

# Black Moves

## *Moments in the History of African-American Masculine Mobilities*

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### **Abstract**

This article explores the mutual constitution of blackness and mobility in the context of the United States. Using insights gained from the interdisciplinary field of mobility studies, it argues that mobilities have played a key role in the definition of blackness (particularly black masculinity) at the same time as blackness has been mapped onto particular forms of mobility. The article is constructed through a series of suggestive vignettes moving backward through time that illustrate continuities in the way forms of movement, narratives of mobility, and mobile practices have intersected with representations of African-American male bodies. Examples include end-zone celebrations in American football, stop and frisk procedures in New York City, the medical pathologization of runaway slaves, and the Middle Passage of the slave trade.

### **Keywords**

African Americans, blackness, embodied mobilities, Middle Passage, mobilities, race, United States

This article builds on previous work on the politics of mobility within the broad remit of mobility studies to ask how such an approach might illuminate the history of black geographies in the United States.<sup>1</sup> As befits a mobilities approach the article uses empirical accounts ranging in scale from the body to the international, considers mobility as an amalgam of forms of physical movement, the meanings attached to those movements, and movements as experienced and embodied forms of practice. All of these facets of mobility—movement, meaning, and practice—are considered as produced by and productive of power.<sup>2</sup> In each case the point is to illustrate contested facets of mobility in relation to the construction of blackness in a U.S. context both historically and in the present day.

The article proceeds by layering vignettes of black mobilities. While each refers to events that merit their own articles, the point is to make connections between seemingly disparate worlds. The vignettes all refer to important



events. I do not claim, however, that they are the most important or representative of such episodes. Rather I use them to provide an impressionistic narrative of compelled or constrained black mobilities in the history of the United States. They also cover a diverse array of arenas in which mobility is practiced, acted on, and represented. One of the key achievements of mobilities research has been to connect across domains of mobility that have most often been kept separate due to disciplinary and subdisciplinary convention. Holding the fact of movement as the central problematic of our explorations means that it becomes possible to talk about sport, dance, and urban policing in holistic ways.

“Race” is a central part of this account. I am using “race” here as a social construct. There is no simple way to assign race following clear biologically based guidelines. There are no such things as (essential) races. Race refers to the way the world has been divided up according to skin color (and associated biological “facts” such as intelligence or genotype) in geographically and historically specific fashions. Race has also been elided with ethnicity. The terms “ethnic” and “ethnicity” were originally mobilized for progressive and antiracist purposes in the United States but, over time, came to be associated with a conservative view of a postracial society where it was not “race” but “culture” that mattered.<sup>3</sup> Older versions of racial difference were simply mapped on to ethnic or cultural difference without any challenge to the underlying hierarchies or structures of representation. “Race”, in this article, does not refer to a biological category or to any notion of ethnicity. Instead it refers to the reality of race as an active component of the lived experience of people in the United States. As a social construct, race, like gender, class or sexuality has real impacts on those who are labeled and it is necessarily lived on a daily basis. It is also the case that many people, especially black people, have chosen to define themselves racially in ways that are empowering.<sup>4</sup>

While [race] is a dynamic phenomena rooted in political struggle, it is commonly observed as a fixed characteristic of human populations; while it does not exist in terms of human biology, people routinely look to the human body for evidence about racial identity; while it is a biological fiction, it is nonetheless a social fact.<sup>5</sup>

A premise of what follows in this article is that mobility has been central to this construction of black identities in the United States as a “social fact.” Race takes on a particular topography in the United States thanks to the way it has been constructed through a very particular history in which notions of white, black, and Hispanic are constantly mobilized within cultural and political arenas in both negative and affirmative ways. While “Hispanic” can act as a category that is considered “not white,” many Hispanics identify as white. “Black” people have been most frequently framed within a history of African Americans dominated by slavery, but this has become complicated by the

large number of black people who have arrived more recently and are not obviously connected to the history of the slave trade.<sup>6</sup> These histories give race a different set of baggage than it has elsewhere.

My focus here is on elements of the history of black mobilities. African people arrived in the New World as a result of forced mobility. Once there they were prevented from moving and denied the rights to mobility granted to citizens. The struggle for civil rights often centered on issues of mobility from bus boycotts to the use of busing to desegregate schools. Narratives of freedom included the Underground Railroad and the “Great Migration” north to cities such as Chicago.<sup>7</sup> More recently, issues of race and mobility came to a head during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina when black residents of New Orleans were first trapped and then forcibly dispersed.<sup>8</sup> All kinds of mobilities have been mapped onto black bodies in both negative and affirmative ways. Black people, we are told, exhibit “natural rhythm,” are “naturally” musical, cannot swim, and are congenitally lazy.<sup>9</sup> Mobility in the United States is marked by race at scales from the body to the country and beyond. Simultaneously, race is marked by mobilities.

For the most part, this article focuses on the mobilities of black men. Intersectionality makes it necessary to think of race, or any other socially constructed social grouping, as working in combination with other social groupings. Race does its work entangled with gender, class, sexuality, and the other familiar social variables.<sup>10</sup> Forms of bodily mobility have been central to the construction of black masculinity in both affirmative and negative ways. Black male entertainers and sportsmen in particular have been labeled as hypermasculine, excessively sexual, and “naturally” athletic.<sup>11</sup> Sometimes these images reflect a degree of admiration (particularly in sports) but more often they undergird a sense of prevailing fear among white onlookers. These ideas, or reconfigured versions of them, reoccur in the cases that follow.

The vignettes of black moves that are presented here are not presented as excavations of race and mobility for their own sake. This is not an exercise in historicism. Rather they are presented in the spirit of Walter Benjamin’s thesis on history as histories collapsed into each other—histories where events are not just freestanding examples of events that once happened but moments folded into each other that continually erupt into the present.<sup>12</sup> I focus on largely negative accounts of black mobilities in the U.S. context. This is not to deny more positive aspects of black mobility cultures as performative forms of self-affirmation in a fluid and often hybrid world.<sup>13</sup> Black mobilities clearly have a fluid and often contradictory set of meanings that can simultaneously be read as restrained, compelled, and submissive on the one hand, or excessive, free, and resistant on the other. The account that follows is meant to be read alongside other accounts of black mobilities, including those that find more room for celebration. The remainder of this article proceeds backward. It starts in recent times and moves ever deeper into history in order to reveal

something of the continuities and eruptions that link present events to those in the past.

### ***Floyd v. City of New York***

In 2013 an investigation by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) revealed that the New York Police Department (NYPD) has conducted more than four million stop-and-search procedures since 2002. Nine out of ten of those who were stopped were completely innocent. Around 54 percent of those stopped were black (another 31 percent were Latino). These figures were remarkably consistent over the period 2003–2014, with the proportion of those stopped being black ranging between 53 percent and 56 percent in any given year. These figures are clearly out of sync with the general demographics of New York City. In 2011, for instance, “While black and Latino males between the ages of 14 and 24 account for only 4.7% of the city’s population, they accounted for 41.6% of those stopped.” If we limit the data to just young black men (fourteen to twenty-four) then 1.9 percent of the city’s population accounted for 25.6 percent of stops: “Remarkably, the number of stops of young black men actually exceeded the total number of young black men in the city (168,126 as compared to 158,406).”<sup>14</sup>

These facts became public knowledge thanks to *Floyd v. City of New York*, a court case in which black and Latino citizens accused the NYPD of acting illegally in their stop-and-frisk procedures. Their case rested on the claims that there was no legal basis for their being stopped and that they were targeted based on racial profiling in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment. The plaintiffs argued that stop-and-frisk procedures should include “reasonable suspicion” and should be enacted without regard to race. Judge Shira Scheindlin found in favor of the plaintiffs noting that the act of being stopped while going about everyday activities was a significant infringement on personal liberty.

While it is true that any one stop is a limited intrusion in duration and deprivation of liberty, each stop is also a demeaning and humiliating experience. No one should live in fear of being stopped whenever he leaves his home to go about the activities of daily life. Those who are routinely subjected to stops are overwhelmingly people of color, and they are justifiably troubled to be singled out when many of them have done nothing to attract the unwanted attention. Some plaintiffs testified that stops make them feel unwelcome in some parts of the City, and distrustful of the police.<sup>15</sup>

The judge was highly critical of the kinds of reasons given on the official police forms that were used when stops were made. One of these reasons was “furtive movements.” In 42 percent of the forms this was the only box that had been checked. “Furtive movements,” in the view of the judge, could not be reasonable grounds for suspicion.

One example of poor training is particularly telling. Two officers testified to their understanding of the term “furtive movements.” One explained that “furtive movement is a very broad concept,” and could include a person “changing direction,” “walking in a certain way,” “[a]cting a little suspicious,” “making a movement that is not regular,” being “very fidgety,” “going in and out of his pocket,” “going in and out of a location,” “looking back and forth constantly,” “looking over their shoulder,” “adjusting their hip or their belt,” “moving in and out of a car too quickly,” “[t]urning a part of their body away from you,” “[g]rabbing at a certain pocket or something at their waist,” “getting a little nervous, maybe shaking,” and “stutter[ing].” Another officer explained that “usually” a furtive movement is someone “hanging out in front of [a] building, sitting on the benches or something like that,” and then making a “quick movement,” such as “bending down and quickly standing back up,” “going inside the lobby ... and then quickly coming back out,” or “all of a sudden becom[ing] very nervous, very aware.” If officers believe that the behavior described above constitutes furtive movement that justifies a stop, then it is no surprise that stops so rarely produce evidence of criminal activity.<sup>16</sup>

The judge found that the NYPD had enacted a form of racial profiling that had resulted in disproportionate stopping and frisking of black and Latino citizens.

*Floyd v. City of New York* draws our attention to several aspects of the politics of black mobility. Most obviously the case is about the application of differential amounts of friction.<sup>17</sup> Black people—particularly young black men—are prevented from moving far more often than anyone else. As Judge Scheindlin indicated in her judgments—this is far more than an inconvenience, it is humiliating and demeaning. Second, and less obviously, this is an account of particular ways in which black people (again—particularly young black men) move. Here various seemingly innocuous forms of bodily movement are coded as “furtive.” While many of the descriptions of furtive movements (which were often the only reason for being stopped) were clearly ridiculous, it does seem likely that anyone’s movements might become furtive if being stopped and frisked was part of their everyday experience.<sup>18</sup> Across the United States black boys learn to run away from the police at an early age.<sup>19</sup>

## Excessive Celebrations

Rule 12, Section 3, Article 1 of the National Football League (NFL) rules concerns “unsportsmanlike” player conduct. The section on “taunting” reads:

### TAUNTING

(c) The use of baiting or taunting acts or words that engender ill will between teams.

(d) Individual players involved in prolonged or excessive celebrations. Players are prohibited from engaging in any celebrations while on the ground. A

celebration shall be deemed excessive or prolonged if a player continues to celebrate after a warning from an official.

(e) Two-or-more players engage in prolonged, excessive, premeditated, or choreographed celebrations.

(f) Possession or use of foreign or extraneous object(s) that are not part of the uniform during the game on the field or the sideline, or using the ball as a prop.

This set of rules, which led some to suggest that NFL stood for “no fun league,” are a response to a decades-old practice of touchdown celebrations introduced by and, for the most part, conducted by, black football players. In 1969, the black University of Houston wide receiver, Elmo Wright, engaged in an unusual high-stepping routine as he entered the end zone to score a touchdown. He would later export this routine to the National Football League when he played with the Kansas City Chiefs and thus the touchdown celebration was born. For a while such celebrations were left intact but by the mid-1970s the NFL had engaged in a long-standing struggle to police and penalize touchdown celebrations. Since the 1970s players have been inventing various ways of celebrating the fact that they have just scored a touchdown. Some of these involve physical gestures and forms of dance. The NFL has spent a disproportionate amount of effort deciding on which of these celebrations should be banned. If a player is involved in a banned celebration, the opposing team is awarded a fifteen-yard penalty at the resumption of play. In some cases players have been fined.

Almost without exception these end-zone celebrations have been invented and enacted by black football players (who constitute around 70 percent of professional football players). The vast majority of those who have sought to ban these celebrations (coaches and NFL officials) are white. This led one commentator to suggest that white head coaches and others were threatened by forms of black behavior that they seemed powerless to control: “How else to assess the ‘illegal celebration’ penalty of the 1980s except as the illegal use of black culture?”<sup>20</sup>

Various commentators have described the embodied mobilities of black athletes in terms that verge on essentialist. We do not have to resort to essentialist versions of black mobilities, however, to recognize historically specific circuits of black body culture originating in Africa and transformed in the process of transatlantic migration and circulation.

Sudden turns, swift changes of pace, the jazz practice of improvisation within set patterns, opening up pathways for self expression to make any game “swing”—all these aesthetic elements were present in the *open-field running style* of African American running backs and wide receivers as they began to dominate college and pro football offenses after the civil rights movement helped end gridiron segregation.<sup>21</sup>

Observations such as this led Joel Dinerstein to argue that “for better or worse, the most admired and imitated *human body-in-motion* in global popular culture is the African American male body (in sports, music and dance)—yet few cultural critics find such a social fact worthy of analysis.”<sup>22</sup> Touchdown dances, he argued, threatened traditional versions of white masculinity with what appeared to be excessive emotion, feminized bodily movements, and a degree of self-expression that appeared to work against regimented versions of teamwork that American football had been built on.

Again, for African American athletes, music, dance, self-expression, dynamic physical gesture, and signature athletic style exist on a cultural continuum, not as separate realms of performance. It would still be unusual to see a Euro-American football player, after scoring a touchdown, spin the ball away slowly on the ground then wiggle his ass to celebrate his achievement, then hipshake his lower torso right and then left while walking away—and, often enough, have some of his teammates join him in the dance.<sup>23</sup>

This is contrasted with the military-industrial emphasis on hierarchy and regimentation developed by the “father” of American football, Walter Camp, in his insistence on team discipline and highly organized patterns of play: “as Camp influenced the evolving structure of the game, athletes came to be viewed merely as cogs in an organized human machine, doing what industrial manager Camp liked to call the ‘work’ of football.”<sup>24</sup> The labeling of particular bodily gestures as “unsportsmanlike” by the NFL is mobilized against black bodies. Herbert Simons has put it succinctly.

These behaviors are a reflection of urban African American male cultural norms, which conflict with white male mainstream norms. The penalties are an example of institutionalized racism and white mainstream males’ assertion of their right to interpret and control African American behavior.<sup>25</sup>

Exactly the same might be said of the stop-and-frisk procedures of the NYPD in twenty-first century New York.

## Drapetomania

In 1851 the physician, Samuel A. Cartwright, came up with a new diagnosis for what he considered an underconsidered disease. Drapetomania was a diagnosis applied to slaves who attempted to run away from their masters in the slave-owning states of the American south.<sup>26</sup>

DRAPETOMANIA, OR THE DISEASE CAUSING NEGROES TO RUN AWAY.

It is unknown to our medical authorities, although its diagnostic symptom, the absconding from service, is well known to our planters and overseers....

In noticing a disease not heretofore classed among the long list of maladies that man is subject to, it was necessary to have a new term to express it. The

cause in the most of cases, that induces the negro to run away from service, is as much a disease of the mind as any other species of mental alienation, and much more curable, as a general rule. With the advantages of proper medical advice, strictly followed, this troublesome practice that many negroes have of running away, can be almost entirely prevented, although the slaves be located on the borders of a free state, within a stone's throw of the abolitionists.<sup>27</sup>

Cartwright suggested that there were two causes of this as yet undiagnosed disease. One was treating “negroes” as equals. “Negroes,” he suggested, needed to be kept in a “position of submission” and provided with basic comforts and necessities of life in which case “the negro is spell bound, and cannot run away.” The other cause of the disease was cruelty and neglect: “They have only to be kept in that state and treated like children, with care, kindness, attention and humanity, to prevent and cure them from running away.”<sup>28</sup> If they insisted on running away, however, there were a number of suggested cures including whipping and having both big toes removed. Drapetomania was not the only diagnosis of black moves that Cartwright made. He also attributed their love of dancing (“he can agitate every part of the body at the same time, or what he calls *dancing all over*”) to a “profuse distribution of nervous matter to the stomach, liver and genital organs.”<sup>29</sup> We would now recognize Cartwright as a proponent of a discredited scientific racism. At the time, however, it was taken seriously and presented at a meeting of the Medical Association of Louisiana. In his talk he made particular mention of the Mason–Dixon Line suggesting that appropriately diagnosed “negroes” would not run away even when they were very close to the Mason–Dixon Line.

On Mason and Dixon's line, two classes of persons were apt to lose their negroes: those who made themselves too familiar with them, treating them as equals, and making little or no distinction in regard to color; and, on the other hand, those who treated them cruelly, denied them the common necessities of life, neglected to protect them against the abuses of others, or frightened them by a blustering manner of approach, when about to punish them for misdemeanors.<sup>30</sup>

This was at a time when approximately one thousand slaves a year were running away in order to reach the North and become (relatively) free partly as a consequence of the “Underground Railroad”—another crucial site for the history of black moves.<sup>31</sup>

## The Middle Passage

It is impossible to understand black history in the United States, or, indeed, the role of race in American society, without reference to the catastrophe of slavery. The Middle Passage is an illustration of both transnational mobility (from west Africa to the United States and other parts of the Americas) and



extreme enforced immobility. This was probably the largest movement of people in history as ten to fifteen million people were forcibly moved across the Atlantic to be sold as slaves.<sup>32</sup> Many more died along the way. The journey took between five and seven weeks. Slaves were chained together and placed shoulder to shoulder with no room to move. There were only occasional opportunities to move above deck. Many died of malnutrition and disease. Some were thrown overboard. Images of the way slaves were immobilized while moving across the Atlantic became key pieces of evidence in the history of abolition.

A number of contemporary accounts of conditions onboard ship during the middle passage exist. One of the most notable is that of Olaudah Equiano, a slave who later recorded his experiences.

The stench of the hold while we were on the coast was so intolerably loathsome, that it was dangerous to remain there for any time, and some of us had been permitted to stay on the deck for the fresh air; but now that the whole ship's cargo were confined together, it became absolutely pestilential. The closeness of the place, and the heat of the climate, added to the number in the ship, which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us. This produced copious perspirations, so that the air soon became unfit for respiration, from a variety of loathsome smells, and brought on a sickness among the slaves, of which many died, thus falling victims to the improvident avarice, as I may call it, of their purchasers. This wretched situation was again aggravated by the galling of the chains, now become insupportable; and the filth of the necessary tubs, into which the children often fell, and were almost suffocated. The shrieks of the women, and the groans of the dying, rendered the whole a scene of horror almost inconceivable.<sup>33</sup>

The statistics of the slave trade and the details of accounts of the Middle Passage combine to provide a stark portrayal on the most significant of African-American mobilities. These numbers and these details haunt all the other “black moves” considered here. The slave trade produced particular forms of consciousness. Paul Gilroy has famously written of the “Black Atlantic” as a mobile site of hybridity where “double consciousness” emerged.<sup>34</sup> He manages to turn the most oppressive of mobilities into a celebration of nomadic cross-cultural circulation, which “lend a false idea of choice to forced migration.”<sup>35</sup> There is certainly value in rescuing a sense of agency and celebration from even the most catastrophic of histories and it is certainly the case that various forms of transatlantic resistance have emerged from otherwise horrific mobilities.<sup>36</sup> Olaudah Equiano, for instance, was able to use his mobile life as a slave and as a free man sailing the world in his account.

Pleasure has also been a product of the interlacing of black mobilities connecting the transatlantic mobilities of slavery to the bodily mobilities of music and dance that have traveled across far wider global circuits. It is possible, as Ananya Kabir has done, to “excavate a history that connects the ship, the jet

engine, and the beats of the drum.”<sup>37</sup> Kabir historicizes Afro-diasporic rhythm cultures through the various routes and sites that trace “the traffic between trauma and pleasure.”<sup>38</sup> Indeed, there has been a long-standing effort to recover positive mobilities from the catastrophic mobilities of slavery. African rhythms have been one of the sites that scholars have looked toward in order to enact this recovery in explorations of the Americas at large, and particularly the Caribbean.<sup>39</sup> The syncopation and polyrhythms of music and dance rooted in Africa and transformed in the process of transatlantic travel became the basis for Gilroy’s configuration of the black Atlantic.<sup>40</sup> But then there is this other history of black moves as an iterative catastrophe enacted over and over in sites ranging from the football field to the streets of New York City. Black moves have been sites of pleasure and resistance but have, at the same time, been sites constitutive of repeated oppression and negation.

## Conclusion

Black mobilities in the context of the United States need to be interpreted contextually. To paraphrase Henri Lefebvre, (social) mobilities are a (social) product. Race and mobility are socially produced in a constantly iterative and circular manner. Each is implicated in the constitution of the other. These mobilities are made up of physical movements (touchdown dances, running away from plantations, etc.), narratives of mobility (“natural” rhythm, “furtive” movements, etc.), and mobile practices. Each iteration of black moves related here carries the ghost of the Middle Passage within it. Each of the instances of black moves I have introduced here could have been developed more fully to provide a properly contextual account of each in turn. Each merits a full paper. My use of layered vignettes is designed to point toward continuities and repetitions through time and indicate the pervasiveness of the interlinking of race and mobility. Other important work has been doing this too. Simone Brown’s recent work on the links between constructions of race and forms of surveillance shows, for instance, how contemporary forms of racial surveillance including biometrics are prefigured by earlier episodes in black history.

If we are to take transatlantic slavery as the antecedent of contemporary surveillance technologies and practices as they concern inventories of ships’ cargo and the making of “scaled inequalities” in the Brookes slave ship schematic, ... biometric identification by branding the body with hot irons, ... slave markets and auction blocks as exercises of synoptic power where the many watched the few, slave passes and patrols, black codes and fugitive slave notices, it is to the archives, slave narratives and often to black expressive practices and creative texts that we can look to for moments of refusal and critique. What I am arguing here is that with certain acts of cultural production we can find performances

of freedom and suggestions of alternatives to ways of living under a routinized surveillance that was terrifying in its effects.<sup>41</sup>

The work of Browne and others shows how the episodic history of black moves is complicated by the more positive history of black moves as intentional acts of pleasure and resistance. My account is not supposed to negate that more positive story. In New York City black people choose to move in particular ways that are sometimes designed to challenge the perceptions of the NYPD and others. Black football players clearly continue to invent new forms of self-expression through their end-zone celebrations. Even runaway slaves diagnosed with drapetomania were, indeed, running away. Practicing freedom. In each case there were also other mobilities at work—white mobilities that existed in relation to black moves labeled pathological. Whiteness has rested, in part, on the privilege of mobility. The work of definition involved in the pathologization of black masculine mobilities is also work that underlines forms of white privilege as white bodies remain (relatively) less likely to be stopped, penalized, rerouted, slowed down, or moved on. This is as true of contemporary New York City (or any other American city) as it was of the institution of slavery.

At the heart of this article has been the claim that mobility is implicated in the production of blackness (and race in general) in the United States. If race is neither biological nor a set of cultural choices then it is the process of social production that we need to examine. This process is always spatial and part of this spatiality is the form, meaning, and practice of mobility. Race is produced and reproduced through everyday life and the ways in which we move are key to that process. All the cases I have briefly touched on here combine movement, meaning, and practice in the context of power. More particularly, they all combine mobilities and immobilities in racialized ways. The Middle Passage was a paradoxical mix of extreme enforced transoceanic mobility and equally extreme enforced bodily immobility. In each subsequent mobility event, forms of immobility (or different forms of mobility) are imposed on mobile black masculine bodies. Rather than seeing some prefigured race as a superorganic cause of these contested mobilities, I would suggest that these (im)mobilities are important components of race as lived in everyday life.

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## Notes

1. Peter Adey et al., eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities* (London: Routledge, 2013). Tim Cresswell, "Towards a Politics of Mobility," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 28, no. 1 (2010): 17–31; John Urry, *Mobilities* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007); Tim Cresswell, *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World* (New York: Routledge, 2006).
2. Cresswell, *On the Move*; Cresswell, "Towards a Politics of Mobility."
3. See Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1994).
4. For accounts of debates about race, see Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006); Peter Jackson, ed., *Race and Racism: Essays in Social Geography* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1987); D. Delaney, "The Space That Race Makes," *Professional Geographer* 54, no. 1 (2002): 6–14.
5. Angela James, "Making Sense of Race and Racial Classification," *Race and Society* 4, no. 2 (2001): 235–247, here: 236.
6. Most notably, there has been considerable discussion of Barack Obama's blackness or otherwise.
7. The "Underground Railroad" refers to the complicated infrastructure by which escaped slaves could move north and gain their freedom. The "Great Migration" refers to the large-scale migration of African Americans from the South to the urban North in the first half of the twentieth century.
8. Cresswell, *On the Move*, Epilogue.
9. For discussion of some of these, see bell hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (New York: Routledge, 2014); John M. Hoberman, *Darwin's Athletes: How Sport Has Damaged Black America and Preserved the Myth of Race* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).
10. Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (July 1991): 1241–1299; G. Valentine, "Theorizing and Researching Intersectionality: A Challenge for Feminist Geography," *Professional Geographer* 59, no. 1 (2007): 10–21.
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12. Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 1986).
13. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); Joseph R. Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance, The Social Foundations of Aesthetic Forms* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).
14. All these data are from: NYCLU Stop-and-Frisk 2011, NYCLU Briefing, [http://www.nyclu.org/files/publicationsNYCLU\\_2011\\_Stop-and-Frisk\\_Report.pdf](http://www.nyclu.org/files/publicationsNYCLU_2011_Stop-and-Frisk_Report.pdf) (accessed 12 February 2015).
15. *Floyd v. City of New York*, 959 F. Supp. 2d 540 (S.D.N.Y. 2013), 6.
16. *Ibid.*, 14–15.

17. Tim Cresswell, "Friction," in *The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities*, ed. Peter Adey et al., 107–115 (London: Routledge, 2014).
18. Very similar statistics about stop-and-search procedures came to light following the U.S. Department of Justice investigation of the Ferguson Police Department. African Americans make up 67 percent of Ferguson's population and yet they account for 85 percent of traffic stops. It also became clear that the poorly specified forms of "deviant" bodily mobility have been used to stop and search African Americans well beyond New York as it became clear that a charge known as "Manner of Walking" was used disproportionately against African Americans, [http://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/opa/press-releases/attachments/2015/03/04/ferguson\\_police\\_department\\_report.pdf](http://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/opa/press-releases/attachments/2015/03/04/ferguson_police_department_report.pdf).
19. Alice Goffman, *On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City*, Fieldwork Encounters and Discoveries (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).
20. Joel Dinerstein, "Backfield in Motion: The Transformation of the NFL by Black Culture," in *In the Game: Race, Identity, and Sports in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Amy Bass (Gordansville, VA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 169–189, here: 174.
21. *Ibid.*, 170.
22. *Ibid.*, 173.
23. *Ibid.*, 183.
24. Paul Christesen, *Sport and Democracy in the Ancient and Modern Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 101.
25. Herbert D. Simons, "Race and Penalized Sports Behaviors," *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 38, no. 1 (2003): 5–22, here: 6.
26. Drapetomania is one of many diagnoses that arose out of "scientific racism." I reflect on it here due to the centrality of bodily mobility to the diagnosis.
27. Samuel A. Cartwright, "Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race," *DeBows Review* 11 (1851), n.p.
28. *Ibid.*
29. Arthur L. Caplan, James J. McCartney, and Dominic A. Sisti, *Health, Disease, and Illness: Concepts in Medicine* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2004), 29–30.
30. Cartwright, "Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race."
31. Eric Foner, *Gateway to Freedom: The Hidden History of the Underground Railroad*, 1st ed. (New York: Norton, 2014).
32. David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
33. Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, 8th ed. (Norwich: The author, 1794), 51–52.
34. Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*.
35. J. Dayan, "Paul Gilroy's Slaves, Ships, and Routes: The Middle Passage as Metaphor," *Research in African Literatures* 27, no. 4 (1996): 7–14, here: 7.
36. See also Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Buford Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: The Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000).
37. Ananya Jahanara Kabir, "Oceans, Cities, Islands: Sites and Routes of Afro-Diasporic Rhythm Cultures," *Atlantic Studies* 11, no. 1 (2014): 106–124, here: 107.
38. *Ibid.*

39. Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997); Peter Fryer, *Rhythms of Resistance: African Musical Heritage in Brazil* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2000); Sonjah Nadine Stanley-Niaah, *Dancehall: From Slave Ship to Ghetto* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2010).
40. Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*.
41. Simone Browne, "Everybody's Got a Little Light under the Sun: Black Luminosity and the Visual Culture of Surveillance," *Cultural Studies* 26, no. 4 (2012): 542–564, here: 548.