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Fighting with Breath, Not Blows: Frederick Douglass and Antislavery Violence

James H. Cook

A quarter century ago, a small skirmish broke out in the pages of the *New York Review of Books* over a fairly innocuous observation made by the preeminent historian Willie Lee Rose. In an essay in which she reviewed biographical works on Frederick Douglass and John Brown, Rose commented that Douglass's refusal to participate in the raid on Harpers Ferry may have been rooted in a "fundamental aversion to real violence." "We can only guess," she wrote, "that the sight of the 950 Bowie knives Brown had welded to the tips of iron pikes . . . roused in Douglass insurmountable conflict." This remark drew a swift response from Douglass biographer Philip S. Foner. After listing several of the pro-violence speeches and editorials made by Douglass throughout the 1850s, Foner concluded that Rose had totally misread him, leaving readers with a "definitely incorrect impression of the Black Abolitionist's thinking on a crucial issue in the antislavery struggle." In her rebuttal, more so than in her original essay, Rose got right to the point. "I wonder if Mr. Foner read my review as carefully as I have read his book," she wryly commented, "for the difference between the violence of rhetoric and the violence of blood was central [to both pieces]. . . . The fact remains," she continued, "that Douglass, though a man of great physical courage, was never personally engaged in the kind of violence that results in death to others."[1]

Though at least one generation of scholars has come and gone since this exchange, few have been willing to explore this simple if controversial aspect of Douglass's life. It is a curious silence, considering that there has existed, for quite some time, an abundance of primary materials with which to debate the issue. The reasons for this lack of interest lie as much within the political realm as they do in the methodological one. Since the 1960s, historians have considered it misguided, if not impolitic, to question the sincerity and commitment of the opponents of slavery. To do so might invite a return of the hostile paradigms offered during the 1940s and 1950s, in which abolitionists were variously portrayed as fools, rogues, hypocrites, and zealots. With a few notable exceptions, the scholars of that era, led by "revisionists" James G. Randall and Avery O. Craven, sought to define the antislavery movement solely in terms of its "sociopathic" tendencies, internal "inconsistencies," and political "blunderings," all the while ignoring its moral authority, courage under fire, and ultimate success in ending slavery within the United States.[2] There is always a chance that continual, intensive scrutiny of abolitionism, especially the kind that probes the private lives of its practitioners more rigorously than their public activism, may unwittingly give rise to a neo-Revisionist school. Nonetheless, it is difficult to deny that the most powerful and insightful studies produced about the antislavery movement remain those which have attempted to explore the nexus between the personal and the political.[3]

The topic of Frederick Douglass's views on antislavery violence is hardly a novel one. Numerous scholars have delineated the evolution of Douglass's thinking on violence, but few have strictly tracked the level of violence within his personal life. None have taken on the sticky task of reconciling the two. This essay's main contention is that there existed an inverted relationship between the level of violence within Douglass's rhetoric and that which he experienced within his personal life. That is, as Douglass was drawn toward a more militant position on antislavery violence, he coincidentally experienced a decrease in the amount of violence he encountered in his day-to-day existence. Though the evidence suggests that this pattern was more circumstantial than by design, it nonetheless produced in Douglass a form of self-consciousness about the relationship between one's use of violence and the level of commitment to the antislavery cause.

This growing self-awareness owed much to Douglass's close relationship with John Brown. As a corollary to his spirited defense of Brown's activities in the 1850s, Douglass drew sharp distinctions among his fellow abolitionists. He praised those who, like Brown, were willing to spill blood (including their own) in the fight against slavery and derided those who were not. In so doing, Douglass ironi-

cally accentuated his own personal distance from antislavery violence. For any critics who perceived in his personal course of action a general inconsistency, however, Douglass felt nothing but disdain.[4]

That the level of violence personally experienced by Douglass steadily declined during his life is not surprising. While a slave, Douglass witnessed and suffered scores of violent acts, many of which he recounted within his three autobiographies.[5] In what he later described as the turning point of his young life, Douglass in 1834 physically resisted and triumphed over the "negro-breaker" Edward Covey. The episode has been represented by one scholar as Douglass's earliest and most important application of a self-defense justification of antislavery violence. But in his recollection of the fight with Covey, written ten years after the fact, Douglass hinted that he had had more on his mind than mere self-preservation. While the reported facts in his 1845 version are consistent with a defensive posture, his gratification in having drawn blood from Covey's throat and his statement that the violence had transformed and redeemed him suggest that the incident was more than just a simple exercise in self-preservation.[6]

A similar theme pervades his autobiographical account of an 1836 brawl with several white coworkers on the Baltimore docks. Again, though Douglass presented himself as having merely intended to defend himself from the combined assault of four rowdies, he also indicated that he attempted to pursue and exact vengeance with the same instrument, a shipyard maul, with which he had been struck. The level of violence in both of these episodes is striking. In the fight with Covey, Douglass grappled with his opponent for two solid hours without rest, giving as well as taking a variety of kicks, blows, and gouges. In the Baltimore fracas, Douglass was nearly killed, having received very serious head injuries from being struck with the maul and kicked in the face.[7]

After Douglass escaped from Maryland in 1838 and had relocated in Massachusetts, he eventually joined the abolitionist ranks and was employed by the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. Douglass entered into the Garrisonian circle of social reformers at a time when it was grappling with tactical and strategic issues. Increasingly convinced that southern slavery and northern racial discrimination were inextricably linked to one another, some Garrisonians turned their attention toward more aggressive means of combating racism within their own backyard. Many proposed racially integrating public spaces

and facilities through sit-ins of railroad cars, steamships, and dining establishments. Predictably, Douglass was drawn into these efforts though often with unpredictable results.[8]

Douglass first participated in a "direct action" against racial discrimination in September 1841 on the Eastern Railroad, which ran from Boston to Portland, Maine. While en route with his fellow lecturer, the white Garrisonian John A. Collins, Douglass was told by the conductor to exit from the first-class car. When he refused to do so, he and Collins were forcibly removed by four railroad employees. Three weeks later, Douglass repeated his attempt to desegregate the first-class compartment with Collins again by his side. This time, when he was ejected, Douglass grasped onto his seat so forcefully that it was ripped from the floor. In recalling these early efforts, Douglass took obvious pride in the fact that it always took several men to overpower him. He also insinuated that these two incidents were not the only scrapes on the railroad line in which he became involved. He "persisted" in "refusing to submit to this proscription" and, as a result, "sometimes was soundly beaten by conductor and brakeman."[9]

In 1848, Douglass and fellow black Garrisonian William C. Nell attempted to enter a segregated hotel dining room in Douglass's new hometown of Rochester, New York, after having been invited to dine there with other journalists. The hotel management positioned a phalanx of employees barring Douglass and Nell's path and threatened to call the police. In discussing their options, Douglass told Nell that he planned to push his way into the dining hall. As Douglass began doing so, someone within the hall sympathetic to his cause intervened and organized a vote among the patrons, who decided overwhelmingly to let the two black men enter. As Nell wrote later to Garrison, "It was a painful as well as triumphant hour for Mr. Douglass and myself for reasons which [white] abolitionists hardly know how to appreciate."[10]

The most violent incident during his association with the Garrisonians took place at Pendleton, Indiana, in 1843. After a group of anti-abolitionist rowdies dismantled the rostrum on which Douglass stood and physically assaulted his speaking partner, William A. White, Douglass picked up a piece of lumber and began swinging it. This only seemed to inflame the rioters, as several began screaming, "Kill the nigger, kill the damn nigger!" The mob chased Douglass down and began beating him with clubs, one blow breaking his hand, and another laid on

his head with almost deadly force. The attackers relented only after Douglass slipped into unconsciousness, lucky to escape with his life.[11]

Douglass attached great importance to this event, recalling it as a significant turning point in his views on antislavery violence. The incident surpassed all others in which Douglass participated in terms of dramatic urgency and the level of violence involved. At an 1854 antislavery meeting, at which he engaged his former mentor Garrison in debate, Douglass stated that the Pendleton incident "cured" him of his belief in nonresistance. "He stated he was once a believer in non-resistance," wrote a reporter on the scene, but "he dropped the idea on seeing a dear friend assaulted and beaten in a cruel and inhuman manner, and taking a club 'went at 'em' with all his strength."[12] Late in life, Douglass reiterated this sentiment, writing to a former abolitionist, "I was a Non-Resistant til I got to fighting with a mob in Pendleton, Ind. in 1843. I fell never to rise again, and yet I cannot feel I did wrong."[13]

That Douglass considered himself to have been a nonresistant at any time in his life is mystifying. As Leslie Goldstein has pointed out, Douglass never joined the Garrisonian Non-Resistance Society, nor is it likely that he ever embraced its broad denunciations of the use of force. The group unconditionally decried all forms of coercion in human experience, including that exercised by governments. During the early years of his association with Garrison, Douglass clearly expressed preference for moral suasion over all other means of ending slavery. In addition, he repeatedly attacked the U.S. government and its Constitution for acting as "the bulwark of slavery." Yet, not once did he deny the theoretical right of governments to exist, as did Garrison who wrote that government was unnecessary to a Christian people and an affront to God. With a single exception, he never even addressed the issue of violent resistance to slavery until he penned his autobiography in 1845. Then, as noted above, he clearly portrayed violence, at least when exercised by the individual, as an entirely appropriate means of resisting slavery.[14]

Douglass's willingness to employ violent resistance during his association with the Garrisonians was by no means ubiquitous. The instances in which he responded in kind to the threat of physical confrontation were far less in number than those in which he chose a different path. Still, his willingness in these early years to respond physically when challenged, if only infrequently, stands in stark contrast to the actions of other abolitionists within his circle, particularly Garrison, who never raised his fists even in self-defense. There is reason to believe that Garrison's presence in certain situations may have served to steer Douglass away from physical confrontation. Indeed, there is not a single recorded instance in which Douglass forcibly resisted in the presence of Garrison.

When Douglass and several other black abolitionists were told to remove themselves to a separate deck on a steamship bound for Nantucket in 1841, Douglass went along with Garrison in quietly enjoining the captain to allow both races to occupy the top deck. Only a month later, under similar circumstances, Douglass ripped his seat from the floor of an Eastern Railroad coach. Six years later—touring for the last time together—Douglass and Garrison encountered numerous threats and acts of violence while traveling through Pennsylvania. In Harrisburg, a hostile audience drove the pair from a stage, showering them with eggs, stones, and brickbats. As Douglass looked on, Garrison tried to reason with the unruly mob, to no avail. Finally, a group of "colored friends" encircled Douglass and escorted him out of the hall, running a gauntlet of various missiles in the process.[15] When the two men traveled together on a canal boat near Pittsburgh, ship stewards refused to serve Douglass at the same table as Garrison. While Douglass submitted to the outrage without as much as a word, Garrison quietly persuaded the vessel's captain to allow Douglass to eat with him.[16]

On the same western tour, a drunken railroad passenger who was accompanying a "lady" to her seat physically challenged Douglass in an incident later described by Garrison in a letter to his wife. While quietly waiting for Garrison to board the train, Douglass "was suddenly accosted in a slave-driving tone, and ordered to 'get out of that seat.'"[17] When compared with his behavior in other such circumstances, Douglass's response to this direct intimidation seems overly civil, if noticeably strained.

Garrison's description gives the distinct impression of Douglass playing the role of a dandy. "Douglass quietly replied," wrote Garrison, "that if he would make his demand in the form of a gentlemanly request, he would readily vacate his seat." In the manner of an eastern dude sniffing at a western tough, Douglass "submitted to this outrage unresistingly," Garrison reported to his wife, "but told his assailant that he behaved like a bully, and therefore precluded him

(D.) from meeting him with his own weapons. The only response of the other was that he would knock D's teeth down his throat, if he repeated the charge." Douglass apparently did not repeat the charge. Considering each man's personal experience with violent confrontation, Douglass's actions on the Pennsylvania train seem to have been more consistent with Garrison's beliefs and personality than his own.[18]

As Douglass withdrew from Garrison and the Boston circle of abolitionists in the late 1840s, he was drawn toward activities that gradually diminished the chances of experiencing personal, violent confrontation. This transformation took place as Douglass's primary career identity changed from circuit-riding agitator to newspaper editor. As a result of Douglass's determination to publish the *North Star*, the American Anti-Slavery Society punitively terminated his employment as a lecturer in October 1847.[19] Prior to this point in time, Douglass's public speaking had been a function of that employment, serving largely as the sole means of supporting his young family. Now, as he continued to tour extensively throughout the North, its main function shifted to the raising of funds to keep his newspaper solvent. By no means simply a drain on his time and energy, the *North Star* (renamed *Frederick Douglass' Paper* in 1851) became for Douglass the primary instrument of both his political and professional identities. While he maintained a combative rhetorical style on the road, direct action soon gave way to the editorial. Gradually, but steadily, violent confrontation deferred to the blistering diatribe.[20]

In 1849, the week before Douglass delivered a dramatic speech in Boston welcoming slave rebellion, stewards removed Douglass from a ship dining room without incident. He was traveling from Albany to New York City on the steamer *Alida* with Julia and Eliza Griffiths, two friends from England in whose company he was to suffer several unpleasant confrontations. At the dinner hour, Douglass and his companions attempted to eat together, only to be told that Douglass would have to leave the dining compartment. At first, Douglass firmly resolved not to give up his seat, asking in a civil tone to see the rules by which he was to be removed. He quickly changed his mind. "Feeling assured that it would only afford the multitude pleasure to see my person bruised, and my clothes torn off. . . . I left the table." To add to the insult, the ship steward told Douglass that he would serve him only if Douglass were the ladies' servant. Employing his famously wicked sarcasm, Douglass tried to convince the steward "in a rather provoking manner, that [Douglass] was the servant of those ladies," a claim that failed to convince.[21]

The last-known incident, prior to the eve of the Civil War, in which Douglass literally exchanged blows with an opponent took place again in the company of the Griffiths sisters in the spring of 1850. While waiting to board a steamer headed for Philadelphia from New York City, Douglass and the two women passed time by strolling along the Battery. They soon found themselves surrounded by five or six "ruffians" who "assailed [them] with all sorts of coarse and filthy language." Two of the men suddenly struck the women on the head, prompting Douglass to drive them off with his umbrella. In a full account later rendered within his newspaper, Douglass claimed that he had acted only in self-defense and "felt no indignation towards the poor miserable wretches who committed the outrage."[22]

In the ten years between 1841, when he attempted to desegregate the Eastern Railroad, and 1850, when he fought with street toughs along the Battery in New York City, Frederick Douglass was an active participant in at least a half-dozen physical confrontations. In the ten years that followed, he was not involved in a single such incident. Douglass's withdrawal from the Garrisonians in the early 1850s and his steady immersion in the newspaper trade removed a great deal of the context for violent confrontation and substantially reduced the risk of personal injury or harm. One might argue that through his extensive activities in the "underground railroad," Douglass continued to expose himself to such risks on a regular basis right up until the Civil War. One of the reasons behind his move to Rochester, New York, had been the city's geographic location, which effectively rendered it as a point of departure for runaway slaves headed for Canada. Though not much is known about his personal assistance to fugitive slaves prior to the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, his involvement following that law's enactment is well documented.[23]

In cooperation with his friend Amy Post, the Quaker pacifist and reformer, Douglass helped to hide a significant number of fugitive slaves passing through Rochester on their way to Canada. Douglass later took great pride in his extensive service on the "underground railroad" because of the great personal risk that it seemingly had involved. "My agency was all the more exciting and interesting," he wrote in his 1881 autobiography, "because not altogether free from

danger. I could take no step in it without exposing myself to fine and imprisonment . . . in face of this fact, I can say that I never did more congenial, attractive, fascinating, and satisfactory work."[24] On one occasion, Douglass hid eleven fugitives within his tiny home before finding enough money to send them across Lake Ontario into Canada. Another time, a U.S. commissioner came perilously close to arresting Douglass and a fugitive whom he was sheltering. It was common for Douglass to arrive at his newspaper office in the morning to find one or two fugitives patiently waiting on the front steps.[25]

The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 posed new dangers to individuals who aided runaway slaves, but the level of risk obviously varied from place to place. Though Douglass felt a great deal of anxiety whenever he sheltered fugitives, the chances of being discovered, arrested, and convicted were never as great in Rochester as they were in other, more vulnerable regions, such as the eastern seaboard. Two famous incidents, both of which directly impacted upon Douglass and his antislavery circle in western New York, illustrate this fact. The Christiana riot of 1851 involved the unsuccessful attempt of Maryland slaveholder Edward Gorsuch and his sons to capture four black men they believed to be fugitive slaves. When Gorsuch and one of his sons were killed in the attempt, several African American "suspects" escaped into western New York, eventually using Douglass's home as a safe house before slipping into Canada.[26] While he later wrote of his heightened anxiety, due to the public's hysteria following the episode, Douglass also stated that he faced no immediate danger from his Rochester neighbors during the time he harbored the Christiana fugitives. In an ironic postscript to the affair, the fugitives expressed their gratitude to Douglass by presenting him with the revolver that fell from Gorsuch's hand when he died, an implement somewhat incongruent with Douglass's newfound professional identity, if not his evolved style of activism.[27]

One month later, in October 1851, a group of Syracuse abolitionists, Douglass's close friend Gerrit Smith among them, carried out what became known as the "Jerry Rescue." Armed with a slavehunter's warrant, Syracuse police had seized a local, black cooper, William "Jerry" McHenry. A band of rescuers broke into the police station and released McHenry, supposedly without inflicting any injury or bloodshed on his captors. Though authorities indicted several of the rescuers for assisting in the escape, they succeeded in convicting only one, Enoch Reed. Reed died unexpectedly while his conviction was about to be overturned on appeal. Though circumstances ended favorably for the rescuers, several of the group, including the black ministers Samuel R. Ward and Jermain W. Loguen, feared the potential outcome enough to flee to Canada.[28]

Douglass was disappointed by the flight of these African American leaders, a course of action which he considered completely unnecessary under the circumstances. During the Jerry Rescue trials, a close friend and Rochester neighbor, Daniel A. Payne, asked Douglass if he was going to stay in the United States or if, like some others, he would retreat to Canada and begin life anew. Douglass replied that he "could not desert [his] post until [he] saw that [he] could no longer hold it." He certainly would not leave as long as Henry Highland Garnet and Samuel Ward remained. "Ward?" replied Payne, "Ward . . . is already gone. I saw him crossing from Detroit to Windsor." When Payne announced that he, too, planned to withdraw to Canada, Douglass was incredulous. "This indeed was a stunning blow," he later wrote. "This man had power to do more to defeat this inhuman enactment than any other colored man in the land. . . . I felt like a besieged city at news that its defenders had fallen at its gates."[29] Douglass clearly saw himself as having acted as a lone sentinel holding the fort, while others, lacking sufficient cause, had broken ranks and fled. Douglass had not participated in the rescue, however, and, therefore, unlike Ward and Loguen, never faced any real threat to his personal security.

Douglass's ex post facto assessment of the dangers posed by the Fugitive Slave Law was ambivalent, if not a little self-serving. On the one hand, he portrayed himself as having incurred grave risks in aiding and abetting fugitives. On the other, he believed that the fears of other notable African Americans like Ward and Loguen, both of whom fled the scene, were sorely unfounded.[30] Though Douglass later said that the Fugitive Slave Law "virtually made every colored man in the land an outlaw," he ultimately believed the peril to fugitives and their rescuers to have been exaggerated. "The hardships imposed . . . were cruel and shocking," he recalled, "and yet only a few of all the fugitives of the Northern States were returned to slavery. . . . As a means of recapturing their runaway property in human flesh the law was an utter failure."[31] As Douglass rightfully believed, it was the steadfast vigilance of northern abolitionists like himself who had made it so. It is unlikely, however, that such organized and spirited resistance to the law could

have long survived without the tacit approval of, or at least a pledge of noninterference from, an otherwise disinterested northern citizenry. The fact remains that, if Douglass and his fellow agents on the Rochester "underground railroad" initially experienced any feelings of anxiety or fear concerning their activities, such thoughts would have quickly evaporated in light of their neighbors' growing sympathy for the movement.

The gradual diminution of personal violence in Douglass's life during the late antebellum period did not necessarily make him unique among black abolitionists. Many of his counterparts suffered acts of violence at the hands of southern masters and northern mobs, then had witnessed a decline in such violence prior to the Civil War. Nor was Douglass the only militant leader who was personally removed from violence, as exemplified by Douglass's close friend, the white abolitionist Gerrit Smith. What makes Douglass's case compelling is the relationship between the real violence in his life and his emerging role as the nation's foremost black abolitionist. At the same time that circumstances in Douglass's life elevated him to national prominence and increasingly removed him from harm's way, he began pressing, with an unforeseen vigor, other African Americans toward the front, alternately encouraging and scolding them to resist slavery and racial discrimination, even to the point of death. Douglass was by no means unaware of or indifferent to the widening gap between his words and his actions. Due in large part to his association with John Brown, Douglass achieved a level of self-awareness regarding his own involvement with antislavery violence. Ironically, as he was drawn into a more rigorous defense of Brown's methods in Kansas and beyond, Douglass revealed the extent to which he had become personally removed from such methods.

Though scholars within the past twenty years have sought to diminish the significance of Brown's influence upon Douglass, it is clear from the written record that Brown loomed large in Douglass's consciousness. At their initial meeting in 1847, Brown laid out his famous "Subterranean Pass Way" scheme, by which an armed band of freedom fighters would penetrate deep into the heart of slave territory via the Alleghany ridge, transforming slaves into soldiers along the way. Though Douglass was at first skeptical of Brown's methods, he noted in his 1881 autobiography that "from this night spent with John Brown, my utterances became more and more tinged by the color of this man's strong impressions." At the 1847 meeting, Brown advanced several key arguments, two of which Douglass gradually incorporated into his antislavery repertoire. One was that slavery constituted a "state of war," and that it "could only be destroyed by blood-shed." Another was that "no people . . . could have self-respect, or be respected, who would not fight for their freedom."[32] Following Brown's lead, Douglass particularly cultivated the second point beginning in the early 1850s.

In January 1851, Brown formed the League of the Gileadites, a quasi-military organization of fifty-four African Americans set up exclusively to resist violently attempts to enforce the Fugitive Slave Law. While forming the league, Brown circulated a document he entitled "Words of Advice." Utilizing shame as a motivational device, he severely rebuked black Americans who would not stand up and fight for their rights, suggesting that white America would consider them human beings only if they physically resisted slavehunters and kidnappers. Brown's text represented not only an exhortation to his black compatriots, but a foreshadowing of his own fiery test of courage eight years into the future. "Nothing so charms the American people," he wrote, "as personal bravery. The trial for life of one bold and to some extent successful man, for defending his rights in good earnest, would arouse more sympathy throughout the nation than the accumulated wrongs and sufferings of more than three millions of our submissive colored population."[33]

In the same week that Brown wrote these words, Douglass chastised New York African Americans for allowing a runaway slave, Henry Long, to be captured from their midst without offering any resistance. "Some explanation, some apology for the apparent indifference and utter inactivity manifested by the colored people of New York City, is demanded," he thundered to a Rochester audience. Eight months later, Douglass offered a critique even more plainly in line with Brown's. Rather than stressing collective guilt as a motivating factor, Douglass focused heavily upon the shame component. The "lamblike submission of blacks to the violation of their rights has only served to create contempt for them in the public mind," he wrote. "The black man could gain not only self-respect but also a measure of public dignity by fighting against his enslavers."[34]

In 1854, Douglass had continued to expand upon the theme of African American resistance, both in the North and South, by posing the deceptively simple question, "Is it Right and Wise to Kill a Kidnapper?" Douglass concluded that the killing of those who at-

tempt to "play the bloodhound" was "as innocent, in the sight of God, as would be the slaughter of a ravenous wolf in the act of throttling an infant." Three years later, after proclaiming the peaceful abolition of slavery to be an "almost hopeless" cause, Douglass levied nothing less than a death sentence upon slaveholders. "Terrible as it [slave insurrection] will be, we accept and hope for it," Douglass wrote. "The slaveholder has been tried and sentenced, his execution only waits the finish to the training of his executioners. He is training his own executioners."[35] Douglass's choice of an execution as metaphor must have seemed more than a little careless to those who were familiar with his strict opposition to capital punishment throughout the same period. If anything, this contradiction revealed how uniquely heinous a crime Douglass considered slaveholding to have been.[36]

As the Kansas conflict began to unfold in 1854, Douglass's personal removal from violent struggle against slavery and discrimination became all the more evident. While he continued vehemently to press others toward the front, he did so increasingly from a rearward position. In spite of numerous warning signs of approaching violence, Douglass did not hesitate to prod his fellow African Americans to go to Kansas in order to serve as a buffer against slavery's advance. Douglass at first tried to convince black Americans that the territory was secure from violent dangers. After declaring that "the coast is clear" and that they would experience little if any hindrance from their white neighbors, he then returned to shame and guilt themes. "Whether regarded from the point of the duty to the Slave . . . or from the point of duty to themselves," he emphatically enjoined, "*they ought to go* into that Territory as *permanent settlers*."[37]

While he made it abundantly clear that Kansas desperately needed black farmers, laborers, and families, Douglass apparently believed that it had filled its quota of black newspaper editors and lecturers. African Americans, both slave and free, continued throughout the decade to populate the territory in significant numbers, provoking intense hostility among white settlers. Despite their violent disagreements over slavery, proslavery and free soil whites in Kansas shared a common attitude toward this black population. In the same week that Douglass pronounced the territory conducive to black resettlement, an abolitionist on the scene, Samuel L. Adair, painted a different picture. Of the free soil forces, he wrote, "their free soil is free soil for white, but not for the black. They hate slavery, but they hate the negro worse. Their language is, 'if we must have niggers here, let them be slaves, not free.'"[38]

As conditions deteriorated for blacks living on the plains, Douglass's presence could have exercised more than a little influence on what one observer referred to as "the large population of ignorance" there. At least one resident believed this to be the case when he wrote to a relative in the East, complaining that among free soilers "the great cry now is nigger, nigger, nigger," adding that he wished Douglass would "come here and lecture."[39] As his speaking itinerary reveals, though, Douglass felt no need to travel through the territory in the crucial years prior to the Civil War. Douglass instead nudged others whom he considered more qualified, like his friend and supporter Gerrit Smith, toward the task of reforming Kansas society. "I am glad you gave three thousand dollars to the cause of freedom in Kansas," he wrote Smith in early 1856, "and hope you will use your power in that country to shame the free state men out of their contemptible selfishness in excluding the free colored men out of that territory."[40] Douglass's main function in the Kansas conflict would be as defender of Brown's reputation in the East.

On May 22, 1856, in a speech delivered in Rochester, Douglass harshly condemned the murders of several Free State men, giving especial notice to the grisly death of Rees P. Brown (no relation to John Brown). Proslavery forces had attacked Brown, the leader of Leavenworth free-staters, hacking him to death with a hatchet and unceremoniously dumping his corpse on his wife's doorstep. This final indignity drew severe censure from Douglass. Yet, acts similar to those which Douglass termed "barbaric" to a Rochester audience on Thursday night were committed by John Brown and his sons two nights later on the Pottawatomie Creek. In what remains his most controversial action, Brown directed his sons to drag five men deemed to be proslavery from their homes in the middle of the night and hack them to death with broadswords. In a manner similar to his broad pronouncements regarding slave rebellion, Douglass suspended, in Brown's case, an otherwise vehement opposition to revenge-based justice. "He has been charged with murder!" he editorialized one month later. "What could be more absurd! If he has sinned in anything, it is in that he has spared lives of murderers, when he had the power to take vengeance upon them."[41]

Like many observers at the time, Douglass was initially misinformed about the facts of the incident. His statement, on its face, was similar to those made by other prominent abolitionists in the wake of the massacre, many of whom considered the charges against Brown too fantastic to believe. But if Douglass held that Brown had not carried out the killings, he nevertheless clearly felt that Brown was remiss in not having done so. Indeed, he strongly hinted that Brown should have exacted revenge upon proslavery "murderers" whenever circumstances would allow. This was no broad, abstract endorsement of slave insurrections or the killing of slave hunters in the name of self-defense. It was rather a cold, blunt advocacy of what turned out to be, in fact, Brown's actual crime. Perhaps Douglass would not have been as enthusiastic about the supposed murders if he had known of their grisly details or that some of the victims' status as "proslavery men" was nebulous. This is unlikely, however, considering his future statements, penned well after the facts of the case became widely known. "The horrors wrought by his iron hand cannot be contemplated without a shudder," Douglass wrote of Brown in 1881, "but it is the shudder that one feels at the execution of a murderer. . . . To call out a murderer at midnight, and without note or warning, judge or jury, run him through with a sword, was a terrible remedy for a terrible malady."[42]

After Brown's mission in Kansas came to a close, he returned to the East and embarked on several fundraising tours for his "Subterranean Pass Way" scheme. Whenever passing through Rochester, he stayed with Douglass and openly sought his counsel. The most spirited defense mustered by Douglass on Brown's behalf while the latter was still alive came in response to a decided lack of enthusiasm on the part of Douglass's neighbors toward Brown. When Brown failed to receive the grandiose reception to which Douglass believed he was entitled during an 1859 visit, Douglass unleashed a furious diatribe against the antislavery community.[43] In so doing, however, he merely highlighted the ever-widening chasm separating his advocacy of violence from his personal involvement in it. Before leveling criticisms at Brown, Douglass righteously intoned, reformers and politicians should take a quick glance into the mirror. "Have they been sincere in what they have said of their love of freedom?" Douglass asked. "Have they really desired to head off, hem in, and dam up the desolating tide of slavery? If so, does it not seem that one who has suffered, and perilled everything in accomplishing these very ends, has some claims upon their grateful respect and esteem?"[44]

More to the point, Douglass insisted, was that Brown, unlike his contemporaries, was a man who did more than just give speeches. "Had John Brown been a man of words, rather than deeds," Douglass wrote, "had he been noted for opposing slavery with his breath, rather than with blows . . . his reception here would have been cordial, and perhaps enthusiastic . . . ."[45] Not only were Brown's critics feeble and pusillanimous, but they always extended praise to the wrong people while withholding it from those who truly deserved it.

Then, employing a bit of overkill, Douglass suggested that individuals who criticized Brown could not be considered true abolitionists. Such criticism was insulting to a man like Brown "who will forsake home, family, ease, and security, and in the cause of liberty go forth to spill his blood, if need be. . . ."[46] Most damning of all was Douglass's suggestion that abolitionists who could not match Brown's level of commitment were not legitimate, but were in fact agents of slavery. "The basis of [Brown's] idea of duty is comprehensive," Douglass lauded, "that a case of [slavery] is one which every human being is solemnly bound to interfere; and that he who has the power to do so, and fails to improve it, is involved in the guilt of the original crime."[47]

The Harpers Ferry raid and John Brown's death lay seven months in the future, but Douglass had already commenced the canonization process. His statements indicate that he embraced the notion of a hierarchy of commitment among antislavery reformers. There was no doubt in Douglass's mind as to who occupied the lone seat atop the pyramid. A more difficult question to answer is the following: where did Douglass place himself within that hierarchy? This issue relates to those raised earlier. Was Douglass conscious of the diminution of violence within his personal world? If so, at what point did he begin to experience this awareness? Douglass must certainly have realized by early 1859 that, while Brown had continued to oppose slavery and racial discrimination "with blows," Douglass himself had come to oppose these injustices "with his breath." Judging by the text of his second autobiography, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855), Douglass was sensitive to this issue at least as early as the mid-1850s.

Recent scholarship has suggested that Douglass's revisions to his

original 1845 autobiography represented a call for African American self-reliance and solidarity, a theme that had its origins in Douglass's bitter struggle with the Garrisonian circle. One may discern within Douglass's changes, however, a hint of self-consciousness regarding antislavery violence. The most telling example of this attitude can be found in Douglass's description of his botched attempt in 1836 to escape, along with five fellow slaves, from Maryland's eastern shore. After the plot had been discovered, authorities came to arrest Douglass and two others who were implicated. While Douglass and another slave, John Harris, made no resistance to the arrest, the third man, Henry Harris, refused to go peacefully. In contrast to his 1845 version of his autobiography, which simply reported the bare facts of the arrest, Douglass's 1855 edition included a reference to his own "shameful" capitulation to the authorities. "Now came the struggle," Douglass wrote. "All hands now rushed upon the brave fellow [Henry Harris], and, after beating him for some time, they succeeded in overpowering him and tying him. Henry put me to shame; he fought, and fought bravely. John and I made no resistance."[48]

Why did Douglass feel it necessary to reframe this episode as an example of "shameful" acquiescence? His revised version of the incident appears incongruent alongside his spirited resistance to Covey, only a few chapters earlier. The reason lies in the brief caveat inserted by Douglass at the end of the episode. "The fact is," Douglass subtly added, "I never see much use in fighting unless there is a reasonable chance of whipping somebody."[49] This comment suggests that Douglass was interested in explaining not only past demurrals of violence, but also present and future ones. With this brief aside, he transformed the central meaning of the episode from that of a "shameful" confession to something akin to apologia. This is not to say that Douglass's embarrassment over his inaction at the critical moment of his 1836 arrest was false or contrived. As William L. Andrews has noted, *My Bondage and My Freedom* was remarkably "frank about its protagonist's frailties as well as his strengths," an aspect that made it unique among the era's numerous autobiographical works. The point remains, however, that Douglass now began to feel a need to justify, if only in a quiet way, his personal abstention from antislavery violence.[50]

Though it is difficult to identify all of the factors that provoked this sensitivity, it is clear that the main force pushing Douglass toward some form of self-awareness regarding his personal involvement in antislavery violence was John Brown. Ironically, Douglass's strident defense of Brown's reputation beginning in 1856, which eventually included publicly denigrating the sincerity and commitment of his fellow abolitionists, only served to highlight his own stark differences with Brown. If these differences were not already evident to Douglass, they must have become so during the several weeks in January and February of 1858 when Brown lived under his roof. Day in and out, Douglass watched and listened as Brown ceaselessly tinkered with his Subterranean scheme, formulated a provisional constitution by which his army would govern, and corresponded with family members and supporters.[51]

Though Douglass later wrote that be became bored with Brown's scheming and dreaming during the latter's stay in Rochester, evidence indicates that he felt something closer to discomfort. In 1881, the year in which Douglass reflected extensively upon his relationship with Brown, both in his final autobiography and in a famous speech at Storer College in Harpers Ferry, an unknown admirer sent him a letter that had been written by Brown during his 1858 "residence" at the Douglass home. The momento sparked fresh memories of that crucial period when Douglass found himself increasingly distressed by Brown's arguments and plans. "He was a constant thorn in my side," Douglass wrote back to the admirer. "I could not help feeling that this man's zeal in the cause of my enslaved people was holier and higher than mine. . . . His call to me was 'Come up higher,' and not being ready to rise to his height, his calls troubled me."[52]

It is not surprising that the failed raid on Harpers Ferry, and especially Douglass's actions in relation to it, produced a crisis of conscience for Douglass, evoking his most candid views concerning his own personal commitment to antislavery violence. Several weeks before the planned attack, Brown met with Douglass at an abandoned stone quarry near Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. He attempted to enlist Douglass in his small army, hoping to utilize the black leader as a magnet for still more African American recruits. Realizing that the raid, as now formulated by Brown, had little chance of succeeding, Douglass decided against participating in the mission.[53]

Due to his close association with Brown, Douglass scrambled to defend both his life and reputation following Brown's capture. Undoubtedly adding to any personal turmoil he might have felt at the time was raider John E. Cook's public accusation that Douglass had

promised to lead reinforcements into Harpers Ferry, only to have backed out at the crucial moment. Writing from Canada three days after the raid, Douglass found himself in the unenviable position of denying any personal involvement in the raid while at the same time praising Brown's efforts. He quickly formulated what became a major theme in his standard characterizations of his relationship with Brown. "Mr. Cook may be perfectly right in denouncing me as a coward," he wrote. "I have always been more distinguished for running that fighting—and tried by the Harpers Ferry insurrection test, I am most miserably deficient in courage." Then, in what has become an oft-quoted passage, he added, "I am ever ready to write, speak, publish, organize, combine and even conspire against slavery when there is a reasonable hope of success. . . . 'The tools to those who can use them.' Let every man work for the abolition of slavery in his own way. I would help all and hinder none."[54]

While the first statement was hardly novel (as shown earlier, he had enunciated something very much like it in *My Bondage and My Freedom*), the second represented a departure. Over the previous three years, Douglass had suggested that those who opposed Brown's methods were not true abolitionists. Only six months before the raid, he had told them in plain language that they were the minions of slavery. Now, in defending his own choices, Douglass tried to turn back the clock to a time when all abolitionists were equal in his sight. It was a sentiment that more than a few compatriots must have found disingenuous.

Douglass's statements after the raid suggest a defensive posture on his part, though he also made it abundantly clear that the only man whom he considered qualified to sit in judgment of him lay six feet in the ground at North Elba, New York. He brooked criticism from none other. In a highly revealing comment, made in his final autobiography, Douglass suggested that any opprobrium over his personal decisions prior to the raid came from a single source. "Some have thought that I ought to have gone with [Brown]," he wrote, "but I have no reproaches for myself at this point, and since I have been assailed only by colored men who kept even further from this brave and heroic man than I did, I shall not trouble myself much about their criticisms."[55]

Douglass was likely referring to a few cursory swipes taken at him by black leaders immediately following the raid. The editors of the *Weekly*

Anglo-African expressed disappointment when Douglass left the country, traveling first to Canada then to Britain. Such actions did not befit "a man of heroic mold" like Douglass, they suggested. J. Sella Martin hinted at cowardice when he scolded Douglass for "writing from the broad latitude of Canada West."[56] Turning the tables on his critics, Douglass suggested that their own similar cowardice rendered any analysis of his actions, no matter how well intentioned, wholly inappropriate. His dismissal of black critics, in such a backhanded manner years after the fact, underscores Douglass's fierce unwillingness even to ponder the disconnections that some African Americans obviously had perceived between his words and actions.

Throughout the 1850s, Douglass pushed black Americans to resist physically against slaveholders and kidnappers. He urged them to pour into a decidedly hostile territory in order to serve as a buffer against the advance of slavery. He publicly expressed disappointment with those who abandoned the good fight for the "pure atmosphere" of Canada and Britain. He repeatedly nudged, cajoled, and goaded them into harm's way, and he insisted, if necessary, that they fight with their last breath against slavery. All this he did from what may be perceived as the comfort and security of a podium and editor's desk. Judging solely by the outcome of Brown's raid, the suggestion that Douglass "ought to have gone with Brown" seems foolhardy, callous, and even vicious. Viewed against a decade of Douglass's querulous demands of black Americans, however, the comment does not appear as outrageous. As he did with many parts of his public persona, Douglass carefully scripted and managed his mea culpas regarding antislavery violence. Though forever willing to defer to the memory of Brown's moral authority, he refused to contemplate, let alone acknowledge, the feelings of other African American leaders on the matter. He maintained for the balance of his life an icy indifference to the opinions of black Americans regarding his abstention at Harpers Ferry.

Four years after Douglass had written contemptuously of the "colored men" who censured him, a former compatriot of Brown, Franklin B. Sanborn, contacted him regarding the facts surrounding the Harpers Ferry raid. Sanborn was in the midst of producing a biography of Brown and wished to tap Douglass's memory concerning a curious item that had found its way into Sanborn's hands. It was a letter that had been delivered to Douglass a few days after his meeting with Brown at the Chambersburg quarry. "It was signed by

a number of colored men," Douglass recalled for Sanborn after recognizing the document. "I never knew how they came to send that letter, but it now seems to have been prompted by Mr. [John Henri] Kagi—who was with Captain Brown, when I told him I would not go into Harpers Ferry. He probably thought that I would reconsider my determination if urged to do so by the parties who signed the letter."[57] Ironically, Kagi and the signatories had attempted to manipulate Douglass by appealing to his sense of shame and guilt, wrapped in the guise of racial solidarity. It was a tactic that Douglass was certainly more than a little familiar with and one he rebuffed.

It is significant that the last recorded instance in which Frederick Douglass was involved in antislavery violence on a personal level took place on the one-year anniversary of John Brown's execution. With the secession crisis foremost in the public mind, a hostile crowd of Unionists and anti-abolitionists took control of a meeting at Boston's Tremont Temple at which Douglass was to have memorialized Brown. When the crowd tried to block his path to the podium, Douglass lowered his head "like a trained pugilist" and bulled his way through the throng. While the crowd rioted, Douglass defiantly continued to speak, exchanging barbs with hecklers, and even threatening to throttle one of them "in the manner of a slave-driver." When somebody grabbed away the chair on which he sat, Douglass grabbed it back and wrestled with several rowdies and a policeman before relinquishing it.[58]

After the meeting reconvened at another location, Douglass unleashed a blistering diatribe against slaveholders, slave catchers, and the South in general. Much to the delight of the crowd—this one decidedly more antislavery than the first one—Douglass suggested that "the only way to make the Fugitive Slave Law a dead letter, is to make a few dead slave-catchers. There is no need to kill them either—shoot them in the legs, and send them to the South living epistles of the free gospel preached here at the North (laughter and applause.)"[59] For the first time in a decade, Douglass employed "real" violence against the proponents of slavery and racial discrimination. That it occurred as he attempted to present a eulogy on John Brown is perhaps more than coincidental.

The inverse nature of the relationship between the level of personal violence experienced by Douglass and his outspoken advocacy of antislavery violence reached its apogee during the Civil War. As a recruiter of black troops, he spurred younger African American men on to combat against the slaveholders' army, sometimes by resorting to shaming tactics. As William McFeely has noted, however, Douglass "displayed no eagerness to lug a rifle across a muddy or bloody field himself." He was forty-four years of age at the war's outbreak, was in relatively fine physical shape, and was no less qualified to serve as an officer than the white abolitionist Thomas Wentworth Higginson, who eventually commanded a regiment of black troops. The War Department in 1862 had set the maximum age for enlistees at forty-five, Douglass's exact age at the time. Though Douglass exceeded the age limit by the time the government began organizing black regiments the following spring, he could easily have talked his way into the ranks if he had so desired. Many men who failed the age requirement successfully bypassed such restrictions time and again. Though he clearly had passed out of his physical prime, Douglass was not beyond a reasonable age for serving in combat.[60]

The federal government made it clear throughout most of the war that it had no intention of commissioning black officers. When the war department finally began commissioning them in late 1864, few were allowed into combat situations. Too old to play the "overage soldier boy, subject to the will of a drill sergeant," McFeely suggests, Douglass's dignity prevented him from enlisting. But, as David Blight has pointed out, although he believed he could not enter service without an officer's commission, Douglass nonetheless asked thousands of younger black men to do just that.[61]

If such behavior seemed inconsistent to his African American critics, who had been more than a little sanctimonious following the Harpers Ferry raid, none stepped forward to offer any remarks during the war. Perhaps they sensed their own vulnerability to charges of maintaining a cool distance from the fighting. J. Sella Martin, who had suggested that Douglass had been a coward for fleeing the country in 1859, spent the majority of his war years in Europe, lecturing and tending to a series of "nagging illnesses." Thomas and Robert Hamilton, the editors of the *Weekly Anglo-African* who also had expressed disappointment following the Harpers Ferry raid, remained at their desks throughout the war. In fact, they rivaled Douglass in terms of the sheer number of appeals to arms they levied upon their black brethren. What Douglass later wrote about his African Ameri-

can critics, if perhaps a bit too flippantly, was essentially correct. They had been as removed from danger, if not more so, than himself.[62]

Over twenty-five years ago, Willie Lee Rose plaintively noted that none of Frederick Douglass's biographers had shown any inclination to indulge in the "critical analysis that is invited by a comparison of Douglass's words with Douglass's actions" in the realm of antislavery violence. Rose insightfully attributed what she perceived to have been gaps between his words and deeds to Douglass's innermost, professional identity. As an "intellectual," Douglass simply "was not emotionally prepared" to fight slavery in the manner of a John Brown, or even a Thomas Wentworth Higginson or a Robert Gould Shaw.[63] While this is a valid and crucial point, it is equally important to note that Douglass had not always been an intellectual and, as a younger man, had hardly been a stranger to "real" violence exercised in the name of fighting slavery and racial discrimination. It is even more important to recognize that it would be nothing less than an exercise in futility, if not in bad form, to question the personal bravery and physical courage of Douglass—or that of his critics, for that matter. Surely little would be gained through such an endeavor.

Still, that the level of physical confrontation within Douglass's daily life declined at the very time that he turned to embrace the rhetoric of violence is an undeniable fact that invites critical analysis on some level. As a true intellectual, Douglass was forced into pondering this paradoxical arrangement and offering some form of self-explanation, if only in a quiet way, to the public. This impulse became particularly strong after Douglass launched a staunch defense of John Brown's mission in Kansas. Ultimately, the brave captain's radical activism and dramatic demise came to serve a dual, ironic purpose for Douglass, who by the late 1850s jealously guarded his position as the nation's leading black abolitionist.

First, it provided Douglass with the opportunity to resolve any misgivings or doubts that he may have felt over perceived inconsistencies between his words and actions. By canonizing Brown (even before his final, glorious mission), Douglass could continue to display solidarity with Brown even while placing his friend on a higher, more distant plane from the one he himself occupied. Second, and more important, Brown's ultimate sacrifice became the means by which Douglass deflected criticism levied against him by leading African Americans. It is this latter function that needs to be more fully examined. A great deal of insight into Douglass's peculiar brand of activism may be gained through a comparative study of his personal dealings with other black militant abolitionists, such as Henry Highland Garnet and Martin Delany, on the one hand, and with John Brown, on the other. Douglass's experiences with the former ranged from half-hearted cooperation, at best, to personal rivalry and political backbiting, at worst. Alternatively, Douglass professed absolute loyalty and admiration for Brown, a man with whom he seemingly shared so much, yet so little.

Notes

1. Willie Lee Rose, "Killing for Freedom," in *New York Review of Books,* Dec. 3, 1970; "An Exchange on John Brown," in *New York Review of Books,* Feb. 11, 1971. The emphasis upon the word "personally" is Rose's.
2. There has existed a plenitude of primary sources relating to Frederick Douglass for at least the past twenty years. The fifth and final volume of Philip S. Foner's edition of selected Douglass writings (speeches, correspondence, and editorials) was completed in 1975. In 1973, the Library of Congress made available for the first time a voluminous collection of Douglass's private papers that were donated by his descendents. For characteristic samplings from the Revisionist school on abolitionism, see the following by Avery O. Craven: "Coming of the War Between the States: An Interpretation," *Journal of Southern History* 2 (Aug. 1936): 1–20; *The Coming of the Civil War* (New York: Scribner's, 1942); *Civil War in the Making, 1815–1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1959). See also the following by James G. Randall: *The Civil War and Reconstruction* (Boston: Heath, 1937); "The Blundering Generation," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 27 (June 1940): 3–28. For historiographical discussions of Craven's and Randall's scholarship, see Clyde N. Wilson, ed., *Dictionary of Literary Biography,* vol. 17, *Twentieth-Century American Historians* (Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1983), 126–31, 373–77. For examples of scholars who dissented during the Revisionist wave, see Russell B. Nye, "The Slave Power Conspiracy, 1830–1860," *Science and Society* 10 (Summer 1946): 262–74; Merton L. Dillon, "Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond: An Appraisal," *Reviews in American History* 21 (1993): 539–52; Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity*

Question" and the American Historical Profession (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1988), 348–50. On the eventual decline of the Revisionist school, see Robert A. Skotheim, "A Note on Historical Method: David Donald's 'Toward a Reconsideration of Abolitionists,'" *Journal of Southern History* 25 (Aug. 1959): 356–65; Martin F. Duberman, "The Abolitionists and Psychology," *Journal of Negro History* 47 (1962): 183–91; Martin Duberman, ed., *The Antislavery Vanguard: New Essays on the Abolitionists* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1965), vii–x; Merton L. Dillon, "The Abolitionists, A Decade of Historiography, 1959–1969," *Journal of Southern History* 35 (Nov. 1969): 500–522, and *The Abolitionists: The Growth of a Dissenting Minority* (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois Univ. Press, 1974), xi–xiii; James Brewer Stewart, *Holy Warriors: The Abolitionists and American Slavery* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976), 204–16, passim; Betty Fladeland, "Revisionists and Abolitionists: The Historiographical Cold War of the 1930s and 1940s," *Journal of the Early American Republic* 6 (1986): 1–21.

3. Examples of this type of scholarship, which has rendered balanced critiques of leading abolitionists without diminishing the efficacy and moral authority of the movement as a whole, are Lawrence J. Friedman, *Gregarious Saints: Self and Community in American Abolitionism, 1830–1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1982); Jane H. Pease and William H. Pease, *They Who Would Be Free: Blacks' Search for Freedom, 1830–1861* (New York: Athenaeum, 1974), and their "Boston Garrisonians and the Problem of Frederick Douglass," *Canadian Journal of History* 2 (Sept. 1967): 29–48. William McFeely's recent biography of Douglass is far more candid regarding certain controversial and unflattering aspects of Douglass's life than any other study produced. For examples of McFeely's willingness to criticize Douglass, see William S. McFeely, *Frederick Douglass* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991), 144–45, 153–55, 184–86, 299, 361–64.
4. Definitions of Douglass's views on antislavery violence may be found in the works of his biographers. See Philip S. Foner, *Frederick Douglass* (New York: Citadel Press, 1964), 137–39, 173–82; Waldo E. Martin Jr., *The Mind of Frederick Douglass* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1984), 21–24, 57–59, 167–68; McFeely, *Frederick Douglass*, 96–97, 185–90, 211–13. Several scholars have focused exclusively on the topic. See Leslie Friedman Goldstein, "Violence as an Instrument for Social Change: The Views of Frederick Douglass (1817–1895)," *Journal of Negro History* 61 (1976): 61–72; Ronald T. Takaki, "Not Afraid to Die: Frederick Douglass and Violence," in *Violence in the Black Imagination: Essays and Documents* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1972), 17–35; Bernard R. Boxill, "Fear and Shame as Forms of Moral Suasion in the Thought of Frederick Douglass," *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 31 (Fall 1995): 713–44. Of these scholars, only Takaki raises the issue of Douglass's *personal* applications of antislavery violence. Though thoughtful and imaginative, Takaki's analysis is seriously limited in two ways. First, he focuses strictly upon the Harpers Ferry raid (and Douglass's unwillingness to participate in it), largely ignoring numerous other episodes and contexts involving Douglass and violence. Second, he attributes Douglass's demurral of personal violence solely to a "feminine" influence exercised upon him by his grandmother, Betsey Bailey, and his master's wife, Sophia Auld. Though such an interpretation is provocative, it is also is quite narrow.
5. Frederick Douglass, *Autobiographies: Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave; My Bondage and My Freedom; The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (New York: Library of America, 1994), passim. For an excellent interpretation of Douglass's use of whipping episodes as rhetorical and literary devices within his autobiographies, see William Andrew, *To Tell a Free Story: The First Century of Afro-American Autobiography, 1760–1865* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1986), 132–35. For corroboration of Douglass's harsh rendition of the violence visited upon slaves, see Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon, 1974; reprint, New York: Vintage, 1976), 63–67, 124–25; John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews, and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1977), passim; McFeely, *Frederick Douglass*, 17.
6. Goldstein, "Violence as an Instrument for Social Change," 63–64; Douglass, *Autobiographies*, 64–65, 282–84; Takaki, "Not Afraid to Die," 22–23.
7. Douglass, *Autobiographies*, 64–65, 282–84, 331–34.
8. On the increased penchant among black and white abolitionists, particularly Garrisonians, for "direct action" tactics, see Pease and Pease, *They Who Would Be Free*, 164–70; Carleton Mabee, *Black Freedom: The Nonviolent Abolitionists from 1830 Through the Civil War* (New York: Macmillan, 1970), 91–93. For a largely negative view of interracial cooperation among abolitionists in employing direct action methods, see

Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790–1860* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1961), 214–46; Friedman, *Gregarious Saints,* 160–86.

9. John W. Blassingame and John R. McKivigan, eds., *The Frederick Douglass Papers,* ser. 1: Speeches, Debates and Interviews, 5 vols. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1979–1992), vol. 2:10n.; Douglass, *Autobiographies,* 669.
10. Mabee, *Black Freedom,* 98.
11. Douglass, *Autobiographies,* 675; McFeely, *Frederick Douglass,* 110.
12. *Frederick Douglass' Paper,* Oct. 13, 1854.
13. Douglass to Richard Hinton, Jan. 17, 1893, Richard J. Hinton Collection, Kansas Historical Society.
14. Goldstein, "Violence as an Instrument for Social Change," 62–63. For samples of Douglass's early condemnation of the federal government and his preference for moral suasion over other means, see *Frederick Douglass Papers,* ser. 1, vol. 1:6, 14–15. For Garrison's standard, nonresistant critique of governments, see Aileen S. Kraditor, *Means and Ends in American Abolitionism: Garrison and His Critics on Strategy and Tactics, 1834–1850* (New York: Pantheon, 1969), 87–91, 118–36. The single occasion, prior to 1845, on which Douglass publicly addressed the issue of violent resistance was the Buffalo Negro Convention of 1843. In responding to Henry Highland Garnet's famous call ("Let your motto be RESISTANCE! RESISTANCE! RESISTANCE!"), Douglass appealed to the delegates to "try moral means a little longer." This strongly suggests that Douglass's opposition to violent resistance was based more upon strategic considerations than upon moral grounds. One month after this lukewarm defense of moral suasion at Buffalo, Douglass was swinging his club at the Pendleton, Indiana, mob. See Goldstein, "Violence as an Instrument," 65; Joel Schor, *Henry Highland Garnet: A Voice of Black Radicalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1977), 49–56.
15. Douglass to Sidney Howard Gay, May 18, 1847, in *The Mind of the Negro as Reflected in Letters Written during the Crisis, 1800–1860,* ed. Carter G. Woodson (1926; reprint, New York: Negro Univ. Press, 1969), 467–70.
16. McFeely, *Frederick Douglass,* 148.
17. Walter M. Merrill and Louis Ruchames, eds., *The Letters of William Lloyd Garrison* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1973), 3:506.

18. Ibid.
19. McFeely, *Frederick Douglass,* 149.
20. On Douglass's reliance upon lecturing as a means of keeping the *North Star* afloat, see Foner, *Frederick Douglass,* 86–89. For the effect of the *North Star* upon Douglass's personal and professional identities, see McFeely, *Frederick Douglass,* 149–50; Foner, *Frederick Douglass,* 93–100.
21. *North Star,* June 15, 1849; *Frederick Douglass Papers,* ser. 1, vol. 2:202n. A slightly different version of this incident appeared in the *Liberator,* June 8, 1849, quoted in Mabee, *Black Freedom,* 96. In the latter version, Douglass stated that he withdrew without a struggle because he "had but one coat and did not care to have it torn." Besides, he felt he "had borne a sufficient testimony against their unrighteous treatment."
22. *North Star,* May 30, 1850; Mabee, *Black Freedom,* 94–95.
23. On Douglass's selection of Rochester as his new home, see McFeely, *Frederick Douglass,* 146–51. On the operations of the "Underground" Railroad in Rochester, see Eugene E. DuBois, *The City of Frederick Douglass: Rochester's African-American People and Places* (Rochester: The Landmark Society of Western New York, 1994), 12–13. On the extent of Douglass's involvement in the "Underground" Railroad, see Foner, *Frederick Douglass,* 130–35.
24. Douglass, *Autobiographies,* 710.
25. Ibid., 710–11; Foner, *Frederick Douglass,* 130.
26. Pease and Pease, *They Who Would Be Free,* 225–26. For a detailed description of the Christiana Affair and its aftermath, see Thomas P. Slaughter, *Bloody Dawn: The Christiana Riot and Racial Violence in the Antebellum North* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1991).
27. Douglass, *Autobiographies,* 725–26.
28. William H. Siebert, *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom* (1898; reprint, New York: Russell and Russell, 1967), 318–20; Benjamin Quarles, *Black Abolitionists* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1969), 200–211; Mabee, *Black Freedom,* 307–8; Jayme A. Sokolow, "The Jerry McHenry Rescue and the Growth of Northern Antislavery Sentiment during the 1850s," *Journal of American Studies* 16 (Dec. 1982): 427–45.
29. Douglass, *Autobiographies,* 723.
30. Douglass continued to view Samuel Ward's flight and expatriation to be, for the most part, indefensible. In 1855, he publicly exhorted Ward and other exiles to return to the United States and carry on the good

fight. "We know, by experience," he gently chided, "that it is very pleasant to be where one can inhale a pure atmosphere, and lift up the voice against oppression . . . upon the gratulations of the sympathising multitude, but any one can perform an agreeable duty. Come home . . . and help us perform the 'disagreeable duty.' . . . Yes! come home, brethren . . . there never was a time when your services were more in requisition than now." For the direct quote, see Philip S. Foner, ed., *The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass* (New York: International Publishers, 1950–75), 2:359–62. Ten years before he wrote this appeal, Douglass was himself a fugitive slave in a foreign country, extremely reluctant to return to the United States so long as there existed a chance that he would be recaptured and returned to his master. Considering this fact, his public call for Ward to return without benefit of manumission papers, seems more than a little insensitive. On Douglass's own reluctance to return to the U.S. without having secured his personal freedom, see McFeely, *Frederick Douglass,* 137–38, 143–44.

31. Pease and Pease, *They Who Would Be Free,* 227; Douglass, *Autobiographies,* 723. Douglass of course became a great believer in the efficacy, not to mention the moral justification, of violent resistance to the Fugitive Slave Law. He was fond of quoting the following passage from Lord Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage:*

    Hereditary Bondsmen! know ye not
    Who would be free themselves must strike the blow?
    By their right arms the conquest must be wrought?
    Will Gaul or Muscovite redress ye? No!

    See *Frederick Douglass Papers,* ser. 1, vol. 2:89, vol. 3:202, 431, 566.

32. Stephen B. Oates, *To Purge This Land with Blood: A Biography of John Brown* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 224–25; Douglass, *Autobiographies,* 718–19. Most Douglass scholars in living memory have chipped away at the notion that Brown exercised any real influence upon Douglass's thoughts regarding violence. Leslie Goldstein suggests that the core of Douglass's beliefs concerning antislavery violence were already firmly in place by the time he met Brown. David Blight, in his fine study of Douglass and the Civil War, is content to repeat Goldstein's interpretation. Waldo Martin concerns himself solely with Douglass's canonization of Brown long after the latter's death, neglecting important, antebellum connections. William McFeely acknowledges Douglass's characterization, throughout the 1850s, of slavery as an "act of war," but fails to associate it with Brown's initial meeting with Douglass. Goldstein, "Violence as an Instrument for Social Change," 61–62; David W. Blight, *Frederick Douglass' Civil War: Keeping Faith in Jubilee* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1989), 95–96; Martin, *Mind of Frederick Douglass,* 267–69; McFeely, *Frederick Douglass,* 187, 192. Many of the arguments advanced by Brown at his 1847 meeting with Douglass (e.g., that slavery was a "state of war," that "the practice of carrying arms would be a good one for the colored people to adopt," etc.) clearly did not originate with Brown. For example, on the early applications of the "state-of-war" thesis, see Merton L. Dillon, *Slavery Attacked: Southern Slaves and Their Allies, 1619–1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1990), 229–30. There is a great deal of evidence that Brown's own thinking on these matters was shaped largely by African American sources. See Richard O. Boyer, *The Legend of John Brown: A Biography and a History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973), 78, 242–43, 311–15, 345–46; Oates, *To Purge This Land,* 39–42, 58–61. It is likely that Douglass had long been familiar with at least some of the arguments advanced by Brown in 1847. If we are to take Douglass at his word, however, it is equally clear that he was not persuaded by any such arguments until Brown entered the picture. The interpretations of the aforementioned scholars are, simply put, wholly based upon a hostile or, at the very least, skeptical reading of Douglass's memoirs, letters, and speeches, wherein he repeatedly claimed that Brown had exerted a tremendous influence upon his own thinking. See *Frederick Douglass Papers,* ser. 1, vol. 5:7–35; Frederick Douglass Papers, Library of Congress, Speech File, reel 14, frames 228–354.

33. Oates, *To Purge This Land,* 74–75; Benjamin Quarles, *Allies for Freedom: Blacks and John Brown* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1974), 25–27. For another example of Brown's use of shame/guilt in motivating African Americans to resist slaveholders and slavehunters, see Oates's discussion of the tract "Sambo's Mistakes," in *To Purge This Land,* 59–60. As with the "state-of-war" thesis, the attempt to motivate black men by shaming them was part of black reform culture long before Brown utilized it. See Schorr, *Henry Highland Garnet,* 37–38; Again, while it is likely that Douglass was familiar with the use of

shame/guilt well before he met Brown, the fact remains that he abstained from its use until he had become "tinged by the color of [Brown's] impressions." One might suggest that broader social and political events, such as enactment of the hated Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, influenced Douglass far more powerfully than did the eccentric Brown. For examples of this interpretation, see John Demos, "The Antislavery Movement and the Problem of Violent 'Means,'" *New England Quarterly* 37 (Dec. 1964): 501–26; Goldstein, "Violence as an Instrument for Social Change," 68–70. To reiterate, such criticisms place those who offer them in the unenviable position of denigrating Douglass's own feelings on the matter. One might additionally hypothesize that Gerrit Smith and the circle of abolitionists in western New York, with whom Douglass became intimately connected during the early 1850s, exercised more influence on Douglass than did Brown. Any such claim, however, "is hard to determine," since the evidence that would seem to support it is largely "circumstantial." John R. McKivigan, "The Frederick Douglass–Gerrit Smith Friendship and Political Abolitionism in the 1850s," in *Frederick Douglass: New Literary and Historical Essays*, ed. Eric J. Sundquist (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1990), 222–23.

34. *Frederick Douglass Papers*, ser. 1, vol. 2:xxix–xxx, 280–81; Goldstein, "Violence as an Instrument for Social Change," 69–70; *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, Sept. 25, 1851.

35. Douglass, "Is it Right and Wise to Kill a Kidnapper?" *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, June 2, 1854; Douglass, "Peaceful Annihilation of Slavery is Hopeless," in *Life and Writings*, 2:406. For an opposite view, that Douglass opposed slave rebellions, see Stanley Harrold, *The Abolitionists and the South, 1831–1861* (Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 1995), 53–54. Harrold aptly points out that Douglass occasionally expressed reservations over slave insurrection on strategic grounds, since (quoting a May 1857 speech) it was "certain to result in the extermination of the colored race." Douglass's infrequent warnings in this area must somehow be reconciled with the far more frequent statements wherein he anticipated, hoped for, and welcomed violent slave resistance. In the same month, for example, in which he expressed the above-mentioned reservation, he made the following statement: "The world is full of violence and fraud, and it would be strange if the slave, the constant victim of both fraud and violence, should escape the contagion. He, too, may learn to fight the devil with fire, and for one, I am in no frame of mind to pray that this may be long deferred." It might be argued that Douglass was referring only to resistance on an individual, rather than organized basis. This seems unlikely considering the tone, context, and frequency of his numerous comments in support of black violent resistance. *Frederick Douglass Papers*, ser. 1, vol. 3:162, 170.

36. On Douglass's opposition to the death penalty, see McFeely, *Frederick Douglass*, 189; Foner, *Frederick Douglass*, 101–3; *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, Oct. 15, 1858. One might argue that Douglass did not mean literally to sanction the execution of slave masters. If this is the case, it must be noted that not once did he ever condemn the act, either in theory or in its direct application (e.g., the Nat Turner rebellion). By contrast, he repeatedly condemned state executions of criminals.

37. Douglass, "Our Plan for Making Kansas a Free State," *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, Sept. 15, 1854. The noted emphasis was Douglass's.

38. *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, Sept. 15, 1854; Samuel L. Adair to Simeon S. Jocelyn, Sept. 19, 1854, quoted in Gunja SenGupta, *For God and Mammon: Evangelicals and Entrepreneurs, Masters and Slaves in Territorial Kansas, 1854–1860* (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1996), 64. The two classic studies of racism among Free Soilers in Kansas are Eugene H. Berwanger, *The Frontier Against Slavery: Western Anti-Negro Prejudice and the Slavery Extension Controversy* (Urbana, Ill.: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1967), and V. Jacque Voegeli, *Free But Not Equal: The Midwest and the Negro During the Civil War* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1967). See also, Bill Cecil-Fronsman, "'Advocate the Freedom of White Men, As Well As That of Negroes': The *Kansas Free State* and Antislavery Westerners in Territorial Kansas," *Kansas History* 20 (1997): 102–15.

39. D. R. Anthony to "Sister Susan," Sept. 10, 1858, quoted in SenGupta, *For God and Mammon*, 93.

40. Douglass to Gerrit Smith, Mar. 22, 1856, Gerrit Smith Papers, Syracuse Univ. Smith's personal involvement in the Kansas struggle apparently did not last long. Though his financial contributions to the Free State movement there have been estimated to have totaled sixteen thousand dollars, they suddenly dried up in late May of 1856. Whether this decision was somehow related to Brown's activities or was due, as Smith claimed, to purely financial reasons, is difficult to determine. For a brief discussion on Smith's role in the Kansas struggle, see Jeffery Rossbach, *Ambivalent Conspirators: John Brown,*

the Secret Six, and a Theory of Slave Violence (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 95–101.

41. *Frederick Douglass' Paper,* May 30, 1856, June 27, 1856, Oct. 15, 1858. For the details of Rees P. Brown's death and the Pottawatomie Massacre, see Oates, *To Purge This Land,* 114, 132–37.

42. Douglass, *Autobiographies,* 744. In arguing their respective cases in 1971, Philip Foner and Willie Lee Rose both believed the following questions were fundamental in measuring Douglass's attitudes on antislavery violence: was Douglass aware, prior to the Harpers Ferry raid, of Brown's actions on the Pottawatomie Creek? If so, did he approve of them? As Douglass's editorial implies, the answer to the first question is clearly negative. The same passage, however, renders the question moot, since Douglass also makes it clear that he would have assented to Brown's actions in any case. Indeed, writing long after the fact, Douglass was still unwilling to condemn without qualification Brown's brutal and summary executions of five men deemed "proslavery," a claim later shown to be questionable. On the face of it, these passages appear to support Foner's claim that Douglass had no personal aversions toward even the most blood-curdling acts of violence when exercised in the name of fighting slavery. I would suggest that it only proves how wide for Douglass the gap had become between rhetorical violence and (to quote Rose) "real violence." One wonders what Foner's Douglass would have done had he been invited by Brown to accompany him on the Pottawatomie raid, as he was asked by Brown three years later at Harpers Ferry. Unlike the latter endeavor, the former presented Douglass with more than a reasonable chance of success and/or survival. The *New York Review of Books,* Dec. 3, 1970, Jan. 11, 1971. There remains to the present day some dispute over whether the victims of the Pottawatomie raid were sufficiently proslavery as to justify their murders. The evidence is somewhat ambiguous. Most of the victims' proslavery credentials derived from having sat as jurors in the district court of Judge Sterling G. Cato, a staunch proslavery jurist who made it known that he intended to enforce the proslavery laws passed by the bogus state legislature. It is clear that two of the five victims, William Sherman and Allen Wilkinson, were committed and outspoken in their defense of slavery. More troublesome to those seeking to defend Brown's actions, however, has been the case of James P. Doyle and his sons, Drury and William. Having left Tennessee because they considered slavery to have "degraded white labor" there, the Doyles were initially neutral in the Kansas struggle. Though they eventually identified with the proslavery forces, it is apparent that they did so not because they felt any affinity for slavery but because they loathed abolitionism. If one were to identify proslavery forces solely by this definition, then a great portion of the northern public at the time could be said to have been proslavery. When Brown was sitting in jail three years later, awaiting execution after the failed raid on Harpers Ferry, he received a letter from James Doyle's wife, Mahala, who flatly denied that her family had been proslavery in Kansas. For the arguments and evidence concerning this issue, see Oates, *To Purge This Land,* 119, 140–41, 344–45; Jules Abels, *Man on Fire: John Brown and the Cause of Liberty* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1971), 72–80; James C. Malin, *John Brown and the Legend of Fifty-Six* (1942; reprint, New York: Haskell House Publishers, Ltd., 1971), 310–343, 405–28. For brief mention of the eastern abolitionists' disbelief concerning Brown's direct involvement in the massacre, see Oates, *To Purge This Land,* 186; Abels, *Man on Fire,* 76–80; James M. McPherson, *Ordeal By Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), 94.

43. For the lukewarm receptions often given Brown on his fundraising tours in the East (1857–59), see Oates, *To Purge This Land,* 195–203.

44. *Frederick Douglass' Paper,* Apr. 15, 1859.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid.

48. Douglass, *Autobiographies,* 318.

49. Ibid.

50. William L. Andrews, "*My Bondage and My Freedom* and the American Literary Renaissance of the 1850s," in *Critical Essays on Frederick Douglass,* ed. William L. Andrews (Boston: G. K. Hall and Company, 1991), 134. For further discussion on the psychological aspects *of My Bondage and My Freedom,* see William L. Andrews, *To Tell a Free Story: The First Century of Afro-American Autobiography, 1760–1865* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1986), 214–39; McFeely, *Frederick Douglass,* 180–82.

51. Oates, *To Purge This Land,* 224–28; Douglass, *Autobiographies,* 755–57.

52. Douglass to unknown, *Syracuse Journal,* May 30, 1881.

53. Douglass, *Autobiographies,* 657–761; McFeely, *Frederick Douglass,* 195–97.

54. Douglass to Editor of *Rochester Democrat and American*, Oct. 31, 1859, reprinted in the *New York Times*, Nov. 3, 1859.
55. Douglass, *Autobiographies*, 760.
56. *Weekly Anglo-African*, Oct. 29, 1859; *New York Times*, Nov. 8, 1859, cited in Benjamin Quarles, *Allies for Freedom*, 114. It should be noted that there is no record of an African American critic who plainly stated that Douglass "ought to have gone with Brown" on the Harpers Ferry raid. Published criticisms were more subtle than Douglass presented them to have been in his autobiography. In addition, they focused less upon Douglass's refusal to participate in the raid than upon his perceived "flight" from the authorities. Douglass defended his "sudden" departure by pointing out that he had planned, several months before the raid, to embark upon a lecture tour in Britain. He was now simply fulfilling speaking obligations. He also pointed out that no good would come from allowing himself to be "bagged" by Henry A. Wise, governor of "the thing calling itself the Government of Virginia." Douglass to Editor of *Rochester Democrat*, Nov. 3, 1859.
57. Foner, *Frederick Douglass*, 178; Douglass to Franklin B. Sanborn, Apr. 15, 1885, Princeton Univ. Library.
58. For a detailed description of the Tremont Temple Riot, see *Frederick Douglass Papers*, ser. 1, vol. 3:387–412; McFeely, *Frederick Douglass*, 208–11.
59. *Frederick Douglass Papers*, ser. 1, vol. 3:419.
60. McFeely, *Frederick Douglass*, 217–18. For Douglass's use of shame as a wartime recruitment technique, see James McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War* (New York: Vintage, 1965), 177. For a brief but informative discussion on the enlistment of older men in the Union army, see Bell I. Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1952; reprint, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1994), 302–3.
61. For the federal government's policy toward and treatment of black officers, see Joseph T. Glattharr, *Forged in Battle: The Civil War Alliance of Black Soldiers and White Officers* (New York: Free Press, 1990), 36, 176–82, 279–80. As it turned out, the War Department gave Douglass the impression in 1863 that he was to receive a commission, but the offer was never officially extended to him. This obvious slight undoubtedly would have reinforced any doubts he may have had about enlisting. Blight suggests that Douglass's home life, which suddenly grew complex during the war, might have played a large role in his decision not to enlist. Blight, *Frederick Douglass' Civil War*, 169–71.
62. For a description of J. Sella Martin's activities during the war, see R. J. M. Blackett, *Beating Against the Barriers: Biographical Essays in Nineteenth-Century Afro-American History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1986), 202–33. On the Hamiltons, see Penelope L. Bullock, *The Afro-American Press, 1838–1909* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1981), 55–63.
63. Rose, "Killing for Freedom" and "An Exchange on John Brown."