

Frederick Douglass and His Strategic Use of Photography as Visual Voice

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Introduction

Frederick Douglass (1818-95) published three autobiographies throughout his public career, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself* in 1845, *My Bondage and My Freedom* in 1855, and *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* in 1881 (expanded edition, 1892). By continuing to revise and retell his life story four times, or five times if the entry of autobiographical sketch for the *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* in 1895 is included,¹ over approximately half a century, Douglass intended to eternalize his ideal self-image as “a respectable black man” in his autobiographies.² Unlike journalistic pieces such as newspaper articles or his self-published editorials, autobiography as a form of literature could survive over time. Douglass expected that his idealized image as a public figure could contribute to “the grand possibilities of a glorious future” (*Life and Times* 352) for African Americans.

At the same time, Douglass also admired photography for its “eternity” (“Lecture on Pictures” 131, “Pictures and Progress” 167). Indeed, Douglass was “the most photographed American of the nineteenth century” (Stauffer, et al., Introduction ix). Douglass fully recognized that the power of photography depended on its circulation in the public sphere, therefore photographs, like writing, needed to be published in books, newspapers, broadsides, and pamphlets in order to be disseminated (Stauffer, et al., Introduction xiii). Among prominent African American intellectuals and activists in the nineteenth century, Douglass most understood photography’s power to shape racial images and employed the new medium in his quest for social and political justice.³ Douglass championed the democratic aspect of photography:

A very pleasing feature of our pictorial relations is the very easy terms upon which all may enjoy them. The servant girl can now see a likeness of herself such as noble ladies, and even royalty itself, could not purchase an hundred years ago. Formerly the luxury of a likeness was the exclusive privilege of the rich and great; but now, like education and a thousand other blessings brought to us by the advancing march of light and civilization, such pictures are brought within the easy reach of the humblest members of society. (“Age of Pictures” 143)

Along with his autobiographies, Douglass made the most of his *visual voice*, that is, photography, as a vehicle of democracy.

It is commonly alleged that photography was a democratic medium, one that made portraits available to the millions. Yet, as Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe has pointed out “if indeed photography was a ‘democratic art,’ then it was so only to the extent that those who used the process were free to express themselves” (qtd. in Wexler, “Seeing” 178). Laura Wexler argues that slaves did not generally make their own photographs, nor did they generally have studio photographs made of themselves unless it was at the behest and with the money of their masters. A slave’s photograph could be used in countless ways to serve the discourse of the masters and that the slave’s self-expression in photography would be in the mode of subversion (Wexler, “Seeing” 178). According to John Stauffer, when they discuss African American and pictures, most critics “focus on how blacks have been objectified and how photography functions as a tool of white society. They view the black image as part of the process of exploitation. To be placed in front of the camera lens, to have one’s body represented, photographed, *taken*—symbolically, if not literally, is to render that body powerless” (“Creating” 257). However, as Stauffer, Zoe Trodd, and Celeste-Marie Bernier have carefully observed, Douglass tried to articulate his vision of the radical democracy of photography. Among the 160 distinct poses of Douglass,⁴ they encapsulated three central themes; first, Douglass almost never showed a smile, as a refutation of racist caricatures; second, he presented himself, in dress, pose, and expression, as a dignified and respectable citizen; third, his visual persona continually evolved, and in a way which undermined the foundations of slavery and racism. The photographs served thus as a kind of visual autobiography (Stauffer, et al., Introduction xxv).⁵

Also, Wexler acknowledges the nature of photography itself, the photography’s “ahistoricity” which implies its unique capacity to freeze time to emphasize a moment from a flow as well as to show its evolution. Hence, Douglass’s portrait embodies a changing sameness, or profound stasis and insistence against change over time despite the shifting nature of personal and national events (Wexler, “Frederick”). This, Wexler’s interpretation of photography, corresponds with what I also have argued, that Douglass continually sought to control his self-image in his autobiographies, which I call “eternalization of self-image.”⁶

Indeed, Frederick Douglass had been having himself photographed his whole career, from the very beginning as an abolitionist in 1841, to his death as a prominent statesman in 1895. Moreover, this process of presenting himself as a public figure in photography corresponds with the changes in his self-description in his autobiographies. This study explores how Douglass strategically utilized photography as *visual voice* in order to represent the black voice in nineteenth-century America, where most African Americans were deprived of their human, social, and political voice. This study also attempts to elucidate how all the three voices that Douglass wielded, a *physical voice*, a *readable voice*, and a *visual voice*, were in a reciprocal and complementary relationship.

1. Douglass and Self-Image:1841-1865

Douglass started his public career as an anti-slavery orator in 1841. As he put it in his *Narrative*: “while attending an anti-slavery convention at Nantucket, on the 11th of August, 1841, I felt strongly moved to speak.... From that time until now, I have been engaged in pleading the cause of my

brethren—with what success, and with what devotion, I leave those acquainted with my labors to decide” (80). Douglass was fully aware that most black people were deprived of voice or oppressed into silence under the institution of slavery. The following quotation from Douglass’s “Lecture on Slavery” speech illustrates the absence of the black voice.

...how is it with the American slave? *Where* may he assemble? *Where* is his Conciliation Hall? Where are his newspapers? Where is his right of petition? Where is his freedom of speech? his liberty of the press? and his right of locomotion? He is said to be happy; happy men can speak. But ask the slave—*what* is his condition?—*what* his state of mind?—*what* he thinks of his enslavement? and you had as well address your inquiries to the *silent dead*. There comes no *voice* from the enslaved, we are left to gather his feelings by imagining what ours would be, were our souls in his soul’s stead. (*Frederick* 170)⁷

Indeed, representing the voiceless voice of enslaved black people, Douglass wielded his pen and voice.⁸ He was very conscious of his oratorical power and made the most of it for the cause of the abolition of slavery. Douglass emerged on the public arena as a young and powerful anti-slavery campaigner, fully utilizing his talent of speech, in other words, his *physical voice*. However, his speech was often regarded too “learned” and “sophisticated” for “a fugitive slave” to deliver, so he decided to publish his first autobiography, *Narrative* in 1845, in order to verify his experience as a slave. The first and subsequent autobiographies worked as *readable voice*. Also, as early as around 1841, Douglass understood photography’s power to shape perceptions about race and employed the new medium in his quest for social and political justice. Thus, he utilized photography as *visual voice*. As Douglass insisted, “Pictures, images, and other symbolical representations speak to the imagination” (“Lecture on Pictures” 133), thus, “[i]t is the picture of life contrasted with the fact of life, the ideal contrasted with the real, which makes criticism possible” (“Pictures and Progress” 170). In fact, it is symbolically significant that Douglass’s oratorical and photographic debut occurred approximately in the same year.

Louis Daguerre invented the daguerreotype in 1839, the most popular form of photography in America. The daguerreotype was a unique, one-of-a-kind process in which a copper plate was coated with silver oxide and produced a laterally inverted positive image, whereas subsequent products of photography, such as *cartes de visite*, were made from a negative and were thus reproducible (Stauffer et al. 261, Stauffer, “Creating” 263). As early as two years after the invention of the daguerreotype, Douglass had already had his first portrait taken (Figure 1). The following, quotation with Douglass’s criticism of white artists who delineated portraits, shows why he was so intrigued by photography.

Negroes can never have impartial portraits, at the hands of white artists. It seems to us next to impossible for white men to take likeness of black men, without most grossly exaggerating their distinctive features. And the reason is obvious. Artists, like all other white persons, have adopted a theory respecting the distinctive features of Negro physiognomy.... This theory

impressed strongly upon the mind of an artist, exercises a powerful influence over his pencil, and very naturally leads him to distort and exaggerate those peculiarities, even when they scarcely exist in the original. (*The Life* 380)⁹

Douglass explained that most whites could not create an impartial likeness of black people because their racial stereotype always interfered with their portrait creating process. “The veracity of daguerreotype,” as Stauffer argues, “prevented distortions of blacks that came from the hands of white artists.” Douglass also knew that “the vast majority of daguerreotypes (over 90 percent) took the form of portraits. The photograph, and accurate renditions or sympathetic engravings drawn from the photograph, became his medium of choice for representing himself visually” (Stauffer, “Creating” 260).

Most researchers acknowledge that Douglass’s first appearance in the visual record can be traced to the engraved frontispiece accompanying *Narrative* in 1845 (Figure 2). In this portrait, he is well-dressed and shown directly confronting the viewer with piercing eyes, while his arms and hands are only partially drawn. Bernier elaborates what Marcus Wood argues: Douglass is simultaneously visible and invisible, present and absent, in this “poor-quality engraved portrait,” in which he is represented in an unfinished process of self-formation and self-making: “he was engaged in the ongoing physical and psychological transition from ‘Frederick Baily, the [fugitive] slave’ into ‘Frederick Douglass the freeman.’” Bernier continues that here “he bore witness to the right to gaze back at the white viewer in a radical declaration of independence,” such as for “which he had been subjected to physical violence ... in his previous life as an enslaved man” (“A Faithful” 113). However, still focusing on the poorly engraved portion, his representation in an unfinished process of self-formation and self-making could be attributed to what Douglass bitterly confessed in *Bondage and Freedom*, which is white abolitionists’ negation of black agency. As he pointed out in the second autobiography, reflecting such comments from Garrisonians as “Let us have the facts,” “Give us the facts,” and “we will take care of the philosophy” (207), Douglass penetrated the deprivation of black subjectivity in a black voice, even in the anti-slavery pulpit in the North.¹⁰ Thus, with the publication of *Narrative*, Douglass was not free in a political, literary and oratorical sense; and hence he was still in the process of simultaneous self-creation and self-emancipation.

After gaining legal freedom in 1846, Douglass published his second autobiography, *Bondage and Freedom* in 1855. According to Douglass: “No man thinks of publishing a book without sending his face to the world with it. He may be handsome or homely, manly or otherwise, it makes no difference; the face, the inevitable face, must be there to meet the smiles or frowns of his readers. Once in the book, whether the picture is like him or not, he must forever after strive to look like the picture” (“Age of Pictures” 142). For Douglass, a picture was “an attribute of man’s nature thus to convert the subjective consciousness into the objective form” (144). Acting in concordance with this principle, Douglass published *Bondage and Freedom* with a new frontispiece (Figure 3). Douglass concluded in *Bondage and Freedom* as follows:

Believing that one of the best means of emancipating the slaves of the south is to improve and elevate the character of the free colored people of the north, I shall labor in the future, as I have labored in the past, to promote the moral, social, religious, and intellectual elevation of the free colored people; never forgetting my own humble origin, nor refusing, while Heaven lends me ability, to use my voice, my pen, or my vote, to advocate the great and primary work of the universal and unconditional emancipation of my entire race. (233-34)

In this context of his concluding remarks in *Bondage and Freedom*, “my pen, or my voice” implies speeches and writings, not photography. However, after selling some ten thousand copies of *Bondage and Freedom* in the first few weeks of publication, “he knew that his public persona could spread more quickly through his portrait than through his [*physical and readable*] voice, and he continually sought to control how he appeared in those portraits” (Stauffer, *The Black* 50). Douglass had his photograph taken only eight times from 1841 to 1853, but after 1855 until the end of the Civil War, thirty-four pictures can be accounted for. As he declared in his lecture “Age of Pictures” of 1862, the Civil War period might “be termed an age of pictures” (142).

For Douglass, the picture-making process was “the subject of distinct observation and contemplation,” and “at [the] bottom of all effort and germinating principles of all reform and all progress” (“Pictures and Progress” 170). Douglass was convinced of the power of pictures for all black people fighting for civil, political and social liberties and equalities after the Civil War.

2. Douglass and Self-Image: 1865-1895

Douglass often considered humans as the “only picture-making animals in the world,” and this concept, rephrasing Aristotle’s *Poetics* (6-7) indicates Douglass’s strong belief in photography. Douglass asserted that picture making is an art and “[a]rt is a special revelation of the higher powers of the human soul” (“Pictures and Progress” 169). In short, Douglass understood picture making to be equivalent to humanity. He continued that the “process by which man is able to posit his own subjective nature outside of himself, giving it form, color, space, and all the attributes of distinct personality, so that it becomes the subject of distinct observation and contemplation, is at [the] bottom of all effort and the germinating principles of all reform and all progress” (“Pictures and Progress” 170). Ginger Hill elucidates quite clearly that “even perceived objects have their own mode of givenness, and for humans perceived in the line of sight of others, for humans as *objects*, this means those viewed have their *own internal intentionality*, whether or not it is recognized as such by the viewing subject. Furthermore, all humans, contrary to the thinking of racial pseudoscience, possess the faculty of thought pictures, to imagine forms” (70). Thus, Douglass believed photography could help enslaved people to be emancipated because photography, as “a true art,” proved its subject’s humanity in his or her positive objectification while slavery denied enslaved people’s and their entire race’s humanity.

Once the institution of slavery had been abolished, Douglass reflected as follows: “I felt I had reached the end of the noblest and best part of my life; my school was broken up, my church disbanded,

and the beloved congregation dispersed, never to come together again. The anti-slavery platform had performed its work, and my voice was no longer needed” (*Life and Times* 292). However, after concluding that civil, political and social liberties and equalities had not been acquired by postbellum African Americans, Douglass determined that “the negro had still a cause, and that he needed my voice and pen with others to plead for it.” He “felt that the work of the Society was not done, that it had not fulfilled its mission, which was not merely to emancipate, but to elevate the enslaved class” (*Life and Times* 296). The fact that Douglass had his photograph taken as many as 118 times from 1866 to 1895 shows his strong belief in the picture’s power to counter widely circulating racist imagery or racial caricatures and in using an ideal self-image as a means of empowerment for African Americans even after the Emancipation.

When Douglass published his third autobiography, *Life and Times* in 1881, the publisher, Park Publishing Company, added visual material with the book, one steel engraving of Douglass for the frontispiece, and seventeen illustrations. Whereas Douglass agreed on the engraving of himself for the frontispiece, he did not like the version of his portrait. Comparing the two frontispieces which appear in *Bondage and Freedom* (Figure 3) and the first edition of *Life and Times* (Figure 4), both pictures are based on photographs. In the earlier book, Douglass in an elegant suit appears from the waist up, posture erect, and his body entirely still and controlled. He looks directly at the viewer with a penetrating stare. As Lynn A. Casmier-Paz points out the “solemn face commands attention, while the clenched fists ... express defiance, strengthening the powerful impression made by his unflinching gaze. ... the gaze-the eyes-that seems to reveal the inner core of strength” (qtd. in Jeffrey 28-29). On the other hand, in *Life and Times*, the engraving has a chest shot of Douglass in middle-class attire. He looks away calmly, glancing at something in the far distance. To quote Julie Roy Jeffrey: “Douglass does not directly engage the viewer or command his or her attention. His focus is elsewhere. ... It suggests little of Douglass’s energy and vitality” (29). This must be the reason why Douglass detested the frontispiece for *Life and Times*. As he once put it, “the picture must be in the book, or the book be considered incomplete.” But once in the book, it is public property. “His position is defined, and his whole *persona* must now conform to, and never contradict, the immortal likeness or unlikeness in the Book” (“Lecture on Pictures”128). Douglass never wanted his public image to be lacking in “energy and vitality.”

Moreover, Douglass abhorred and objected to all of the woodcut illustrations based primarily on sketches rather than photographs. He wrote to the publisher, calling the images “coarse and shocking woodcuts such as may be found in the newspapers of the day” once read and tossed away, and his portrait a “caricature of my own face.” He added that the illustrations had “marred and spoiled my work entirely,” and furthermore, he threatened, “I have ground for appealing to the law under the contract.”¹¹ As mentioned earlier, Douglass had embraced the daguerreotype and its subsequent improvements because it could capture the black image more accurately than white artists who almost always exaggerated “Negro” features in their paintings and sketches. Not only those explicit caricatures but also the implicit notion of the black person as powerless and incompetent made Douglass disgusted and furious about them. Among seventeen illustrations, six woodcuts (Figure 6 to 11) feature incidents from

Douglass's years of enslavement, the other five illustrate his years of being a fugitive, abolitionist and statesman, and the rest show Douglass's house in Washington D. C., five white abolitionists' portraits and Abraham Lincoln's portrait.¹² All of the illustrations of Douglass depict black people in a stereotypical way, with precisely the same shade of skin color, wooly hair and round eyes, which represent the black race and the demeaning images prevalent in the nineteenth century. Figure 7. "Whipping of Old Barney" and Figure 8. "Gore Shooting Denby" depict black beings as the subjects of white violence. Figure 9. "Mrs. Auld Teaching Him to Read" exemplifies that an enslaved person's possibility of becoming literate depends on the discretion of whites. As Jeffrey brilliantly elaborates, while Douglass's "written accounts showed black defiance, efficacy, empowerment, agency, and courage, these images reinforce the notion of whites as dominant and African Americans subordinate." Indeed, these illustrations not only "fail to convey the spirit of the written narrative," but "also express the kinds of stereotypical depictions of African Americans created by white artists to which Douglass often objected" (31).

When Douglass published the second edition of *Life and Times* in 1892, adding one hundred pages in order to update his life story, Douglass succeeded in replacing its frontispiece (Figure 5). The new publisher used a photograph instead of an engraving.¹³ Douglass looks away with a sharp stare with a very dignified manner, as if gazing at "the grand possibilities of a glorious future" (*Life and Times* 352) for African Americans. As George L. Ruffin, Douglass's contemporary attorney and judge put it, *Life and Times* showed how a "photographic view of slave life as given to us in the autobiography of an ex-slave will give to the reader a clearer insight of the system of slavery than can be gained from the examination of general history." Moreover, Douglass's great achievement through his talent and effort, exemplified in the final edition of his autobiography, serves as an example for "the black boy as well as the white boy" by which they "can take hope and courage in the race of life" (Introduction 4-5). This time the frontispiece was a high quality picture which would serve in a dignified lasting autobiography.

Conclusion

Frederick Douglass passed away on February 20, 1895, and even after his death, his photograph was taken on February 21 (Figure 12). Furthermore, on the same day, the sculptor Ulric Dunbar came to Cedar Hill, Douglass's House in Washington D. C., and created a mask of Douglass's face (Figure 13) and a cast of his right hand (Figure 14). The post-mortem photograph, death mask, and hand cast, according to Fionnghuala Sweeney, "are last objects of two quite different kinds—the former belonging to the intimate domain of family and gesturing to the radical singularity of the historical subject; the other present in the public domain as a three-dimension object that marks the space left by the specific body from which it has been cast" (149).¹⁴ The mask and cast of the right hand have been on public display in the museum at the Frederick Douglass Home Visitor Information Center at the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site in Washington D. C. "The sculptural form of this work," Sweeney argues, "aligns it more with the public domain of memorialization than with bereavement, as conscious of the memorial processes of history rather than of the moments of history's making" (161). Furthermore, Sweeney interprets the cast of Douglass's right hand to be a reference to the eponymous

title of Douglass's first autobiography, "Written by Himself." Both mask and hand "gesture towards the inaccessibility of the body as a known and a living thing, or of the subject it contained. They position the act of looking as one that involves looking on death." Also, the death mask serves performatively as a "proof of the common tragedy of human existence" (162).

Whoever was born in chattel slavery was considered as a thing, not a human. Slave narratives almost always provide as their opening the same line, "I was born," with which Douglass started in his *Narrative*. In that sense, Douglass was also a "thing" when he started his life but over the course of his public career, he established his own humanity and that of his entire race by utilizing photography. Therefore, the picture of his deathbed and the death mask and hand cast bring Douglass's life to "a coherent affective conclusion" (162), as Sweeney puts it. With his right hand, he had written all the draft of his speeches, and elaborated his autobiographies and also germinated his strong belief in photography's eternity; as Douglass put it "Men of all conditions and classes can now see themselves as others see them, and as they will be seen by those [who] shall come after them" ("Pictures and Progress" 165).

To borrow from what Douglass once stated, his portraits and remnants could be "richly studded with the material of art. Not only the outside world, but the inside soul may be described as a picture gallery, a magnificent panorama in which things of time and things of eternity are silently portrayed" ("Pictures and Progress" 167). Frederick Douglass represented and served on behalf of black people, strategically using three voices: oration as *physical*, autobiography as *readable* and photography as *visual voice*. All three voices are in reciprocal complementarity to strengthen the eternalization of self-image. Frederick Douglass continues to exercise his authorship, power and influence over his self-image at the present time.

Appendix

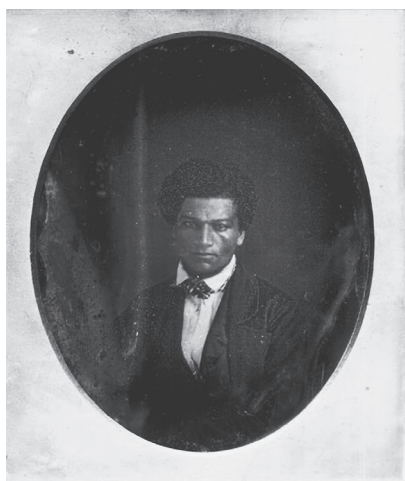


Figure 1. First portrait of Frederick Douglass. Unknown photographer, c. 1841. Collection of Greg French. <https://www.wbur.org/artery/2016/07/21/picturing-frederick-douglass>

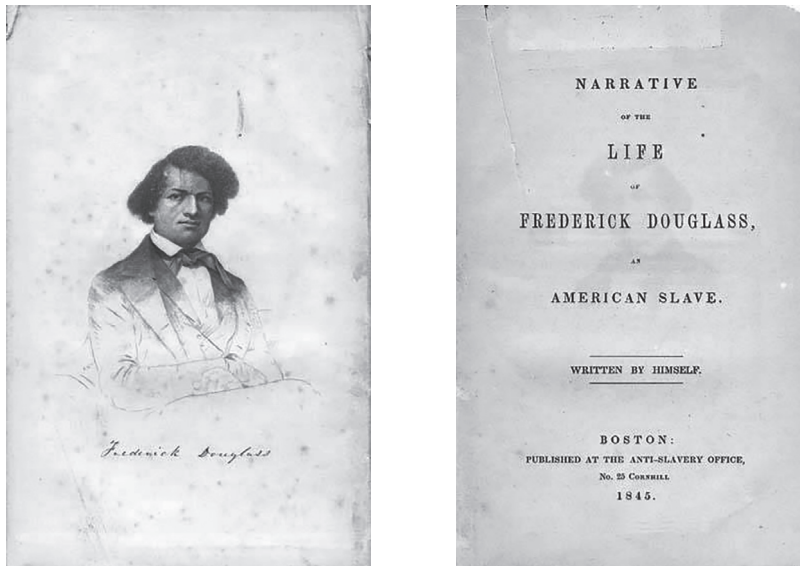


Figure 2. Frontispiece and title page for *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself*, 1845. Documenting the American South, University of North Carolina.

<https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/douglass/menu.html>

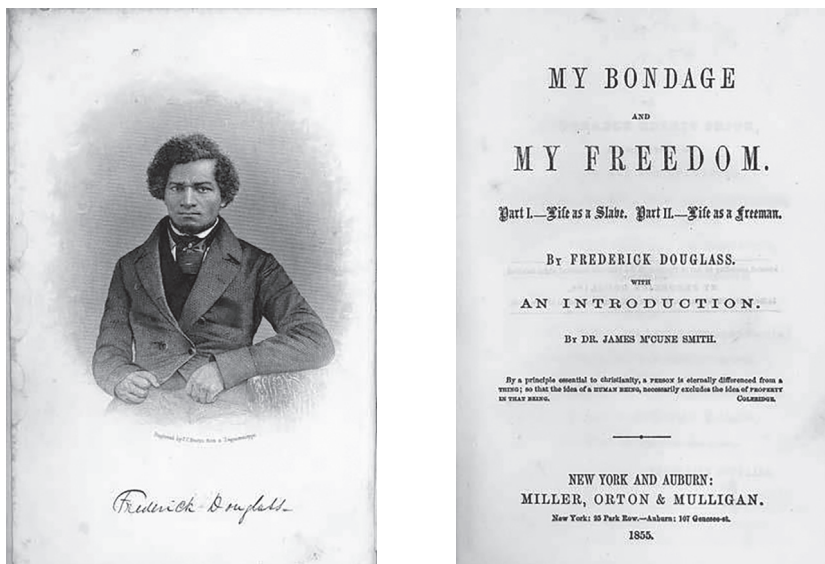


Figure 3. Frontispiece and title page for *My Bondage and My Freedom*, 1855. Documenting the American South, University of North Carolina. <https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/douglass55/menu.html>

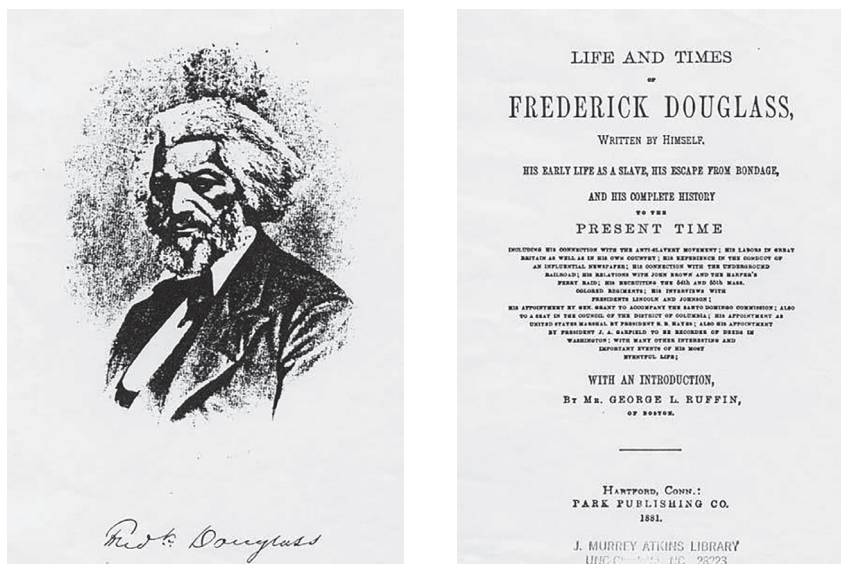


Figure 4. Frontispiece and title page for *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, 1881. Documenting the American South, University of North Carolina. <https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/douglasslife/illustr.html>

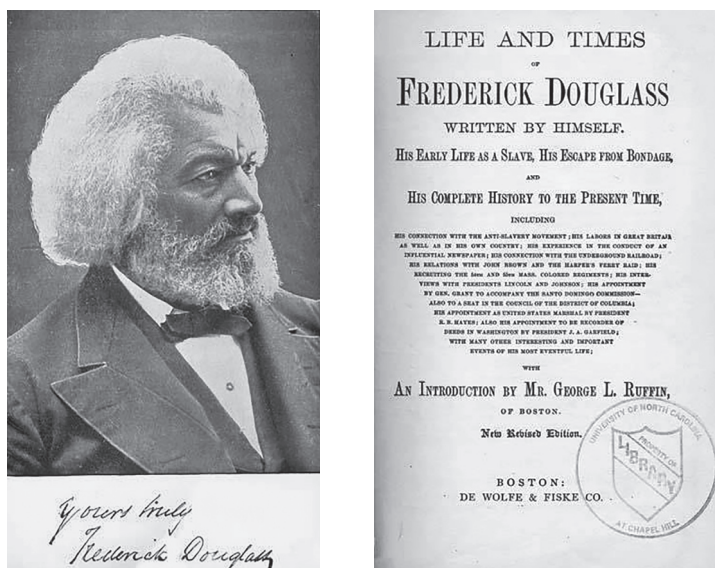


Figure 5. Frontispiece and title page for *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, 1892. Documenting the American South, University of North Carolina. <https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/doug192/frontis.html>



Figure 6. "The Last Time He Saw His Mother"

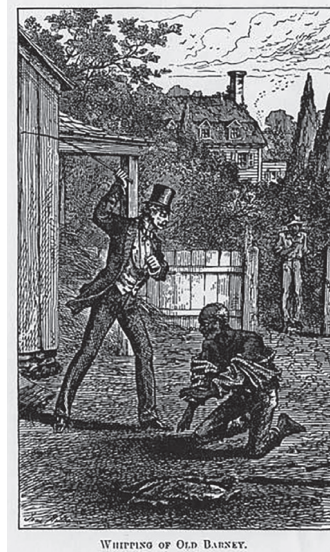


Figure 7. "Whipping of Old Barney"

Woodcuts from *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, 1881, 1892. Documenting the American South, University of North Carolina. <https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/douglasslife/illustr.html>



Figure 8. "Gore Shooting Denby"



Figure 9. "Mrs. Auld Teaching Him to Read"

Woodcuts from *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, 1881, 1892. Documenting the American South, University of North Carolina. <https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/douglasslife/illustr.html>

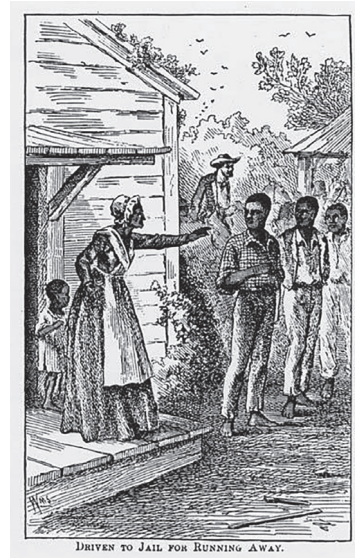
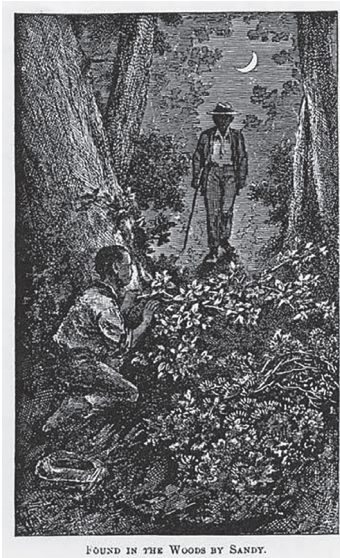


Figure 10. “Found in the Woods by Sandy”

Figure 11. “Driven to Jail for Running Away”

Woodcuts from *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*, 1881, 1892. Documenting the American South, University of North Carolina. <https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/douglasslife/illustr.html>



Figure 12. Deathbed portrait of Frederick Douglass. Unknown photographer, February 21, 1895.

US National Park Service, Frederick Douglass National Historic Site, Washington D.C.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2019/02/18/frederick-douglass-died-feb-just-hours-after-his-public-make-up-with-susan-b-anthony/?utm_term=.dfd593d1cb1b



Figure 13. *Frederick Douglass Death Mask*.
Ulric Dunbar, 1895.

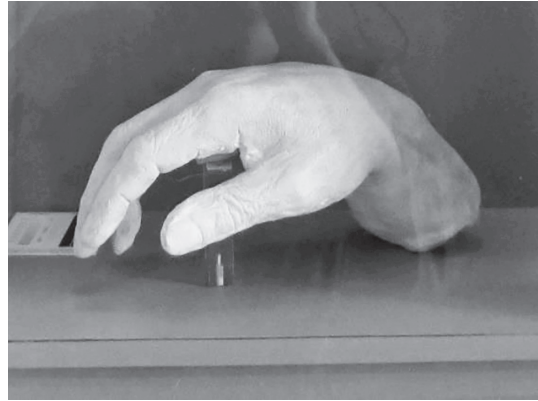


Figure 14. *Frederick Douglass Right Hand Cast*.
Ulric Dunbar, 1895.

US National Park Service, Frederick Douglass National Historic Site, Washington D.C. Photo by Author, August 16, 2012.

Notes

- ¹ According to the most recent research on Douglass, Douglass wrote a short autobiographical sketch for the *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* in 1891. The entry was planned to appear in late 1891 but it was not released until 1895 (Kaufman-McKivigan and Duvall 34). Although the entry was only fifteen hundred words, it clearly shows what points Douglass did or did not want to emphasize.
- ² For an account of Douglass's eternalization of self-image in his autobiographies, see Park "Changes."
- ³ White abolitionist such as William Lloyd Garrison also never underestimated the power of images. When he "began publishing *The Liberator* in 1831, what most offended Southerners in the periodical were the images—particularly its masthead, which depicted a slave auction in front of the Capitol, the flag of liberty atop its dome, a whipping post in its plaza, and in the foreground a grieving slave family at auction ..." (Stauffer, "Creating" 256).
- ⁴ While Stauffer's project team determined there to be 160 pictures of Douglass, (Stauffer, et al., Introduction ix), Laura Wexler pointed out that there are 168 pictures of him, including 6 pictures which Stauffer's staff concluded to be non-Douglass photos. In collaboration with Yale University Library Digital Humanities Lab, Wexler utilized by visual analysis of "Douglass Face Orientation" a digital corpus of Douglass portraits to identify Douglass's pictures ("Frederick"). However, Wexler's study has not been published yet, therefore, I follow Stauffer's research in this article.
- ⁵ Colin L. Westerbeck also speculates that Douglass's "daguerreotype could be yet another

autobiography” (qtd. in Meehan 134-35).

⁶ See Park, “Changes.”

⁷ *The North Star*, December 5, 1850.

⁸ For a more detailed argument on Douglass’s representation of the black voice in literary form, see Park, “Silence.”

⁹ *The Liberator*, April 20, 1849.

¹⁰ See Park, “Changes” and “Silence.”

¹¹ Frederick Douglass to Sylvester Betts, Park Publishing Company, October 30, 1881, January 28, 1882, Frederick Douglass Papers, Correspondence Subject File.

¹² Among five white abolitionists, John Brown appeared in the first edition in 1881, but for some undetermined reason Douglass replaced Brown’s portrait with Harriet Beecher Stowe’s in the expanded edition in 1892.

¹³ However, Douglass was not able to remove the illustrations from the second edition of his autobiography.

¹⁴ “Post-mortem photography was not an unusual form of remembrance and sat comfortably within the cultural norms of the time” (Jay Ruby qtd. Sweeney 150).

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