

Humanizing the Dehumanized: The Complex Connections between William Lloyd Garrison's Preface and Fugitive Slave Advertisements

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Abstract

By connecting nineteenth-century slave advertisements and the preface provided by William Lloyd Garrison to Frederick Douglass's Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself, this article argues that Garrison's preface provides a moment in history when the voice of a specific person, speaking for a group of people who were frequently silenced, is recovered. Examining particular slave advertisements published around the time of Douglass's 1845 narrative, it is possible to see that these advertisements tend to highlight the lack of voice provided to slaves while being focused on the body and the kinds of work that the slave was capable of doing. Other types of writing, such as the authenticating preface written by Garrison, also serve as advertisement, which recognizes the implicit silencing of African American humanity while also acknowledging slaves as authorities to tell their own stories.

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The publication of runaway slave advertisements was far from unusual in the mid-nineteenth century. These publications were published by southern slaveowners who hoped to recover their property—slaves—that had run away. These kinds of publications frequently appeared in newspapers throughout the United States and utilized a specific kind of rhetoric that sought to call attention to the body of the slave. These advertisements were frequently published in both the North and the South and utilized language that would provide slave catchers with physical information about the missing slave. The slaves who managed to obtain their freedom by running to the North, and especially those who were able to become literate during or after their journey (like Frederick Douglass), would have been knowledgeable about both the plight that slaves faced in the South and the publication of these advertisements, which made them knowledgeable voices to speak for those who were kept historically silenced.

While these advertisements were being published, fugitive slave narratives were also becoming increasingly popular among the American public. One such narrative that gained prominence in the American mindset was Frederick Douglass's *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself* (1845), which included different prefaces that serve a variety of different purposes, such as the authentication of the former slave's story for a skeptical white audience. One of the prefaces to the 1845 version of Douglass's narrative was written by William Lloyd Garrison. His preface to the *Narrative* accomplishes important work for Douglass. From the beginning of his preface, Garrison attempts to highlight the uniqueness of Douglass's narrative and the importance that it offers to both the abolitionist movement and the construction of historical narratives. Garrison's preface provides verification for a nineteenth-century audience who might have been skeptical of the ability of a former slave to write effectively about his experience while at the same time provides a voice to a historically ignored group of people. Garrison's preface should be put into conversation with the slave advertisements, and perhaps even as an advertisement, in and of itself, albeit with a different purpose. Garrison's work recognizes the implicit silencing of African American humanity that occurred in slave advertisements and made those traits explicit in his preface. From this, I argue that these two different kinds of texts are in conversation: slave advertisements are focused on the body while Garrison is focused on the mind and contributions to historical narratives.

The relationship between Garrison and Douglass has been the subject of much critical debate since the publication of the *Narrative*. Robert Levine's book, *The Lives of Frederick Douglass*, discusses their relationship and their break, mentioning that Garrison "did much more than see the book through the press" since he supplied one of the

“paratexts’ of the antebellum slave narrative. . . which served to legitimize the black text for white readers” (46). At the same time, though, Levine also mentions the ways in which scholars have thought of Garrison’s preface as paternalistic, particularly in regard to “his account of Douglass’s speech at the August 1841 Nantucket meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society” (49). The preface, according to Levine, also shows Garrison “portraying himself as the teacher of a black man” who was “uncertain” of taking on the role of the abolitionist speaker (49). Thinking in this way, the preface written by Garrison is important because it would have provided a sense of creditability for the nineteenth-century audience because of Garrison’s posturing of himself as a teacher; he is, in the Garrison-Douglass relationship, a paternalistic person — someone in a position of power who restricts the freedom of others, like slaves. In this light, Garrison, as a white person, is capable of exposing Douglass’s story to a white audience and by suggesting that Garrison served as a guide for Douglass as he became integrated into abolitionist society. At the same time, though, it may also be suggested that Douglass’s credibility should be taken a step further and that Garrison is suggesting that slaves like Douglass who are fortunate enough to write narratives are doing so to insert their voices into an overarching historical narrative.

John Sekora mentions the relationship between the prefaces and the narrative as being parallel to the relationship between Garrison and Douglass, as well as the master and slave. He claims that “white sponsors compel a black author to approve, to authorize white institutional power. The black message will be sealed within a white envelope” (502). Sekora’s argument focuses on the power relationship between the works of Douglass and Garrison. Rather than simply seeing Garrison’s preface as trying to acknowledge that Douglass has written a narrative that provides a necessary voice to the American narrative, however, Sekora argues that the preface helps to provide authentication and authority to the text. Instead of it only providing authority, though, it does so in a way that still legitimizes white dominance; with this understanding, there is a paternalistic relationship between the two texts.

The construction of historical narratives tends to accommodate dominant voices, and, at times, purposefully excludes the voices of different groups of people. According to Michelle Ballif in her introduction to *Theorizing Histories of Rhetoric*, and utilizing framework provided by Victor Vitanza, certain voices are commonly excluded, where writers and historians have “an obligation to search for ‘the third man’ or ‘the third woman,’” as well as “for that which has been ‘systematically excluded’” from historical archives (3). Employing the framework provided by Vitanza, Ballif makes this claim because “to write *any history*... demands ‘systematic exclusions’ of figures, of events, of artifacts, of

whatever cannot be accounted for or synthesized by the historical narrative” (3). Certain archives, or collections, like the published slave advertisements of the nineteenth century, leave out specific voices or people, and it is necessary for scholars and historiographers to actively look for the “third man” rather than continue to construct a historical narrative that leaves out these voices. Fugitive slave advertisements tend to focus on specific traits and, unlike Garrison’s preface, do not allow for slaves to have authority over their bodies or voices. As Garrison encourages his audience to recognize the importance of Douglass’s narrative, he is recognizing a gap in the American historical narrative and attempting to include other voices.

Garrison’s work seeks to authenticate and provide a voice to a man, and a group of people, who might have been excluded from American historical narratives. Instead of adhering to a white, male understanding of history, Garrison encourages Douglass’s audience to examine the narrative for the voices of African Americans as a part of the abolitionist movement and as a part of the larger American historical narrative. As they tried to actively combat the gaps in historical narratives and thinking specifically of the African American experience and historiography, V.P. Franklin suggests “African American historians were interested in documenting the fact that ‘we were there too’” for a variety of different historical events, such as the Civil War (214). African American historians were also concerned with altering “the pervasive distortions and misrepresentations about Africans and African-descended people in the historical literature and popular media” by “[setting] the record straight and [documenting] the numerous and significant contributions” of African Americans (214). It might also be contended that Garrison’s preface is attempting to provide Douglass’s audience with further knowledge of who Douglass was as a person.

The structure of the preface also suggests Garrison’s attempt to help the readership know Douglass, as much as is possible. Garrison engages in a kind of “stranger humanism,” as posited by Lloyd Pratt, which allows him to suggest that Garrison is working to provide Douglass with an authoritative selfhood that is built on the concept of the “semi-private room” (1). Pratt suggests that this room

is a space both rhetorical and material, [where] people discover their difference from one another, but they are barred from trying to appropriate or penetrate those differences. This discovering of difference facilitates the coming-into-selfhood of those who elect to enter the room. (1-2)

Garrison recognizes the differences between himself, Douglass, and their audience, but at the same time appears to recognize that they all have voices that contribute to an American historical narrative. Pratt also contends that “This discovering of difference

also forms the groundwork of democracy” (2). Garrison’s preface also helps to fill in the gaps of the historical narrative rather than playing into African Americans’ “elliptical subtraction” from historical narratives (22).

Garrison’s preface, in this way, counteracts the archival silences that might have surrounded slave experiences by providing access to what might have been ignored if he had not emphatically highlighted the importance of it. The slave narrative, as Sekora acknowledges, deals with issues of power and how that power might appear in writing, particularly in regard to the relationship between master and slave: “Slavery and the language of slavery are virtually coextensive. Of the slave narratives, one must ask: Who is entitled to claim, to possess these lives? In whose language do they appear? What historical conditions permit or demand their appearance?” (485). These questions regarding the power relationship between slaves and masters, which Sekora considers for slave narratives, are at work in the interrelationship between Douglass’s 1845 *Narrative* and Garrison’s preface. The traditional reading of the interrelationship between these texts is that “Most white northerners were as indifferent as Garrison believed them to be; for them slavery was remote, abstract, and inconsequential” (Sekora 495), and it also became more apparent that “Not black storytelling but white authentication made for useable narrative” (497). While he does valuable work by noting the power relationships involved between the two texts, Sekora’s article continues to view Garrison as paternalistically authenticating Douglass’s work, since white authentication is what made for “useable narrative.”

While Douglass was publishing his 1845 narrative, slavery was still in existence, meaning that fugitive slave advertisements were a common form of writing and utilized specific word choices to dehumanize slaves and remove their archival authority. These advertisements were focused almost solely on the body of the slave, as pieces of personal property. Focusing on advertisements for runaway slaves in the eighteenth century, Tom Costa’s work focuses on these pieces of writing as “[following] a kind of formula” because of the “very detailed descriptions of the runaways” provided by owners (38). These advertisements mention specific literacies that they might have, such as an eighteenth-century slave’s ability to play an instrument, as Robert Winan describes in his book chapter, and the different languages they might speak, as Mark Loudon discusses in his article, “African Americans and Minority Language Maintenance in the United States.” Advertisements, Winan notes, also highlight “how well or how badly the runaway speaks English and what other languages he speaks” and the ability to read, write, and “cypher’ or ‘do accounts” suggest their occupation as house servant (198). Although they might highlight the ability to speak, these advertisements also suggest that these are skills that can be used by owners to their benefit. These advertisements, despite their mentions of the ability

to speak a specific language, do not try to provide a voice directly from slaves. Instead of thinking about how the stories and voices of these slaves might contribute to a united overarching narrative, advertisements for runaway slaves purposefully eliminate the voices slaves might be given. They are put into newspapers for the recovery of property, not to emphasize the importance or contributions of these runaways. These advertisements focus solely on the body and traits, rather than the voices of the individual.

Garrison's preface provides Douglass with authority; these are his experiences, and he should be given the privilege of being able to write about them. Garrison's preface before Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of a Slave* relies heavily on specific punctuation, including many exclamation points, which suggests an emphatic attempt to make the voices of slaves, voices who might be ignored by a white audience, heard. Garrison's preface should be juxtaposed against fugitive slave advertisements, since his preface is almost an advertisement of its own, although instead of focusing on the physical, it is focusing on the humanity of Douglass. Garrison's material does important work to contribute to the missing archive of slaves' voices by utilizing punctuation and language that other printers, particularly those who would have been writing and printing runaway slave advertisements, would not have had the space to include in their writing.

Throughout both the South and the North, slave advertisements frequently appeared in newspapers. These advertisements were written to serve a specific purpose, which was to help owners of slaves recover what they considered lost property: escaped slaves. These advertisements focused on the physical aspects of slaves, such as their clothing or other physical traits, like their hair or specific scars. Patricia Hunt-Hurst discusses the prominence of the clothing noted in Georgia fugitive slave advertisements, mentioning that "Most of these notices... focused on the clothing worn by the fugitive rather than on his or her occupation on the plantation. Yet such descriptions of clothing can shed light on the value of the slave, which was generally based more on that occupation... than on any other factor" (729-30). David G. Smith in his discussion of slavery in the south-central portion of Pennsylvania notes that advertisements, even those run in areas farther north, tended to follow a particular pattern: "The advertisements generally followed a similar style: an account of when and where the slave escaped, the slave's name, a description of the slave and his or her clothing, and the reward offered" (23). Focusing on the physical, albeit physical aspects that could potentially be changed given the time and space to do so, these advertisements gave the people searching for slaves' tangible aspects to look for.

Partially because of their purpose and partially because of their genre, the advertisements that were being published around the time that Douglass was making

his own escape and writing his narrative in the late 1830s and mid-1840s, neglected to mention the voices of their distinct group of people, nor their contributions to an overarching American historical narrative. Because of the amount of space provided for advertisements and the amount of information that slaveowners deemed necessary to the recovery of their property, advertisements were only able to convey certain, tangible traits and to use an authoritative, and at times imploring, tone. Since advertisements were usually confined to relatively small spaces in newspapers, they could provide only a certain amount of information.

Looking at various advertisements from throughout the United States during the mid-1840s, around the time that Douglass was writing and publishing his *Narrative*, it is possible to see that there is still a specific kind of language, or “formula” used, as Costa and Smith both suggest. One advertisement, offering a reward of twenty-five dollars from the Georgia newspaper, the *Milledgeville Federal Union*, states:

RANAWAY from the subscriber on the 15th of January last, my negro man POLDORE—he is about fifty years of age, 5 feet 8 or 10 inches high, black complected, and weighs about 150 lbs., walks very erect, and speaks quickly when spoken to; he has a very notable scar I think on his left thigh, caused by a burn; he will doubtless deny any knowledge of me. I will give the above reward for his apprehension and delivery to the Jailer of Baldwin county, or \$20 if lodged in any safe Jail so that I may get him.

O.H.P. Bonner.

(1 April 1845)

This advertisement places emphasis on the specific traits of Poldore. By focusing on this kind of language, the owner is providing the general outline of a physical body; from this advertisement, we know that he is about fifty years old, stands at almost six feet, and has a notable scar, which would help to differentiate him from other fugitive slaves. The owner notes that Poldore does have a specific way of speaking, but does nothing to elaborate on Poldore’s thoughts, feelings, and opinions—presumably because of space in his advertisement or to better suit his purpose of property recovery. The advertisement made for Poldore shows that he has been dehumanized and, for his master, is just a body meant for work, rather than a person with an intellect and a voice to speak for himself.

Another advertisement from Tennessee suggests a similar focus on physical traits. One advertisement, published in the *Nashville Union* and offering a twenty-dollar reward, focuses on a slave named Henry:

RANAWAY from the subscriber on the twenty-eighth day of January last. . .
He is about thirty-five years old, dark complexion, five feet six or eight inches

high; he speaks quick when spoken to; walks very erect and steps short. He will, I presume, write himself a free pass of some sort, and attempt to get to a free State. The above reward will be given to any person who will deliver said negro to me in Habersham, Georgia, or confine him in some safe Jail so that I can get him. (14 April 1842)

While this advertisement comes from a different state and another date, although around the same time period, similar dehumanizing language is being used. Again, both the slave's possible age and height are described, along with his speech; both of these statements are almost identical between advertisements. The advertisement's focus on the way in which he walks is also suggestive of a draft animal, with the emphasis being on his posture and the way in which he steps, possibly in the same way the gait of a horse is observed. Tonally, the owner, like Poldore's own, comes across as authoritative, particularly with his assurance that there will be a reward involved and with his presumption that Henry will not acknowledge his ownership if asked. Like the advertisement placed for Poldore, this advertisement for Henry strips him of his humanity and neglects to claim that he is anything other than an almost empty vessel, capable of completing work and being subservient.

Looking at yet another advertisement, the pattern of language that is being used becomes clearer. Published in the New Orleans *The Daily Picayune* is another advertisement, this time focused on a girl named Mary Anne:

\$20 Reward.—Ran away from the subscriber the Yellow Girl MARY ANNE, aged about thirty years; about five feet two inches high very black hair, rather straight; black eyes; large mouth; well and strongly built, without being stout; has a little of an Indian look. The above reward will be paid to any person who will bring her to the Jail of the Second Municipality.

Evarist Blanc, New Basin.
(25 May 1845)

The owner, in this instance, focuses on a woman, but the language that he uses is still similar to the other two advertisements examined. Instead of focusing on her posture or way that she talks, though, the owner chooses to emphasize her physical looks; instead of physical markers, like a scar or burn, he comments on what might have made her attractive to her owner, or eye-catching to someone who is looking for her. The focus on physical traits, like the hair and the mouth, suggests stereotypical traits on which a white audience might have focused. Yet again, her humanity is removed in this advertisement because he pays little to no attention to anything other than how she looks.

While these are only three of thousands of other slave advertisements that are

available from both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, by only examining a few, it is possible to see that there is a common language and tone among them. They focus on the physical; by virtue of who the advertisements are mostly written by — white southern men — and their purpose, which was to recover lost property, at the least cost to them, the ads do not try to provide a voice for the slaves. It would not serve their purposes to humanize their “lost property.” It could be assumed from these advertisements that the owners were hoping to convey just enough information to recover their slaves, while at the same time, continuously stripping away the humanity of their slaves by following a pattern of language that helped to maintain a sense of historical dominance. Putting slave advertisements in conversation with a preface to Douglass’s *Narrative* allows for a discussion of what traits are being suppressed in the advertisements but highlighted by the Preface.

At the same time that the voices of slaves were being silenced through the advertisements, slave narratives sought to actively prevent the silencing of slave voices. By 1845, Douglass’s publication had caused a stir among the public. Because of this, he left for Europe. Some newspapers like the *American Republican and Baltimore Daily Clipper* made the general statement that Douglass “the fugitive Maryland slave, who spoke in New York last May, was among the passengers in the *Cambria*, which sailed for England last week” (“Gone to Europe”). By going to Europe, Douglass avoided backlash and threats of being recaptured and returned to slavery that he would have faced if he had remained in the United States, therefore silencing him.

Throughout his preface to Douglass’s 1845 slave narrative, Garrison attempts to advocate for and suggest that Douglass’s voice is essential to the development of an inclusive American narrative. The preface, placed at the beginning of the *Narrative*, serves its own kind of advertisement, which is both similar to, and different from, the fugitive slave advertisements published at the same time. Jeannine Marie DeLombard discusses the lack of personhood provided to slaves, and, focusing on the confessional works of E.D.E.N. Southworth, she notes that where white citizens who descended into criminality can be charted, the same traits “could also plot the black print subject’s extraordinary ascension from the civil death of the slave... into legal personhood” (92). She also suggests that “At times, first-person articulation of individual black selfhood could even fill out this meager guilty legal personhood with an incipient civil personality. To be the narrator of one’s own historical life is to claim responsibility for and authorship of that life” (92). These early criminal confessions recognized the humanity of fugitive slaves because, at a basic level, they participated in the judicial system of the United States, and, as DeLombard claims, “the black print persona attained the requisite civic presence to authorize his

reemergence in the slave narrative as African American protocitizen” (93).

Throughout his preface, Garrison refers to how fortunate he was to hear Douglass speak. Garrison also claims that Douglass was “fortunate for himself, as it at once brought him into the field of public usefulness, ‘gave the world assurance of a MAN,’ quickened the slumbering energies of his soul, and consecrated him to the great works of breaking the rod of the oppressor, and letting the oppressed go free” (Douglass 1164). Garrison’s claims that Douglass has brought him into the “field of public usefulness” has not been ignored by critics and is typically read as Garrison suggesting that Douglass has made himself useful for the purposes of Garrisonian abolitionists (Levine 49). While it is feasible to read his statement in this way, with Garrison serving as the more restrictive figure, striving to highlight his own purposes instead of Douglass’s, it is also possible to think of Garrison as suggesting that Douglass is making himself useful to the collection of historical voices and that Garrison wants for people like Douglass to have the power to contribute to the historical narrative that might have otherwise excluded them.

Also, Garrison places emphasis on Douglass’s ability to move his audience with his speech. He claims that Douglass began to speak with “a hesitancy and embarrassment, necessarily the attendants of a sensitive mind” and “After apologizing for his ignorance, and reminding the audience that slavery was a poor school for the human intellect and heart, he proceeded to narrate some of the facts in his own history as a slave, and in the course of his speech gave utterance to many noble thoughts and thrilling reflections” (Douglass 1164). Again, in this instance, it could be easy to see Garrison as being paternalistic, claiming that it was shocking and moving to see a former slave, someone that nineteenth-century thought would consider of lower intellect, make such complex and revealing statements about slavery. At the same time, it is worth thinking about Douglass, via Garrison’s preface, as revealing to his audience the existence of other narratives with which they are not familiar. Unlike the lack of authority given to slaves’ voices and the dehumanization that takes place in slave advertisements, by including this moment in his preface, Garrison is advertising that Douglass is worthy of being listened to and that he has a valuable story to add to the American historical narrative.

Douglass’s first speech is almost a revelatory experience for his audience and for Garrison, to the point that Douglass is able to make his audience reflect on slavery and to be so moved that they later emphatically claim that they would be willing to intertwine Douglass’s history with their own local Massachusetts’s history. When Garrison asks the audience after the speech, “Will you succor and protect him as a brother-man—a resident of the old Bay State?” his audience eagerly responds “YES!” (1165). The choices that Garrison makes here, like the choices that the slaveowners made in their advertisements,

shows him consciously linking the runaway slaves who have escaped to the North, like Douglass, and their narrative, with the history of the North. Garrison, at this moment, chooses to display the emphatic response of the audience, suggesting with his all capitals and the choice of punctuation that the audience would be receptive to the inclusion of the excluded voice of slaves into the American narrative.

The concept of excluded voices in the historical narratives comes up as Garrison addresses the cruelties of slavery. He claims that “Nothing has been left undone to cripple their intellects, darken their minds, debase their moral nature, obliterate all traces of their relationship to mankind, and yet how wonderfully they have sustained the mighty load of a most frightful bondage, under which they have been groaning for centuries!” (1166). Garrison, at this moment, could again be perceived as exhibiting paternalism toward slaves. However, at the same time, it could also be seen as Garrison openly acknowledging the cruelties of slavery, the strength with which the slaves have resisted domination, and their worthiness of having their voices and their stories listened to. Instead of focusing on the physical toll of slavery, like advertisements tend to, Garrison utilizes language that will garner the sympathy of his reader by using words that recall extremes, like “cripple,” “debase,” “obliterate,” which allows him to highlight the plight of slaves, while at the same time pointing out that there is a group of people who have not been listened to, despite their “groaning for centuries!” (1166).

The preface also mentions that Garrison recognizes slaves as human, unlike the dehumanized image presented in slave advertisements. He laments, “O, how accursed is that system, which entombs the godlike mind of man, defaces the divine image, reduces those who by creation were crowned with glory and honor to a level with four-footed beasts, and exalts the dealer in human flesh above all that is called God!” (1167). Instead of the focus on the physicality of slaves, Garrison appeals to the audience’s sense of religion. All men are created in God’s image, which appears to include slaves, who are frequently related to animals rather than other humans. By focusing on the inequality Garrison sees involved in the institution of slavery, he is able to suggest, subtly, that there should be equality in the historical narrative. The conscious choice of language here suggests equality, which means that if all people are equal, then perhaps there should not have to be an excluded group of people who get left out from the historical narrative.

Punctuation also plays an important role in how Garrison’s preface material is received. He makes several emphatic statements, most of which conclude with an exclamation or question mark. He structures his material in such a way that he is constantly asking his readers questions and then emphatically providing a response, which he might hope is similar to his audience’s response. Toward the middle of his preface, for

example, Garrison points out that while Douglass had a comparatively better slave experience than if he were further South, “Yet how deplorable was his situation! what terrible chastisements were inflicted upon his person! what still more shocking outrages were perpetrated upon his mind!... and how signal have been his deliverance and preservation in the midst of a nation of pitiless enemies!” (1167). The section, like other sections of his preface, is structured in a way that calls attention to the series of abrupt, forceful descriptions of Douglass’s treatment in slavery. But, again, it places emphasis on the treatment and Douglass’s mind, rather than on just Douglass’s physical body. Garrison’s work is attempting to show that Douglass is unlike the other slaves with whom the readers might be familiar; he is unique and important to the historical discussion that is going on, rather than just another body that is sacrificed to the toils of slavery.

Garrison’s refrain from utilizing the physical descriptions that are seen in slave advertisements suggests a different kind of advertising: Douglass is attempting to put something forward that will have a lot of significance to history, as it is remembered. It also suggests that, instead of simply using Douglass to suit his own abolitionist needs, Garrison recognized that Douglass’s work would have an impact and that he needed to use language that would help support the work that Douglass is accomplishing for the American historical narrative.

From the opening of Garrison’s preface, the reader is drawn into his relationship with Douglass and Garrison’s rhetorical choices. He almost immediately claims the importance, and good fortune, for the audience to read the following narrative and for Douglass to have written the narrative, which emphasizes Douglass’s thoughts and capabilities. By calling attention to the humanity of both Douglass and other slaves, Garrison is able to create an expanded advertisement. He is not advocating for Douglass to be returned to slavery, but instead advertising the plight of those in slavery and left out of the historical narrative. Garrison’s advertisement contends that the audience should concern themselves with what Douglass has to say.

Both the audience and Douglass are benefitting from the publication of the *Narrative*: the audience has the opportunity to read and listen to a former slave share his experience, and Douglass has the opportunity to have his voice heard as a part of the American historical narrative. The relationship between Douglass and Garrison, then, becomes a moment in which recovery is occurring, where the voice of a specific person or group of people is looked for, found, and ultimately included in the historical narrative of the United States. Garrison’s work, instead of being restrictive or adversarial, should be seen as being helpful and inclusive because he is putting forward the work of Douglass as important.

The comparison between nineteenth-century fugitive slave advertisements and Garrison's preface to Douglass's *Narrative* is beneficial. This kind of comparison provides a look at two kinds of writing, one that focuses on preventing the agency of a group of people while the other actively suggests the equality and importance of making sure that minority groups of people are included and listened to as a part of the American historical narrative. Although of different genres and styles, both use different kinds of language, which helps to demonstrate how the inclusion of slaves' voices into historical narratives was both accepted and resisted by different groups of people.

The kind of work being accomplished with Garrison's preface also suggests that the historical narrative is constantly under revision and subject to any number of preferences from a time period or dominant group of people. He suggests that the historical narrative should not be completely dominated by the voices of white men by putting forward the work of someone who would typically be excluded, and emphatically suggests that the American public is fortunate enough to have access to and to read what others, like Douglass, have to contribute to our historical narrative.

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