

## **Maria Stewart and the Rhetoric of Mobility**

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### **Abstract**

Formulating a black feminist rhetoric, a counter-narrative that joins rather than separates the church with politics, Maria Stewart, in the meditations and political speeches of the Productions of Mrs. Maria Stewart (1835) calls on the nation to live up to its spiritual ideals and African Americans to mobilize as a community of Christians. In her own transgression of male-dominated space, becoming the first American woman to speak before a “promiscuous” audience, she enacts the conjunction between spiritual and spatial journeying, the crossing of spatial and ideological limits of race and gender. Countering experiences of exclusion, marginality, and stasis, Stewart constructs a rhetoric of mobility that becomes practiced and that itself becomes a location of resistance.

**Key Words:** *Maria Stewart, Mobility, African American women*