truth, see Alan Trachtenberg, "Illustrious Americans," *Reading American Photographs: Images as History, Mathew Brady to Walker Evans* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989), 27.

51. Brian Wallis, "Black Bodies, White Science: Louis Agassiz's Slave Daguerreotypes," *American Art* 9, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 39–60. See also the chapter in this volume by Suzanne Schneider.

52. Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," 459.

53. Lindon W. Barrett, *Blackness and Value: Seeing Double* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 71. For more on the black radical tradition that criticizes the equation of literacy and personhood, see Gregory S. Jay, "American Literature and the New Historicism: The Example of Frederick Douglass," *Boundary 2* 17, no. 1 (Spring 1990): 238–39; Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 6, 12; Valerie Smith, *Self-Discovery and Authority in Afro-American Narratives* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 3.

54. Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," Frederick Douglass Papers at the Library of Congress, ms. pages 12–13.

55. Ibid., and ms. page 17; Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," 462. Note that *savage* is left in the abstract, as if Douglass assumes his audience will automatically recall a certain image, time, and place.

56. Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," Frederick Douglass Papers at the Library of Congress, ms. pages 14–15; Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," 459.

57. Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," 460.

58. Frederick Douglass, "The Claims of the Negro Ethnologically Considered: An Address, Before the Literary Societies of Western Reserve College, at Commencement, July 12, 1854, Delivered in Hudson, Ohio," in *The Frederick Douglass Papers: Series One, Speeches, Debates, and Interviews; Volume Two, 1847-1854*, ed. John W. Blassingame (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 497–525. As scientists, this school, allegedly most civilized because most learned and literate, sought a new text written upon the black body that only they could "properly" read. The compulsion to exhaustively categorize visible characteristics and link them to nonsomatic traits, thereby creating a new written script for social engagements, belies a certain anxiety of the writers and readers, not those who are written. In other words, they write themselves by writing upon others.

59. Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," 459.

60. The literary theorist Michael Chaney has also persuasively argued that Douglass was one of the first U.S. intellectuals to insist upon the social construction of visuality. See "Picturing the Mother, Claiming Egypt: *My Bondage and My Freedom* as Auto(bio)ethnography," *African American Review* 35, no. 3 (Autumn 2001): 391–408.

61. Frederick Douglass, "The Trials and Triumphs of Self-Made Men: An Address Delivered in Halifax, England, on 4 January, 1860," in *The Frederick Douglass Papers: Series One, Speeches, Debates, and Interviews; Volume Three*, ed. John W. Blassingame (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 291. Similar thoughts are detailed in Douglass, "Age of Pictures," Frederick Douglass Papers at the Library of Congress: Speech, Article, and Book file, 1846–1894 and Undated; American Memory, Library of Congress Manuscript Division, available online at http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/doughtml/dougFolder5.html, ms. pages 40–41.

62. Frederick Douglass, "Age of Pictures," Frederick Douglass Papers at the Library of Congress, ms. pages 40–41. These examples are taken from the U.S. philosopher Thomas Cogswell Upham's *Elements of Mental Philosophy* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1861), 69–70 and available online at http://name.umdl

.umich.edu/AJE5906.0001.001, which Douglass had in his library. See Frederick Douglass National Historic Site, FRDO 2134.

63. Lee, *Slavery, Philosophy, and American Literature, 1830–1860*, 103. Though Lee states that all of Douglass's early library was destroyed by fire in his Rochester home, some texts did indeed survive, including works by William Paley, Dugald Stewart, Thomas Upham, and Hugh Miller, all disseminating Scottish realist thought that averred the primacy of perceptions (see Frederick Douglass National Historic Site, FRDO 286, FRDO 580, FRDO 1110, and FRDO 2134; and Frederick Douglass, "It Moves," Frederick Douglass Papers at the Library of Congress, ms. page 8). Douglass's library also included selections of Emerson's lectures on transcendentalism that similarly tried to find a balance between Lockean empiricism and Kantian idealism. See Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Representative Men: Seven Lectures* (Boston: Phillips, Sampson, and Co., 1850), which was owned by Douglass (Frederick Douglass National Historic Site, FRDO 1156). On Emerson, see Lee, *Slavery, Philosophy, and American Literature, 1830–1860*, 7–9.

64. Frederick Douglass, "The Races," Frederick Douglass Papers at the Library of Congress: Speech, Article, and Book file, 1846–1894 and Undated; American Memory, Library of Congress Manuscript Division, available online at http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/doughtml/dougFolder5.html, ms. page 2 (emphasis added).

65. Frederick Douglass, "The Color Line," *North American Review* 132, no. 295 (June 1881): 567 (emphasis added). Available online through Jstor.

66. Frederick Douglass, "Age of Pictures," Frederick Douglass Papers at the Library of Congress, ms. page 42.

67. Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," 463.

68. "There is something in dress," *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, 8, no. 23 (May 25, 1855).

69. Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," 454–58.

70. Ibid., 458.

71. Ibid., 453.

72. Ibid., 462 (emphasis added).

73. A similar argument is made by Lee, *Slavery, Philosophy, and American Literature, 1830–1860*, 95.

74. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (1962; London: Routledge Press, 1994), xvi; Douglass, "It Moves," Frederick Douglass Papers at the Library of Congress, ms. pages 13–16, 25.

75. Douglass, "It Moves," Frederick Douglass Papers at the Library of Congress, ms. page 23. This idea parallels Merleau-Ponty's distinctions of sensation and synthesis (*Phenomenology of Perception*, x–xi and xvi–xvii).

76. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, xii.

77. Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," Frederick Douglass Papers at the Library of Congress, ms. pages 5–6 (emphasis added).

78. Douglass's narration goes even further to suggest that not only is the divide between self and other never fully discriminated, but that one also is not in full control of the divide between one's for-self and for-others. His companion reveals more of his for-himself than he realizes, and that this is picked up by Douglass and

shared with his audience suggests that the for-oneself and for-others are always fettered by the broader social world. Though there is a distinction, where that break is made is never fully known but pointed toward.

79. Notably, in a different version of "Pictures and Progress," Douglass utilized the same strategy to frame his topic. He foresaw his audience's impatience, explaining "it may seem almost an impertinence to ask your attention to a lecture on pictures" during "the all engrossing character of the war" and thus apologized for "this seeming transgression" (Frederick Douglass Papers at the Library of Congress, ms. pages 1 and 3). He initially called these ruminations on pictures a "relief from this intense, oppressive and heart aching attention to the . . . war" that "may be of service to all." The denouement of the lecture implies that these philosophic theories were seminal in understanding the concerns driving the war and its possible resolution, rather than an entertaining diversion.

80. In framing whiteness as race, and noting the speaker's unspoken centrality of his own racial identification, Douglass argues here for racial identification and reproduction in ways presciently akin to Richard Dyer's recent analyses in *White* (New York: Routledge Press, 1997).

81. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, x.

82. Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," 461.

83. Ibid., 462.

84. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," *The Primacy of Perception*, trans. Carleton Dallery (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1961), 165 (emphasis added).

85. Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," 459; Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," 164–65. For Merleau-Ponty, the imaginary is internal, something of the for-itself, that is simultaneously a prerequisite for acting in and with the world and is acted upon by the world. The imaginary is "the quasi presence and *imminent* visibility" because it moves toward a manifestation represented outside the body. The imaginary takes the world in and yet is not fully outside of the world; it "is *in* my body as a diagram for the life of the actual, with all its pulp and carnal obverse exposed to view for the first time" (164–65; emphasis added), an internal picture that "offers to our *sight*, so that it might join with them, the inward traces of vision" (165; emphasis in original).

86. Douglass, "It Moves," Frederick Douglass Papers at the Library of Congress, ms. page 6.

87. Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," 165 (emphasis added).

88. Ibid., 164. This does beg the question: does this only apply to objects made by an author for the sake of being seen?

89. In the various lectures on pictures, it does seem implicit, however, that photographs could be influenced by the visions of thought pictures. Whether such productive influence would emanate from the operator or sitter—or even a nosy patron not before or behind the camera—is left uninvestigated by Douglass.

90. Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," Frederick Douglass Papers at the Library of Congress, ms. page 20.

91. McFeely, *Frederick Douglass*, 186–200; Douglass, *The Life and Times of Frederick*

Douglass in His Own Words, 310–38; Philip S. Foner, "Douglass and John Brown," *The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass: Vol. II, Pre-Civil War Decade, 1850–1860* (New York: International Publishers, 1950), 85–94; Frederick Douglass, "A Lecture on John Brown, Delivered at Harpers Ferry and Other Places," Folders 1 and 2, Frederick Douglass Papers at the Library of Congress: Speech, Article, and Book file, 1846–1894 and Undated; American Memory, Library of Congress Manuscript Division, available online at http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/doughtml/dougFolder5.html; Frederick Douglass, "To my American Readers and Friends," in *Douglass' Monthly* (November 1859), in Foner, *The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass*, 2: 463–67; Stauffer, *Black Hearts of Men*, 245–51.

92. Douglass, *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass in His Own Words*, 312, 326–27 (emphasis in original).

93. McFeely, *Frederick Douglass*, 203.

94. Frederick Douglass, "John Brown and the Slaveholders' Insurrection: An Address Delivered in Edinburgh, Scotland, on 30 January 1860," in *The Frederick Douglass Papers: Series One, Speeches, Debates, and Interviews; Volume Two, 1847–1854*, ed. John W. Blassingame (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 312–22; Stauffer, *Black Hearts of Men*, 250.

95. Douglass, *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass in His Own Words*, 336.

96. This illustration was done by the young Winslow Homer ("Expulsion of Negroes and Abolitionists from Tremont Temple, Boston, Massachusetts, on December 3, 1860," *Harper's Weekly* [Dec. 15, 1860], 788, available at Library of Congress Online Catalogs, http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3c12670/.) See Peter H. Wood and Karen C. C. Dalton, *Winslow Homer's Images of Blacks: The Civil War and Reconstruction Years* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988), 21.

97. Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," 471.

98. Ibid., 453.

99. These include photographs of Brown, his sons, and wife, as well as a framed engraving hung in Douglass's office, illustrating the mythical tale of Brown, on his way to the gallows, stopping to bless a black child held by his mother. Though Brown is framed as the martyr, his Old Testament beard and impending death seem to suggest a passing not only of spiritual blessing but also of worldly leadership onto the young child.

100. Douglass, *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass in His Own Words*, inserted after 276.

101. Cabinet cards, a larger version of cartes de visite, soon followed in 1862.

102. Andrea L. Volpe, "Cartes de Visite Portrait Photographs and the Culture of Class Formation," in *Looking for America: The Visual Production of Nation and People*, ed. Ardis Cameron (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 43, 51; Hirsch, *Seizing the Light*, 78–83.

103. His bearded chin and streak of white in his hair help date the sitting to sometime during the early 1860s. See also the images at the Frederick Douglass National Site, FRDO 3924 and FRDO 4688. David W. Blight dates this image to sometime "shortly after the Civil War," in his edited version of *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself* (1845; New York: Bedford

Books, 1993), 146. Christopher Densmore, the curator of Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College, also suggests a date in the 1860s, personal correspondence, August 25, 2008. The connection between Hurn as telegraph operator and Douglass's escape of 1859 is related in James M. Gregory, *Frederick Douglass the Orator* (Springfield, MA: Willey and Co., 1893), 46–47. Special thanks to Mr. Densmore for bringing this source to my attention. Douglass names him as "Mr. John Horn, the telegraph operator" (*The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass in His Own Words*, 312).

104. Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," 460.

105. Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," Frederick Douglass Papers at the Library of Congress, ms. page 18.

106. It is of theoretical importance that Douglass chooses the example of seeing shapes in the clouds because it indicates the structure of the imagination. The child does not mistake the clouds for the objects he sees in them, but he endows the forms in the clouds with the sense of these other objects. The objects of the imagination are not present, and yet some impression of them is present in the sensible material of the clouds. These ideas are influenced by Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Imagination* (1940; London: Routledge, 2004), 5, 8–10, 12–13, and 23.

107. Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," 461; Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," Frederick Douglass Papers at the Library of Congress, ms. page 19.

108. Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," 460.

109. Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," Frederick Douglass Papers at the Library of Congress, ms. page 19.

110. Ibid., 22 (emphasis added).

111. Douglass, "It Moves," Frederick Douglass Papers at the Library of Congress, ms. page 23.

112. Douglass, "Pictures and Progress," 461 (emphasis added).

113. Moten, *In the Break*, 206.