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## The Evolution of Frederick Douglass' Slavery Debate: An Examination of his Rhetoric

Jacquelyn Torres  
*Dominican University of California*

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**The Evolution of Frederick Douglass' Slavery Debate:  
An Examination of his Rhetoric**

By

Jacquelyn Torres

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Bachelor of Arts In Political Science

Bachelor of Arts In History

Department of Political Science & International Studies Dominican University of  
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## **Abstract**

From leading the Abolitionist movement to holding a lecture tour abroad, Frederick Douglass is well known for championing racial justice and leaving a legacy of exposing the evils of slavery. Scholars have primarily focused on Douglass' actions as an abolitionist but not on the evolution of his thinking about slavery. While Douglass' actions, such as in the Abolitionist movement, are discussed in-depth amongst academic circles, there is oversight regarding looking at his arguments about slavery. Douglass' rhetoric was impacted by his experiences traveling abroad when he gave lectures in the British Isles between 1845-1847. This thesis examines speeches given by Frederick Douglass between 1841 and 1894 illustrating the evolution of his slavery rhetoric. Using content analysis, 14 speeches are coded to understand how Douglass framed the issue of slavery across his lifetime. This thesis improves our understanding of Douglass as a person, an orator, and his views about the human condition. Furthermore, the findings demonstrate how Douglass' slavery rhetoric changed before, during, and after his lecture tour in the British Isles. Before Douglass went abroad (1845) his speeches showed more religious framing, during his time in the British Isles (1845 - 1847) he used moral framing, and after 1847 he used political framing.

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## I. Introduction

Institutional racism, discrimination, and hate crimes plague the history of the United States due to the lingering effects of slavery and segregation having been meticulously interwoven in its founding. As observed with the Black Lives Matter movement and the George Floyd murder, people from all backgrounds protested to demand change, especially for Black individuals who are unjustifiably subjected to this cruel reality more than any other group in this nation. Despite the efforts of these progressive groups, there is still a lot left to do which is why this nation is eager for better leaders. While there is a saying that history should be consulted for our mistakes to not be repeated it is also fair to say that we shall do this but to learn from those who led progressive movements to have the same level of success. The main characteristic that the majority of racial justice leaders share is a talent for public speaking, which they strategically use to light the fire in the hearts of their followers and push for reform. Frederick Douglass is one of the best examples that illustrates the immense power rhetoric has since his efforts helped garner support for Abolitionism and human rights in general. Additionally, Douglass is an interesting case study, because his work demonstrates how the influence of rhetoric and public speaking has no borders — it is truly an international phenomenon.

Frederick Douglass' work revolved around exposing the evils of slavery, therefore it is fitting that his slavery rhetoric is examined. Douglass partook in a lecture tour abroad in the British Isles and during this experience he underwent a lot of character development that influenced the development of his thinking about slavery and slavery rhetoric. Examining how Douglass' slavery rhetoric changed as a result of his travels abroad is important because it provides a better understanding of his beliefs. Being able to decipher Douglass' motives is

crucial since it serves as the missing puzzle piece to the more significant matter of how he used public speaking and rhetoric to further his agenda. It is apparent that there is a gap in the literature about the evolution of Douglass' slavery rhetoric because the majority of the scholarship focuses on his Abolitionist efforts. Despite this reality, there are a couple of scholars who have studied Douglass' rhetoric such as John Brut who examines his political framing, and Gregory M. Collins who focuses on his legal framing. Collins, in particular, concludes that Douglass relied on Constitutionalism-infused rhetoric regarding anti-slavery. This thesis poses the question: How did Frederick Douglass frame the issue of slavery over his lifetime? Framing theory is helpful for this task as it helps identify the frames Douglass employed in his slavery rhetoric to better persuade his audiences.<sup>1</sup> This thesis utilizes content analysis, analyzing 14 speeches between 1841 and 1894, coded to understand how Douglass framed the issue of slavery over his lifetime. These speeches are divided into three categories: before (speeches delivered from 1841 to 1845), during (speeches delivered during 1845 to 1847), and after his lecture tour in the British Isles (speeches delivered after 1847). Do note that an additional section has been added titled "international speeches" which would go under the section of 1845-1847. The locations of these speeches are abroad which is why they are separated from the rest of the periods to make sure to code non-U.S. delivered speeches that are present in the during section. For clarification: The speeches in the "1845-1847" section were not delivered abroad which is why it was imperative to include this "international speeches" section since it provides more insight into Douglass' slavery rhetoric.

Without a doubt, Douglass' stay in Ireland was one of the most transformative experiences for him. This is because he witnessed the suffering caused by the Irish famine which

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<sup>1</sup> Dennis Chong and James N. Druckman, "Framing Theory," *Annual Review of Political Science* 10, no. 1 (2007): 103–26.



was eye-opening for him since he never truly realized public suffering occurs beyond the U.S. It took Douglass a long time for him to share his thoughts on the matter, but once he did he began to assist the movement of championing Abolitionism abroad. Reference Primary Source 1 Letter to William Lloyd Garrison to read Douglass' own words on the Irish famine and how it was hard for him to vocalize his sentiments towards it since he initially felt like he was not in a position to do so. Before this lecture tour, his rhetoric and public speaking were focused on his own experience as a slave, but after this experience in Ireland, he shifted to support a wider agenda that championed human rights and justice for everyone, regardless of borders.

Abolitionist figures in the U.S. spoke about slavery from various standpoints: Moral, economic, legal, political, and religious. To understand how Douglass framed the issue of slavery over his lifetime, it is imperative to analyze his speeches to see if he framed his rhetoric about slavery using moral, political, religious, and legal arguments. The thesis consists of an extensive literature review, theoretical framework, a section on methodology and data collection, findings and analysis, and a conclusion. To accompany this research, literature on Frederick Douglas' biography, time abroad in the British Isles, and slavery rhetoric were examined.

### **A. Douglass Between 1845 to 1847**

1845 is a point in Douglass' life, since that is when he published his first autobiography: *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. With his book and identity out, his safety was at risk which is why he travels to the British Isles where he lectures on anti-slavery. Douglass' freedom is eventually bought in 1846 by his British admirers for 150 pounds sterling (\$711.66 in U.S. currency) which causes him to become legally free.<sup>2</sup> In 1847,

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<sup>2</sup> "Buying Frederick Douglass's Freedom, 1846," Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, January 18, 2022.

Susan B. Anthony, a key figure in the women's movement, moved in with Douglass and his family to Rochester, New York.<sup>3</sup> That house functioned as a stop for fugitive slaves, since he was still passionate about helping runaway slaves and abolishing slavery.<sup>4</sup> During this year, Douglass started to become a spokesman for women's rights which is why he became acquainted with Susan B. Anthony in the first place.<sup>5</sup> *The North Star*, Douglass' newspaper, is printed for the first time in a Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion church basement located in Rochester, New York.<sup>6</sup> Aside from purchasing Douglass' freedom, his British admirers also helped fund this newspaper.

According to Dr. Hannah Murray, Douglass gave 29 speeches in Ireland, 20 speeches in Northern Ireland, 93 speeches in Scotland, and 138 speeches in England.<sup>7</sup> In total, Murray mapped out the locations of 280 speeches Douglass delivered abroad. Douglass is also said to have lectured on a steamship in Cambria in August 1845.<sup>8</sup> Douglass enjoys his time abroad, especially since slavery was not present and he was treated as an equal. Despite this being an experience of contentment for Douglass, he was caught off guard by the Irish Famine since he was not expecting to witness Irish suffering.

## **B. Impacts of the British Isles Lecture Tour on Douglass**

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<sup>3</sup> Steven Mintz, "Frederick Douglass Timeline," Digital History, UH, [https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/exhibits/douglass\\_exhibit/douglass\\_timeline.html](https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/exhibits/douglass_exhibit/douglass_timeline.html).

<sup>4</sup> "Timeline of Frederick Douglass and Family," African American History of Western New York, The Circle Brotherhood Association, [www.math.buffalo.edu/~sww/0history/hwny-douglass-family.html](http://www.math.buffalo.edu/~sww/0history/hwny-douglass-family.html).

<sup>5</sup> Steven Mintz, "Frederick Douglass Timeline," Digital History, UH, [https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/exhibits/douglass\\_exhibit/douglass\\_timeline.html](https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/exhibits/douglass_exhibit/douglass_timeline.html).

<sup>6</sup> Steven Mintz, "Frederick Douglass Timeline," Digital History, UH, [https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/exhibits/douglass\\_exhibit/douglass\\_timeline.html](https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/exhibits/douglass_exhibit/douglass_timeline.html).

<sup>7</sup> Hannah Murray, "Frederick Douglass Speaking Locations," <http://frederickdouglassinbritain.com/Map:FrederickDouglass/>.

<sup>8</sup> Hannah Murray, "Frederick Douglass Speaking Locations," <http://frederickdouglassinbritain.com/Map:FrederickDouglass/>.

To better illustrate how Douglass was influenced by his British Isles lecture tour, it is crucial to take a look at relevant primary sources which can further support this. Before Douglass went abroad, the main issue he had witnessed was that of slavery which is why he was not aware of other oppression occurring abroad. This is why Douglass' efforts before going abroad were focused on sharing his story as a former slave as well as advocating against the institution of slavery. Leslie A. Williams' book *Daniel O'Connell, The British Press and The Irish Famine: Killing Remarks* reveals the situation of the Irish famine since they faced a lot of discrimination and oppression: "They call us a dirty race — a lazy race — superstitious beasts — brutes — savages, worse than the cannibals of New Zealand... They call us robbers... wholesale murderers, and they call our clergy 'sanguinary scoundrels,' 'surpliced ruffians'... 'demon priesthood.'"<sup>9</sup> This excerpt from *The Times* reveals British sentiment on the Irish as they stereotyped the Irish movement led by O'Connell. This excerpt consists of O'Connell's words, but he references *The Times* newspaper and the negative things they have said about his people. This is relevant to the collection as Douglass joined O'Connell's movement and did advocacy work for the Irish who were being oppressed as depicted by British newspaper content. This sentiment was widespread in the British Isles which caused Douglass to remain silent for a while since he did not want to overreach by putting out his opinion on the matter.

In addition to the newspaper primary source, it is imperative to look at a letter Douglass wrote to William Lloyd Garrison during his trip to Ireland (reference Primary Source 1). This letter was found in an initiative by the University Library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill called Documenting the American South. They were able to get access to this letter from *The Liberator*. This letter is the first time Douglass expresses his sentiments regarding the

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<sup>9</sup> Leslie Williams, *Daniel O'Connell, The British Press and The Irish Famine: Killing Remarks*, Routledge, 2016.

Irish Famine. Before this point, he had never expressed his opinion on the matter which is why this historical artifact is of important significance. Additionally, this is the shifting point in Douglass' life where he stops focusing so much on the oppression of slaves and starts to speak about global human suffering.

An *Irish Times* article titled "Frederick Douglass and Ireland: In His Own Words: A compelling account of a historic moment"<sup>10</sup> provided context for a quote that reveals the impact Ireland had on Douglass and his public speaking work: "Douglass heard O'Connell speak at a public meeting in Dublin on September 29th, 1845, and was immediately entranced: "It seems to me that the voice of O'Connell is enough to calm the most violent passion, even though it were already manifesting itself in a mob. There is a sweet persuasiveness in it, beyond any voice I ever heard. His power over an audience is perfect." Douglass was referred to many times as the Black O'Connell and the reason for this is due to the great admiration he had for his political work as an Irish Catholic nationalist which he then replicated to an extent. The reason why Douglass related to O'Connell's words was that Douglass thought the Irish were similar to slaves in America as they were both oppressed due to their identity. This primary source demonstrates how an Irishman, O'Connell, influenced Douglass' own speech writing since he was a sort of role model of his. Perhaps, this could be the reason why Douglass' slavery rhetorical framing changes during this time and after his trip.

The strong relationship that formed between Douglass and those he met in the British Isles can be seen in the following primary source (reference Primary Source 2).<sup>11</sup> The Library of

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<sup>10</sup> Brendan Kelly, "Frederick Douglass and Ireland: In His Own Words: A Compelling Account of a Historic Moment," *The Irish Times*, September 22, 2018.

<sup>11</sup> "Frederick Douglass Newspapers, 1847-1874: Digital Collections," The Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/collections/frederick-douglass-newspapers/about-this-collection/>.

Congress provides more context on this primary source: "Douglass gained much of the funding to establish *The North Star* during a lengthy speaking tour of England, Ireland, and Scotland from late August 1845 to early April 1847, which followed the publication of his first autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*." This primary source connects to the findings of Murray's '*With almost electric speed*': *Mapping African American abolitionists in Britain and Ireland, 1838–1847*, piece since it reveals how Douglass received assistance from the Abolitionist network abroad. *The North Star Newspaper* was funded by his European supporters which demonstrates how the relationships he made abroad in the British Isles were maintained after he left.

One of the most interesting primary sources this thesis looked at was an image of a broadside announcing Frederick Douglass' lecture on American slavery (reference Primary Source 3) which was accessed virtually from the Yale University Library.<sup>12</sup> This primary source is interesting because it shows how Douglass marketed his lectures through the use of broadsides which were posters used back in his day. The wording on there that says "Recently a Slave" reveals how Douglass made sure to use his unique experience to stand out from the rest of the Abolitionist who were White and had not experienced slavery. The fact that this broadside was for a lecture on Douglass' slavery experience makes sense when the date of such a piece is taken into consideration. This is relevant to my research question and my findings because slavery, specifically Douglass' lived experience, is the main focus of Douglass in the first period I coded which is when this broadside was put up. This is why the period after he comes back from his lecture tour abroad he does still talk about slavery but to a smaller degree since he is focused on advocating against global human suffering and other matters such as racial injustice.

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<sup>12</sup> "Broadside Announcing Frederick Douglass Lecture on American Slavery," Yale University Library, <https://collections.library.yale.edu/catalog/17382470>.

### III. Literature Review

Frederick Douglass (1818 - 1895) is a venerated figure in American history due to breaking the barriers of what a slave can achieve: self-education, abolition of slavery, involvement in politics, and lecturing abroad. Douglass knew he was one of the first slaves to accomplish such notable feats, which is why he used the platform he had created to fight against the institution of slavery in the U.S. and abroad. Change is part of human nature, which is why it is imperative to look at the changes Douglass' life and rhetoric underwent. To understand this phenomenon better, it is imperative to conduct a literature review that touches upon scholars' study of Douglass with regards to the following topics of analysis: Douglass' biography, the impacts of Ireland on him, and the study of his rhetoric. In addition to looking at what has been written about Frederick Douglass, it is also crucial to look at the emerging issues from these pieces as well as identify gaps that require further research.

#### A. Biographical Research

*Frederick Douglass: America's Prophet* by D. H. Dilbeck presents research on Douglass' life through a religious lens, specifically Christianity. Dilbeck's thesis is that religion is what shaped Frederick Douglass' career due to how important it was to him. Unlike other books on the topic of Frederick Douglass, that only focus on Douglass' life through no religious lens, Dilbeck's piece examines his faith to delve deeper and provide a more personal understanding of Douglass' identity and thought processes. Dilbeck is effective at supporting his thesis, but his piece would have been stronger if he had considered the effects of other religions on Douglass, especially since he traveled extensively throughout his life and therefore encountered different faiths. Additionally, it would have been interesting to hear about Douglass' lecture tour in the

British Isles and how exposure to other religions might have impacted him. One of the interesting findings of this piece is how Douglass was against the way the U.S. practiced slavery due to its connections to religion; hence its corruption that made Douglass struggle with his faith.<sup>13</sup> Another aspect of Dilbeck's work that fills a gap in this field is the overview of the African Methodist Episcopal Church — especially how its founding, as well as one of the founder's 1829 pamphlet, *An Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World*, inspired many to speak against slavery.<sup>14</sup> The primary sources this work utilizes are mainly Frederick Douglass' autobiographies as well as his speeches. Dilbeck explained how he mainly focused on speeches during his public career because that is when Douglass is said to have voiced his religious beliefs more.<sup>15</sup> These sources, and the analysis that Dilbeck provides, help us understand Douglass' struggle with Christianity, how religion impacted his work, and how his faith manifested.

Analyzing Frederick Douglass through a religious lens reveals a lot, another scholar, Dickson J. Preston, uncovers more about him by placing an emphasis on Douglass' ancestry and life before he runs away from slavery. Scholars mainly focus on the work Douglass did during the Civil War and afterward, which is why this is a very much needed piece of scholarship. Preston examines a lot of primary sources, including newspapers, autobiographies, letters, and other materials found in archives such as in the Frederick Douglass Collection at Howard University. What motivated Preston to pursue this research were the inconsistencies found in Douglass' work, the criticisms that had surfaced that Douglass invented his slavery accounts, and his little-known background/ancestry.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, Preston's work was based on research of

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<sup>13</sup> D. H. Dilbeck, *Frederick Douglass: America's Prophet*, 14 February, 2018, 5.

<sup>14</sup> D. H. Dilbeck, *Frederick Douglass: America's Prophet*, 14 February, 2018, 6.

<sup>15</sup> D. H. Dilbeck, *Frederick Douglass: America's Prophet*, 14 February, 2018, 7.

<sup>16</sup> Dickson J. Preston and David W. Blight, *Young Frederick Douglass: The Maryland Years*, Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018, xvi.

external sources such as records that provided more information on his family and the locations Douglass has lived in. According to Preston, the only myth he learned about was Douglass' over-exaggeration of his time as a slave: "Although [the Bailey clan] were illiterate Eastern Shore slaves, the Bailey clan into which [Douglass] was born were far from being "dregs of society."<sup>17</sup> They were part of a culture group, too often overlooked, that had been thoroughly Americanized by long and intimate association with the dominant Eastern Shore whites.<sup>18</sup>

Preston's groundbreaking research further reveals how Frederick Douglass was privileged:

"From early childhood he was recognized by his white masters as an unusually gifted boy and, within the limits of their conditioned attitudes as slave-holders, he was treated as such."<sup>19</sup> He was given opportunities open to few, if any, other young blacks... For the seven most formative years of his youth, he lived in virtual freedom, under a mistress who regarded him as a foster son, in the intellectual ferment and commercial bustle of Baltimore."<sup>20</sup> One of the interesting findings of this biography was that Douglass might be part Indian based on a lot of evidence and family tradition.<sup>21</sup>

*Frederick Douglass in Brooklyn* by Theodore Hamm looks at Frederick Douglass' life by examining his complex relationship with the borough of Brooklyn. Although Brooklyn was not a haven for Black Americans (e.g. strong economic ties to Southern slavery), Douglass still frequented this city since he had friends and allies there as well as connections to publications

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<sup>17</sup> Dickson J. Preston and David W. Blight, *Young Frederick Douglass: The Maryland Years*, Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018, xvii

<sup>18</sup> Dickson J. Preston and David W. Blight, *Young Frederick Douglass: The Maryland Years*, Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018, xvii

<sup>19</sup> Dickson J. Preston and David W. Blight, *Young Frederick Douglass: The Maryland Years*, Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018, xvii.

<sup>20</sup> Dickson J. Preston and David W. Blight, *Young Frederick Douglass: The Maryland Years*, Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018, xvii.

<sup>21</sup> Dickson J. Preston and David W. Blight, *Young Frederick Douglass: The Maryland Years*, Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018, 10.



founded in Brooklyn.<sup>22</sup> Hamm's thesis looks at what influences Douglass left on this city, and vice versa, is effectively accomplished by looking at primary sources such as Douglass' accounts of the city as well as the speeches he gave there and how they were received. Similarly, he placed an emphasis on newspapers and their coverage of Douglass — particularly the newspaper called the *Brooklyn Eagle*. This piece adds to the literature of Frederick Douglass by looking at his relationship with Brooklyn, especially how he was able to help Abolitionists there.

While the study of Douglass's complex relationship with Brooklyn does expand understanding of how important the matter of anti-slavery was for Douglass, Benjamin Quarles provides a different lens that accomplishes the same: Douglass' relationship with Susan B. Anthony in "Frederick Douglass and the Woman's Rights Movement." Quarles provides an interesting account of the relationship of these change-makers which did not work out in the long run due to their disagreement on voters' rights. While Douglass believed the woman suffrage movement's success depended on the preliminary success of the Abolitionists, Anthony's group disagreed with this causing the Equal Rights Association to be left for a new organization they created that did not champion Black suffrage: the National Woman's Suffrage.<sup>23</sup> In Quarles' archival research the following primary sources are used newspapers, records, and letters. This piece is relevant because it shows how Douglass was not willing to compromise on the matter of slave voter rights.

## **B. Douglass's Time Abroad**

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<sup>22</sup> Theodore Hamm, *Frederick Douglass in Brooklyn*, New York: Akashic Books, 2017, 11.

<sup>23</sup> Benjamin Quarles, "Frederick Douglass and the Woman's Rights Movement," *The Journal of Negro History* 25, no. 1 (1940): 35–44, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2714400>, 41.

“‘Safe in Old Ireland’: Frederick Douglass’s Tour, 1845–1846” provides a lot of insight into Frederick Douglass’ experience in Ireland. Quinn’s thesis is hidden in this piece, but it can be assumed that it revolves around Douglass feeling safe and content in Ireland and his sentiment towards the struggles of that nation. Unfortunately, Quinn’s work reads more as a timeline rather than a scholarly work. Instead of providing analysis, the author merely provides accounts of Douglass’ travels as well as quotes from Douglass. Quinn used various primary sources, particularly writings of Douglass, letters, speeches, and newspapers. Quinn mainly relied on letters to further his thesis that Douglass enjoyed his stay in Ireland, especially those to Garrison because they were the ones where Douglass expressed his true feelings about Ireland. One of the interesting findings in this piece is how Douglass expresses feeling welcomed in Ireland and how he is not treated or perceived as below anybody else. This is a major experience for someone who was a former slave and has lived most of his life being discriminated against based on the color of his skin. Overall, compared to other works on Frederick Douglass in Ireland, this piece does not add anything new to this subject rather it summarizes what other scholars have found.

“‘With almost electric speed: Mapping African American abolitionists in Britain and Ireland, 1838–1847’” provides an interesting approach to covering Frederick Douglass’ British Isles Lecture tour. Rather than relying solely on primary sources — newspapers, letters, and speeches — Murray maps out the locations Douglass spoke at during his lecture tour abroad to point out patterns. Murray’s main argument presented in this piece is that African American Abolitionists left a mark abroad which can be better understood through modern mapping technology. The spreading of thoughts from American Abolitionists helped these nations abroad learn more about the American experience and the issues that impacted them. This modern digital mapping technology opens up new avenues for research that would have not been

considered such as patterns in travel or interactions with certain people.<sup>24</sup> An example of new avenues for research is how the establishment of more railways in England directly impacted Abolitionists including Douglass because they were better able to move around and spread their rhetoric about slavery.<sup>25</sup> An interesting finding from this research is how Douglass was mainly successful in his lecture tour abroad because of the white abolitionist network he had as well as his great oratory abilities.<sup>26</sup> Successful in this context refers to Douglass being able to put on many lectures in different locations and the influence this had: "African American activists had an extraordinary impact on the British and Irish public from tiny villages to capital cities."<sup>27</sup> This is why his efforts garnered attention for Douglass to the point where foreign newspapers began to cover his work. Without a doubt, Douglass received assistance with securing locations to speak at thanks to these supporters who eventually funded his first newspaper *The North Star*. One of the great aspects of Murray's work is how it reveals the negative factors in this lecture tour such as the toll it took on Douglass: "He canceled a meeting in Leeds because of a 'fit of sickness' which sapped his 'usual strength', according to local abolitionist Mary Brady. When he finally attended the rescheduling meeting, however, even the newspaper correspondent noticed 'he was evidently laboring under [a] severe disposition' and halfway through his speech, his 'strength failed him, and he was compelled to resume his seat, requesting that someone might address the meeting until he had in some measure recovered."<sup>28</sup> The number of lectures and traveling

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<sup>24</sup> Hannah-Rose Murray, "With Almost Electric Speed: Mapping African American Abolitionists in Britain and Ireland, 1838–1847," *Slavery & Abolition* 40, no. 3 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1080/0144039x.2018.1551296>.

<sup>25</sup> Hannah-Rose Murray, "With Almost Electric Speed: Mapping African American Abolitionists in Britain and Ireland, 1838–1847," *Slavery & Abolition* 40, no. 3 (2018).

<sup>26</sup> Hannah-Rose Murray, "With Almost Electric Speed: Mapping African American Abolitionists in Britain and Ireland, 1838–1847," *Slavery & Abolition* 40, no. 3 (2018).

<sup>27</sup> Hannah-Rose Murray, "With Almost Electric Speed: Mapping African American Abolitionists in Britain and Ireland, 1838–1847," *Slavery & Abolition* 40, no. 3 (2018).

<sup>28</sup> Hannah-Rose Murray, "With Almost Electric Speed: Mapping African American Abolitionists in Britain and Ireland, 1838–1847," *Slavery & Abolition* 40, no. 3 (2018).

Douglass engaged in ultimately ended up impacting his work and mental health towards the end of said lecture tour. Murray poses an interesting question about what digital mapping can reveal: “what was the cost of such punishing abolitionist activism.”<sup>29</sup> Overall, the reason why Murray praises digital mapping is that: It can reveal how the successes of Abolitionist tours were often dependent on reformist/Abolitionist networks and therefore show how Abolitionism was a complicated matter involving racial divisions.<sup>30</sup> Murray also believes digital mapping technology, and digital humanities in general, “can reinvigorate transatlantic abolitionist research and reveal that Britons walk past sites with a rich history of black activism on a daily basis.”<sup>31</sup>

In “Frederick Douglass, Daniel O’Connell, and the Transatlantic Failure of Irish American Abolitionism,” Black takes a different approach to looking at Douglass’ trip to Ireland by placing an emphasis on the failure of Irish American Abolitionism. The reason why the focus is placed on Ireland, although other locations were involved in Douglass’ lecture tour in the British Isles, is due to Douglass’ beliefs that Irish peasants had a lot in common with slaves, and the 1840s Irish Repeal movement shares some similarity with the Abolitionist movement.<sup>32</sup> An interesting finding of Black’s research is that newly arrived Irish immigrant had a very different sentiment than those in Ireland when it came to Douglass’ Abolitionist efforts: “they believed that O’Connell and Garrison’s equation of the Irish Repeal movement with Garrisonian Disunionism was being used as a political ploy to discourage the Irish Americans’ ascension into

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<sup>29</sup> Hannah-Rose Murray, “With Almost Electric Speed: Mapping African American Abolitionists in Britain and Ireland, 1838–1847,” *Slavery & Abolition* 40, no. 3 (2018).

<sup>30</sup> Hannah-Rose Murray, “With Almost Electric Speed: Mapping African American Abolitionists in Britain and Ireland, 1838–1847,” *Slavery & Abolition* 40, no. 3 (2018).

<sup>31</sup> Hannah-Rose Murray, “With Almost Electric Speed: Mapping African American Abolitionists in Britain and Ireland, 1838–1847,” *Slavery & Abolition* 40, no. 3 (2018).

<sup>32</sup> Christopher Allan Black. “Frederick Douglass, Daniel O’Connell, and the Transatlantic Failure of Irish American Abolitionism,” *Making Connections: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Cultural Diversity* 12 (1): 17–25. 2010, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=54905077&site=eds-live>, 17.

white middle-class society and their desire to achieve economic success at the expense of working-class black labor.”<sup>33</sup> Daniel O’Connell, an activist for Irish rights, garnered the support of these skeptics because he was perceived as a hero due to his work with the “Catholic Emancipation movement of the 1820s and his unwavering support of the Repeal movement in the 1840s.”<sup>34</sup> It is imperative to note that O’Connell was the first to push forward the utilitarian idea of human suffering being universal and how the suffering of these skeptics was similar to that of slaves — Douglass did not make these connections until later on when he began to champion human rights.<sup>35</sup> The reason why Douglass and other Abolitionists stayed away from directly comparing the economic conditions of Irish and slave struggles is that the latter had it worse since they had to face ownership rather than their material condition.<sup>36</sup> Black was effective at providing a glimpse into how Douglass was impacted by Ireland by placing an emphasis on Daniel O’Connell’s influence on Douglass. He uses a lot of primary sources, but the most important ones are newspapers since it shows how far some went to spread skepticism about Abolitionism: "The Catholic press warned that Abolition would lead to the dissolution of the Union and that the Disunionist movement itself 'was a British plot to weaken the United States...

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<sup>33</sup> Christopher Allan Black, “Frederick Douglass, Daniel O’Connell, and the Transatlantic Failure of Irish American Abolitionism,” *Making Connections: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Cultural Diversity* 12 (1): 17–25. 2010.

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=54905077&site=eds-live>, 18.

<sup>34</sup> Christopher Allan Black, “Frederick Douglass, Daniel O’Connell, and the Transatlantic Failure of Irish American Abolitionism,” *Making Connections: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Cultural Diversity* 12 (1): 17–25. 2010.

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=54905077&site=eds-live>, 18.

<sup>35</sup> Christopher Allan Black, “Frederick Douglass, Daniel O’Connell, and the Transatlantic Failure of Irish American Abolitionism,” *Making Connections: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Cultural Diversity* 12 (1): 17–25. 2010.

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=54905077&site=eds-live>, 18.

<sup>36</sup> Christopher Allan Black, “Frederick Douglass, Daniel O’Connell, and the Transatlantic Failure of Irish American Abolitionism,” *Making Connections: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Cultural Diversity* 12 (1): 17–25. 2010.

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=54905077&site=eds-live>, 21.

The editors of *The Pilot* claimed that if Irish Americans endorsed Disunionist they ran the risk of putting themselves back into the subservient minority position they experienced in their native country.<sup>37</sup> Black supports their main point especially when they mentioned that the efforts of Douglass, Garrison, and O'Connell were a failure due to Irish immigrants leaving their peasant past behind in the sense that they were able to live in better conditions which decreased their sympathy for the economic struggles the Abolitionists advocated and adopted prejudices.<sup>38</sup> An interesting matter Black brought up was the distrust slaves had towards other immigrants due to the labor discrimination they experienced and the fact that it was common for Irishmen to encourage slaves to escape for freedom just to turn them in and receive compensation.<sup>39</sup> Another point that Black notes contributed to the lack of support for the Abolitionist movement by Irish immigrants is due to them not being discriminated against for their faith in the U.S.<sup>40</sup>

In “Send Back the Bloodstained Money: Frederick Douglass on Tainted Gifts,” Emma Saunders-Hastings researches an interesting aspect of Douglass’ lecture tour abroad and that is the stance he had regarding tainted money. Tainted or blood-stained money refers to money or donations that come from slave owners which is why Douglass advocated against foreign

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<sup>37</sup> Christopher Allan Black, “Frederick Douglass, Daniel O’Connell, and the Transatlantic Failure of Irish American Abolitionism,” *Making Connections: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Cultural Diversity* 12 (1): 17–25. 2010.

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=54905077&site=eds-live>, 19.

<sup>38</sup> Christopher Allan Black, “Frederick Douglass, Daniel O’Connell, and the Transatlantic Failure of Irish American Abolitionism,” *Making Connections: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Cultural Diversity* 12 (1): 17–25. 2010.

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=54905077&site=eds-live>, 20.

<sup>39</sup> Christopher Allan Black, “Frederick Douglass, Daniel O’Connell, and the Transatlantic Failure of Irish American Abolitionism,” *Making Connections: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Cultural Diversity* 12 (1): 17–25. 2010.

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=54905077&site=eds-live>, 22.

<sup>40</sup> Christopher Allan Black, “Frederick Douglass, Daniel O’Connell, and the Transatlantic Failure of Irish American Abolitionism,” *Making Connections: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Cultural Diversity* 12 (1): 17–25. 2010.

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=54905077&site=eds-live>, 23.

churches and organizations from accepting this since it would indirectly continue to allow slavery to flourish. Without a doubt, this piece fills in a gap in the study of Douglass and his lecture tour. Emma Saunders-Hastings examines various speeches by Douglass to get his perspective on tainted gifts. For example, some of the speeches were given before the Free Church of Scotland and Douglass argued that their acceptance of dirty money makes them responsible for slavery.<sup>41</sup> Not only does bloodstained money tie into the Abolitionist movement, but it was also subject to controversy, which is why the exploration of Douglass' beliefs on this is groundbreaking. This ties into my research because some of the speeches I looked at encouraged foreign nations to put social pressure on the U.S. to halt the institution of slavery. Douglass did make sure to explain how he would not approve of military action against the U.S. since he understood the messy history and relations of England and America.

Unlike the rest of the literature on Douglass' lecture tour, which focuses on his impact on the locations he visited, Adrian N. Mulligan's work in "As a Lever Gains Power by Its Distance from the Fulcrum: Tracing Frederick Douglass in the Irish Atlantic World" looks at the impacts this trip had on Douglass. Mulligan provides an interesting thesis: how Douglass' British Isles lecture tour, especially his stay in Ireland, influenced Frederick Douglass' thinking and rhetoric on slavery. Mulligan employs a variety of primary sources to further his thesis that there were impacts. Most notably, archival research on the specific impact of the abolitionist Atlantic network, which influenced Douglass, is what he focuses on. The majority of the primary sources Mulligan looks at are records of meetings, newspapers, and letters but he does not look at speeches. Mulligan should have included more speeches in his research because those can reveal

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<sup>41</sup> Leslie Williams, *Daniel O'Connell, The British Press and The Irish Famine: Killing Remarks*, Routledge; 2016,  
<https://search-ebshost-com.dominican.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=1480233&site=ehost-livel>

more about Douglass than say records of meetings that do not express any sentiments he may have had. Mulligan's findings reveal that Douglass was not only influenced by the sense of freedom in Ireland but also by the structure of society (i.e. religion, social classes, etc).<sup>42</sup>

Mulligan believes Douglass' time in Ireland showcases how his level of savoir-faire improved while there since he had to address different audiences based on their location and status.<sup>43</sup>

Savoir Faire means being able to adapt one's behavior depending on multiple factors such as audience and location. Mulligan also talks about how during the period when Douglass was in Ireland he “covered his eyes at times” since he did not speak on the Irish Famine which can be reflected in Primary Source 1 of this thesis.<sup>44</sup>

### **C. Rhetorical Analysis**

While Douglass’ rhetoric has been studied by various academics, John Brut’s “Political Violence and the Persuasive Engagement in Frederick Douglass” adds to the discussion by looking specifically at political rhetoric. Brut’s research highlights Douglass’ perception of politics as a tool to counter slavery. One of the speeches Brut covers is “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” which is full of political framing and concludes with support of the Constitution since he labeled it as a glorious liberty document. Brut makes sure to note how Douglass’ stance on the Constitution was not shared by all Abolitionists as seen with William Lloyd Garrison

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<sup>42</sup> Adrian N. Mulligan, “As a Lever Gains Power by Its Distance from the Fulcrum: Tracing Frederick Douglass in the Irish Atlantic World,” 2017, 411.

<sup>43</sup> Adrian N. Mulligan, “As a Lever Gains Power by Its Distance from the Fulcrum: Tracing Frederick Douglass in the Irish Atlantic World,” *Social & Cultural Geography* 18 (3): 395–414. doi:10.1080/14649365.2016.1184709, 412.

<sup>44</sup> Adrian N. Mulligan, “As a Lever Gains Power by Its Distance from the Fulcrum: Tracing Frederick Douglass in the Irish Atlantic World,” *Social & Cultural Geography* 18 (3): 395–414. doi:10.1080/14649365.2016.1184709, 411.



calling it an agreement of hell. An interesting find from this work is that Douglass encouraged anti-slavery political violence, which is not common knowledge.

Gregory M. Collins' thesis in "Beyond Politics and Natural Law: The Anticipation of New Originalist Tenets in the Constitutional Thought of Frederick Douglass" focuses on Douglass' constitutionalism-infused rhetoric regarding anti-slavery. Collins specifically analyzes his employment of natural rights which addresses the question of whether slavery is compatible with the United States Constitution. Collins goes even further, by also looking at Douglass' contribution to political thought since he believed in New Originalism. Collins makes the shocking reveal that Douglass supported a proslavery perception of the Constitution, but this was all a strategy, since he only cared about doing what would help end slavery.<sup>45</sup> Douglass' logic was initially that supporting a proslavery perception would help him look like he was compromising and less of a threat to those in favor of that stance which would make them more likely to hear him out in the future once he decided to change his stance. Douglass eventually voices his true sentiments and changes his support in favor of an antislavery view of the Constitution. Again, he initially supported the proslavery view to reach a middle ground with the opposition and gain their support; hence this all being strategy.<sup>46</sup>

In addition to the scholars who studied Douglass by examining his political and constitutionalism rhetoric, Lucy Williams proposed a different categorization of Douglass' rhetoric with "Blasting Reproach and All-Pervading Light: Frederick Douglass's Aspirational American Exceptionalism." The three aspects of exceptionalism Williams analyzes are:

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<sup>45</sup> Gregory M. Collins, "Beyond Politics and Natural Law: The Anticipation of New Originalist Tenets in the Constitutional Thought of Frederick Douglass," *American Political Thought* 6, no. 4 (2017): 574–609. <https://doi.org/10.1086/694117>, 574.

<sup>46</sup> Gregory M. Collins, "Beyond Politics and Natural Law: The Anticipation of New Originalist Tenets in the Constitutional Thought of Frederick Douglass," *American Political Thought* 6, no. 4 (2017): 574–609. <https://doi.org/10.1086/694117>, 575.

accomplished, aspirational, and self-critical exceptionalism. William's research is based on speeches, such as how she analyzed the rhetoric in one of Douglass' speeches to highlight his progressive nature — especially regarding American citizenship.

There is overlap amongst the literature on Frederick Douglass because they agree on the foundational aspects of his life — with the exception of *Dickson J. Preston's Young Frederick Douglass*. Preston's piece goes against popular belief which is what the majority of scholars in this subject used as a foundation for their research. The reason why he disagrees with others is that his research demonstrates how Douglass was privileged and over-exaggerated his youth to gain more sympathy throughout his career. Additionally, he brings up the notion of Douglass possibly having Indian in him due to the evidence there is around his grandmother having said background. Preston's piece went further than other scholars have because he made sure to double-check Douglass' claims through archival research (records, letters, etc.) which made these groundbreaking discoveries. Theodore Hamm's piece also fills in gaps in academia by shining light on a more niche matter: Douglass' relationship with Brooklyn. Through this, a lot is also learned about Brooklyn since it had major racial tensions due to its strong ties to slavery. Dilbeck, Preston, Hamm, and Quarles communicate with each other because they study different aspects of Douglass' life that when brought together provide a more intimate understanding of who he was. All of these pieces agree with the notion of Douglass's work being transformative which is why they share the same tone of veneration.

Aside from that, the literature under the Douglass Abroad section agrees on everything but each piece adds more information about Douglass' lectures in the British Isles. Out of the available literature on this, Christopher Allan Black and John F. Quinn provide the most interesting research, again, due to it being niche in nature. It is common knowledge in this field

that Irish Americans and slaves did not have a positive relationship, but Black is able to go further by backing this up with evidence. Black's research connects this as well as the experience of newly arrived Irish immigrants to the failure of Irish American Abolitionism. Other scholars tend to omit mentions of Douglass' failures which is why this piece fills in a missing piece in academia. John F. Quinn on the other hand also provides unique findings that demonstrate how Douglass' thinking and rhetoric on slavery were influenced by his stay in Ireland. Quinn's piece is important for this thesis because it builds on his research by coding speeches to see how his stay in the British Isles, with an emphasis on Ireland, impacted his slavery rhetoric. Again, the majority of scholarly literature on Douglass' lecture tour abroad focuses on other locations such as England rather than examining Ireland which arguably played a much larger role in Douglass' life because there are accounts of him revealing how that location was one of the transformative places he has ever visited. He enjoyed his time there especially since he was treated as human and an equal to those living there. Having witnessed the Irish famine directly impacted his advocating work since before this he would mainly talk about slavery but this changed when he returned to the U.S. after this lecture tour.

The scholarship about Douglass' rhetoric raises the question of what it truly was about and what approach can best answer this. Disagreement on Douglass' rhetoric is illustrated by Williams Lucy focusing on his rhetoric through an exceptionalist lens while Gregory M. Collins pursues his research on Douglass' constitutionalism rhetoric. John Burt is different from these two scholars because he focuses on Douglass' rhetoric as a political one which led him to discover Douglass' encouragement for anti-slavery political violence. Despite their different conclusions and research findings, all of these works agree on the fact that Douglass' rhetoric,

whatever it may be, was effective at persuading people and ultimately helping the Abolitionist movement.

Scholars of Frederick Douglass have studied his life and his work with the Abolitionist and Women's Suffrage movements but only a few have studied his British Isles lecture tour. Adrian N. Mulligan is one of the scholars who has looked into Douglass' stay in Ireland and how this experience influenced his thinking and rhetoric on slavery. Mulligan used records of meetings, newspapers, and letters, but I am going to try to add to this and the general study of Douglass' slavery rhetoric by analyzing his speeches before, during, and after his time in the British Isles. While Mulligan's findings are substantive they do not truly get at Douglass' rhetoric since he did not analyze his rhetoric. I will be using framing theory to analyze Douglass' slavery rhetoric and how it changed over time due to the change in audience and location.

### **III. Theoretical Framework**

This thesis examines speeches, as outlined in-depth in the following section, delivered before 1845, during 1845-1847, and after Douglass' lecture tour in the British Isles. The time periods and speeches are important to study because scholars have shown that his time in the British Isles was influential. It is equally important to understand how Douglass frames the issue of slavery since this is what ultimately persuades his audiences.<sup>47</sup> Framing theory refers to the way in which one's conceptualization of a topic is developed or altered as a result of framing. This thesis relies on the definition provided by Dennis Chong and James N. Druckman in their "Framing Theory" article. They state, "An issue can be viewed from a variety of perspectives

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<sup>47</sup> Dennis Chong and James N. Druckman, "Framing Theory," *Annual Review of Political Science* 10, no. 1 (2007): 103-123. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.10.072805.103054>.

and be construed as having implications for multiple values or considerations.”<sup>48</sup> With this logic, any changes Douglass applies to his framing of slavery rhetoric can directly impact how his audience perceives the issue of slavery and whether they are persuaded. As part of framing theory, Chong and Druckman acknowledged how, “Scholars track frames to identify trends in issue definitions, compare coverage across media outlets, and examine variations across types of media.”<sup>49</sup>

To measure the impact and shifts in the framing being utilized there are four steps Chong and Druckman outline: “First, an issue or event [has to be] identified... Second, if the goal is to understand how frames in communication affect public opinion, then the researcher needs to isolate a specific attitude... Third, an initial set of frames for an issue [has to be] identified inductively to create a coding scheme. Fourth, once an initial set of frames is identified, the next step is to select sources for content analysis.”<sup>50</sup> Examples of framing this article provided included an individualism and an economic frame.<sup>51</sup> This thesis codes for the following rhetorical frames: moral, economic, legal, political, and religious. In accordance with Chong and Druckman, this study defined all of the frames researched to provide accurate results: “When researchers... analyze large volumes of text, they must identify the universe of words that mark the presence of a frame.”<sup>52</sup> This is relevant to this thesis since the speeches are coded based on frames that have been assigned a definition.

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<sup>48</sup> Dennis Chong and James N. Druckman, “Framing Theory,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 10, no. 1 (2007): 104. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.10.072805.103054>.

<sup>49</sup> Dennis Chong and James N. Druckman, “Framing Theory,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 10, no. 1 (2007): 106. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.10.072805.103054>.

<sup>50</sup> Dennis Chong and James N. Druckman, “Framing Theory,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 10, no. 1 (2007): 106-107. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.10.072805.103054>.

<sup>51</sup> Dennis Chong and James N. Druckman, “Framing Theory,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 10, no. 1 (2007): 106. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.10.072805.103054>.

<sup>52</sup> Dennis Chong and James N. Druckman, “Framing Theory,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 10, no. 1 (2007): 108. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.10.072805.103054>.

The way in which rhetoric is presented is studied by scholars because it helps reveal certain patterns and changes in how an issue is framed. These changes provide further insight into how the subject has evolved in thinking or perhaps how they have been influenced by a change in society. Chong and Druckman acknowledge how the theory of framing can be applied to many forms of media including articles, surveys, television, and speeches. This study does not study the public's attitude regarding the issue of slavery rather it only focuses on Frederick Douglass as the overall purpose is to see how his thinking has changed over time. Whether Douglass' efforts of persuasion through framing were effective are therefore irrelevant to this thesis. With the aid of framing theory, this thesis attempts to gain insight into Douglass' mind to better understand how his lecture tour in the British Isles impacted the way he perceives the issue of slavery. As noted by Chong and Druckman, the way in which people frame their arguments can reveal a lot about said person; hence why framing theory was used for this thesis.

#### **IV. Methodology and Data Collection**

This thesis employs content analysis to analyze 14 speeches. Kimberly A. Neuendorf's *The Content Analysis Guidebook* defines "content analysis [as the] summarizing, quantitative analysis of messages that relies on the scientific method... and is not limited as to the types of variables that may be measured or the context in which the messages are created or presented."<sup>53</sup> In other words, this research technique is used to analyze the content of materials by making inferences based on certain messages or variables presented. Since I am looking at speeches and coding them for certain frames to better understand Douglass' rhetoric over time, content

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<sup>53</sup> Kimberly A. Neuendorf, *The Content Analysis Guidebook*, SAGE Publications, Inc; 1st edition, 10.

analysis is an appropriate methodology. The data and the narrative of Douglass' life reveal how his lecture tour abroad, especially when in Ireland, influenced his rhetoric tremendously.

The main data set employed in this thesis is composed of 14 speeches: 3 given before 1845, two given between 1845 to 1847, and five speeches given after 1847. There is also an additional section titled 'International Speeches' with four speeches that were delivered abroad. This was important to include since the other two speeches during 1845 to 1847 were delivered in the United States. The speeches this thesis examines are periodized—before, during, and after Douglass' British Isles lecture tours—to determine how his rhetoric has shifted due to said experience. The speeches are all from Douglass but vary in terms of audience, venues, and dates. The speeches were gathered from a website called the Frederick Douglass Heritage, which hosts a collection of his speeches.<sup>54</sup> Other speeches were collected from the book *The Speeches of Frederick Douglass: A Critical Edition*.<sup>55</sup> Another website I gathered speeches from is the Yale Macmillian Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition.<sup>56</sup> All 14 speeches contain references to the topic of slavery. The following search terms were searched for when compiling the list of speeches: slavery, Frederick Douglass, British Isles lecture tours, and Ireland.

I was the sole coder for this thesis project and can attest that there was no intercoder reliability. The Code Sheet found in Appendix A was developed to capture how Frederick

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<sup>54</sup> *Frederick Douglass Heritage*, Frederick Douglass Heritage, 23 October, 2016, <http://www.frederick-douglass-heritage.org>.

<sup>55</sup> George Barr et al, "American Slavery, American Religion, and the Free Church of Scotland (1846)," In *The Speeches of Frederick Douglass: A Critical Edition*, Yale University Press, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv6hp3kt.8>.

<sup>56</sup> "Temperance and Anti-Slavery: An Address Delivered in Paisley, Scotland on March 30, 1846," *The Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition*, 7 Apr. 2015, <https://glc.yale.edu/temperance-and-anti-slavery-address-delivered-paisley-scotland-march-30-1846>.

Douglass' slavery rhetoric was framed since it changes based on the speech. The Code Sheet begins with the date the speech was given, followed by the length of the speech (number of sentences), location, and audience. The total number of sentences that refer to historical events/figures and Douglass' personal experience as a slave is also included. Five frames were coded for: moral, economic, legal, political, and religious. These five frames are some of the main ways arguments can be made which is why there is value in applying them to Douglass' rhetoric. For a list of these terms along with their corresponding definitions see Table 1.

## **V. Findings and Analysis**

Using content analysis, 14 speeches between 1841 and 1894 were coded to understand how Douglass framed the issue of slavery before, during, and after his lecture tour in the British Isles. This thesis, therefore, asks whether any changes occurred in Douglass' slavery rhetoric during these sections of his life. These speeches are divided into three categories: before, during, and after his lecture tour in the British Isles (1845-1847). There is an additional section that examines speeches during Douglass' lecture tour in the British Isles to provide a clear observation of how that specific period impacted his rhetoric. The difference between this section and the section titled "1845-1847" is that the former were delivered abroad while the latter section consisted of speeches given in the U.S. In addition to content analysis, framing theory was employed to identify the frames Douglass used in his slavery rhetoric as well as its effects that ultimately influenced the opinion of the public. The frames this study coded for came about from an evaluation of possible arguments that could be made against slavery. The results show that Douglass' rhetoric on slavery had indeed changed before (1845), during (1845-1847),



and after (1847) his lecture tour abroad. This supports my argument since I had predicted Douglass' lecture tour trip had an impact on him and his slavery rhetoric.

In addition to looking at the three time periods of Douglass' life — before (1845), during (1845-1847), and after (1847) his lecture tour in the British Isles — this thesis also looked at four speeches given abroad from 1845 to 1846. These international speeches had a total of 785 sentences and the following was revealed about the rhetorical framing employed: 314 sentences were moral; 61 sentences were economic; 69 sentences were legal; 54 sentences were political, and 207 sentences were religious. The results from coding the speeches given abroad show that Douglass used a moral frame to talk about slavery more than any other frame that was coded. These speeches were included to determine whether or not Douglass' time in England and Scotland had an impact on his rhetoric.

Two speeches were coded for the time between 1845 and 1847 for a total of 345 sentences. The following was found from coding these speeches: 83 of the sentences were framed as moral; 10 as economic; 14 as legal; 60 as political, and 30 as religious (See Table 3). During this period, Douglass framed slavery mainly as a moral issue, followed by a political frame. Douglass' speech titled "The Right to Criticize American Institutions," delivered on May 11, 1847, for the American Anti-Slavery Society provides a lot of examples of moral framing. For example, "The only thing that links me to this land is my family, and the painful consciousness that here and there are three millions of my fellow-creatures, groaning beneath the iron rod of the worst despotism that could be devised, even in Pandemonium; that here are men and brethren, who are identified with me by their complexion, identified with me by their hatred of Slavery, identified with me by their love and aspirations for liberty, identified with me by the

stripes upon their backs, their inhuman wrongs and cruel sufferings.”<sup>57</sup> The reason why this quote was framed as moral is because it relates to character and how some behavior is ethically wrong. Speeches given between 1845 and 1847 are different from the previous two sections since the rhetorical framing of religion is not as popular in Douglass’ speeches during this time. Unlike the “before 1845” section, the use of an economic argument increases from 0.6% of a speech during the “before 1845” section to 2.9% in the “between 1845 and 1847” section (See Table 3). This can mean that Douglass had to reinforce his arguments through economic framing to better persuade people. An economics frame is relevant to the discussion of slavery since the main reason why this institution thrived was due to the profits slaveowners received. When slavery was abolished slaveholders suffered a lot financially since they had to secure paid employees which was hard since people were not willing to work for free anymore. The presence of money is what also ended up persuading priests to support a pro-slavery version of the Bible which again demonstrates the power of economics and money overall. The corruption of the bible is touched on in Douglass’ “The Church and Prejudice” speech: “But all this prejudice sinks into insignificance in my mind, when compared with the enormous iniquity of the system which is its cause—the system that sold my four sisters and my brothers into bondage—and which calls in its priests to defend it even from the Bible! The slaveholding ministers preach up the divine right of the slaveholders to property in their fellow men. The southern preachers say to the poor slave, “Oh! if you wish to be happy in time, happy in eternity, you must be obedient to your masters; their interest is yours. God made one portion of men to do the working, and another to do the thinking; how good God is!”<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Frederick Douglass, “The Right to Criticize American Institutions,” May 11, 1847.

<sup>58</sup> Frederick Douglass, “The Church and Prejudice,” Plymouth County, Massachusetts, November 4, 1841.

Finally, five speeches after 1847 for a total of 1,387 sentences were coded. Interestingly, political and moral frames were most common in this group of speeches since the former had 161 sentences (11.6%) while the latter had 151 (10.9%) sentences coded as moral frames (See Table 3). Legal framing came in third (91), followed by religious (33), and economic (30) (See Table 3). This section is the first to have the rhetorical framing of legal in third place. It is interesting to note how moral and political framing are the most popular for Douglass to use in his speeches during this period. The following were the audiences for the five speeches coded during this period: The Literary Societies of Western Reserve College, Women's National Loyal League, Parker Fraternity Lecture Course, Louisville's Exposition Building (part of a parade that included African American fraternal societies, Black veterans, and Black bands), and Civil Rights Mass-Meeting. The audience made a difference because most of them are political in nature and have individuals who value morality; hence why Douglass took this into account and used moral and political framing the most during this period. Douglass' speech "Our Composite Nationality" delivered on December 7, 1869, in Boston Massachusetts provides a great example of moral framing: "Our treatment of the negro has lacked humanity and filled the country with agitation and ill-feeling, and brought the Nation to the verge of ruin."<sup>59</sup> This quote notes how slavery and racism are unethically wrong which is why it is categorized as moral. "Recollections of the Anti-Slavery Conflict" delivered on April 21, 1873, in Louisville Kentucky is one of the most political speeches Douglass delivered because it talks about how Abolitionism is not new since it has been uttered in the past by those involved in the founding of this nation: "The leading statesmen of the Republic were opposed to slavery... I remember reading one of the most eloquent outbursts of sentiment from him upon this subject that I ever read from any source. He said he could be instrumental in erasing from his native State a hint of human slavery, and from

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<sup>59</sup> Frederick Douglass, "Our Composite Nationality," Boston, Massachusetts, December 7, 1869.

the State of his adoption he would not exchange the profound satisfaction for all the laurels ever bestowed upon the most successful conqueror. I do not quote his exact language, but he uttered such a sentiment as this. Such sentiments as this were uttered fifty years ago, so that Abolitionism is no modern idea."<sup>60</sup> This excerpt was coded as political because it relates to government and political beliefs (See Table 1).

The closer the speeches are to the post-lecture tour in the British Isles, the less Douglass uses compound-complex sentences in addition to being able to better simplify his writing. Here is a piece of Douglass' speech "The Southern Style of Preaching to Slaves: An Address Delivered in Boston, Massachusetts" given on January 28, 1842, which showcases how Douglass' early work employs compound-complex sentences: "And this is the way they would apply it. They would explain it to mean, "slaveholders, do unto slaveholders what you would have them do unto you: "—and then looking impudently up to the slaves' gallery, (for they have a place set apart for us, though it is said they have no prejudice, just as is done here in the northern churches;) looking high up to the poor colored drivers and the rest, and spreading his hands gracefully abroad, he says, (mimicking,) "And you too, my friends, have souls of infinite value—souls that will live through endless happiness or misery in eternity. Oh, labor diligently to make your calling and election sure."<sup>61</sup> The earlier speeches that were coded for tended to be long and quite messy but this improves a lot especially since he takes on a more direct approach later on. Here is an excerpt from one of Douglass' later speeches titled "The Right to Criticize American Institutions," delivered on May 11, 1847, which shows how his speech writing has evolved to become more direct and simplified: "They deserve to be irritated. I am anxious to

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<sup>60</sup> Frederick Douglass, "Recollections of the Anti-Slavery Conflict," Louisville, Kentucky, April 21, 1873.

<sup>61</sup> Frederick Douglass, "The Southern Style of Preaching to Slaves: An Address Delivered in Boston, Massachusetts," January 28, 1842.

irritate the American people on this question. As it is in physics, so in morals, there are cases that demand irritation, and counter irritation. The conscience of the American public needs this irritation. And I would blister it all over, from center to circumference, until it gives signs of a purer and a better life than it is not manifesting to the world."<sup>62</sup> Another observation that can be made is how Douglass' earlier speeches tended to be quite repetitive — some seemed to have been copied and reused from other speeches he delivered. This makes sense, since he was expected to make multiple appearances and that could have limited his ability to put out fresh content. This changed when Douglass was exposed to more people and the world abroad since his speeches were not as repetitive as they used to be before he went to lecture abroad in the British Isles. Repeating material in speeches is not uncommon for public speakers since it is effective to have continuity and repeat a similar message. This is the case for Douglass' speeches given before 1845 since he repeats his former slave experience and uses the same arguments.

The findings of this thesis support the findings of D. H. Dilbeck's *Frederick Douglass: America's Prophet* regarding Douglass' use of religious framing. This use makes sense because of how Dilbeck explained that religion had a major impact on Douglass' career, identity, and thought process. Although this is supported, the findings of this thesis further reveal how religion was most prominent before Douglass went abroad in 1845. The way in which Douglass framed his rhetoric was in a religious frame but this only stands true for that section since he is quick to adopt other framings during and after his lecture tour in the British Isles. Here is an example of Douglass using religious framing in one of his earlier works titled "The Church and Prejudice," "I used to attend a Methodist church, in which my master was a class leader; he would talk most sanctimoniously about the dear Redeemer, who was sent "to preach deliverance to the captives,

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<sup>62</sup> Frederick Douglass, "The Right to Criticize American Institutions," U.S., May 11, 1847.

and set at liberty them that are bruised”—he could pray at morning, pray at noon, and pray at night; yet he could lash up my poor cousin by his two thumbs, and inflict stripes and blows upon his bare back, till the blood streamed to the ground! all the time quoting scripture, for his authority, and appealing to that passage of the Holy Bible which says, “He that knoweth his master’s will, and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes!”<sup>63</sup> This demonstrates how Douglass struggled with accepting the negative aspects of Southern religion but how that did not deter him from continuing to be faithful and looking past this corruption. Another point Dilbeck made, which was supported by the findings of this thesis, was Douglass’ struggle with his faith due to its corruption and connections with slavery. For example, in the following excerpt, Douglass critiques religion: “Thus you see, my hearers, this prejudice goes even into the church of God. And there are those who carry it so far that it is disagreeable to them even to think of going to heaven, if colored people are going there too” Despite his frustration with the pro-slavery churches, Douglass was able to overcome this struggle since he realized how people are what corrupt religion and alter its teachings according to their self-interest.

Dickson J. Preston made a good decision by focusing his research on Douglass before he runs away from slavery because his speeches then have a lot of religious rhetorical framing. Preston made a controversial remark about Douglass overexaggerating his life as a slave because he is said to have been more privileged than initially thought. With this in mind, it is interesting how Douglass acknowledged in multiple of his speeches how other slaves experienced hardships worse than him. In Douglass’ speech “American Slavery, American Religion, and the Free Church of Scotland” he covers the stories of other slaves such as that of a couple where the husband was separated from his wife and when he ran to say his farewell, his new slaveowner hit

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<sup>63</sup> Frederick Douglass, “The Church and Prejudice,” Plymouth County, Massachusetts, November 4, 1841.

him in the head with a loaded whip killing him instantly. In that same speech, Douglass also told the story of a female slave who was running away and trying to make it to the free world but ended up committing suicide by jumping off a bridge since her path was blocked by those trying to recapture her.<sup>64</sup> One of Preston's critiques of Douglass is how he exaggerated the treatment he endured since he was truly only hit very few times and was part of a notable Black American family: "When I was treated exceedingly ill, when my back was being scourged daily, when I was kept within an inch of my life, life was all I cared for. "Spare my life," was my continual prayer. When I was looking for the blow about to be inflicted upon my head, I was not thinking of my liberty; it was my life. But, as soon as the blow was not to be feared, then came the longing for liberty."<sup>65</sup> This quote is an example of how Douglass would portray his life worse than what Preston believed was a privileged life.

Another aspect of Douglass' speeches that is questionable is how he portrays himself as a friend of the slaves. This is peculiar because he belonged to that group therefore the need to differentiate is suspicious. Aside from that, Douglass has a tendency of including the stories of other slaves and laws as if to divert attention from his privileged experience. Douglass' speech "I am Here to Spread Light on American Slavery," notes how there have been skeptics about his former slave status: "It was at last doubted if I had ever been a slave, and this doubt being used in injure the anti-slavery cause, I was induced to set the matter at rest by publishing the narrative of my life."<sup>66</sup> The fact that he took this personally and took the time to respond to it, despite not having had to, brings up suspicion as if Preston's findings were correct.

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<sup>64</sup> Frederick Douglass, "American Slavery, American Religion, and the Free Church of Scotland," London, England, 22 May 1846.

<sup>65</sup> Frederick Douglass, "American Slavery, American Religion, and the Free Church of Scotland," London England, 22 May 1846.

<sup>66</sup> Frederick Douglass, "I am Here to Spread Light on American Slavery," 12 October 1845

In terms of the literature on Douglass' time abroad, Quinn's findings are illustrated in many of Douglass' speeches since he expresses feeling safe and content in Ireland. In Ireland and England, Douglass shares his feeling of being seen and respected as any other man there; hence his appreciation for the British Isles. Black and Mulligan's findings on how Ireland impacted Douglass hold true in the research conducted in this thesis especially since Douglass mentions Daniel O'Connell a lot. Douglass empathizes with the situation of the Irish people experiencing the Irish famine in his speeches since he recognizes how their treatment is a violation of human rights: "But in Ireland, persecution has at last reached a point where it reacts terribly upon her persecutors. England to-day is reaping the bitter consequences of her injustice and oppression. Ask any man of intelligence to-day, "What is the chief source of England's weakness?" "What has reduced her to the rank of a second-class power?" and the answer will be "*Ireland!*" Poor, ragged, hungry, starving and oppressed as she is, she is strong enough to be a standing menace to the power and glory of England."<sup>67</sup> Black was also correct in looking at the failure of Irish American Abolitionism since Douglass discussed this matter a lot in his speeches. To him, it was conflicting how despite Irishmen being supportive of Douglass and anti-slavery efforts this did not translate well with their American or newly arrived counterparts in the U.S. Some of Douglass' speeches advocate for the Irish who are heavily oppressed in the U.S. and abroad especially in his speech "The Claims of the Negro Ethnologically considered," delivered on July 12, 1854: "The Irishman educated, is a model gentleman; the Irishman ignorant and degraded, compares in form and feature with the negro!" Although Douglass acknowledges how in the U.S. recent Irish immigrants are oppressed but how unlike their American Irish counterparts are not as hateful towards Black individuals. Irish Americans have a history of

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<sup>67</sup> Frederick Douglass, "The Decision Has Humbled the Nation," Washington, D.C., October 22, 1883.



oppressing Black individuals to the point where it was said some would encourage slaves to escape and then capture them for a reward. In Douglass' first autobiography he talked about how some Irishmen in one of the jobs he had encouraged him to escape slavery but although that was in the back of his mind he made sure not to let his intentions be known to these guys because of his fear of being backstabbed by them.<sup>68</sup>

My findings support that of Emma's "Send Back the Bloodstained Money: Frederick Douglass on Tainted Gifts" piece because Douglass expressed being against tainted gifts in his speeches. As illustrated in the speeches, Douglass believed international organizations such as the Free Church of Scotland contributed to the institution of slavery in the U.S. by accepting the bloodstained money from slaveholders which allows slaveholders to continue without accountability. In Douglass' speech "American Slavery, American Religion, and the Free Church of Scotland," there is an indirect reference to blood money and how it enables for the institution of slavery to flourish: "I have to inform you that the religion of the southern states, at this time, is the great supporter, the great sanctioner of the bloody atrocities to which I have referred. (Deep sensation.) While America is printing tracts and Bibles; sending missionaries abroad to convert the heathen; expending her money in various ways for the promotion of the Gospel in foreign lands, the slave not only lies forgotten—uncared for, but is trampled under foot by the very churches of the land."<sup>69</sup> Murray's findings in "With almost electric speed!: Mapping African American abolitionists in Britain and Ireland, 1838–1847," aligned with the findings of this thesis. In particular, the data from this study supports Murray's thesis that Douglass' lecture tour was successful because of the White abolitionist network he had as well as his oratory abilities.

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<sup>68</sup> Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*, Dover Thrift Editions, New York, Dover Publications, 1995.

<sup>69</sup> Frederick Douglass, "American Slavery, American Religion, and the Free Church of Scotland," London, England, 22 May 1846.

In the speeches coded in this thesis, Douglass talks about gaining supporters in the British Isles who eventually help buy his freedom from his former slave owner. An example of this is found in “Recollections of the Anti-Slavery Conflict,” delivered in Louisville, Kentucky on April 21, 1873, “They found who he was and wrote to him to know if he would sell me, and if he would that they would buy me. And so \$750 was sent over in British gold and I was set at liberty, and by that means I was enabled to return to the United States and pursue my anti-slavery studies and my anti-slavery labors.”<sup>70</sup> Black also affirms Murray’s findings by thanking the Abolitionist network abroad including Daniel O’Connell’s support.

In terms of the literature analyzing Douglass’ rhetoric, the three scholars examined in this section came to different findings. While Brut’s research found that Douglass’ rhetoric is framed in a political manner, Collins disagrees since they believe it was framed in a legal manner that emphasizes the role of the Constitution. An example of my findings that support Collin’s findings regarding the emphasizing on legal framing and the Constitution is that of Douglass’ “The Southern Style of Preaching to Slaves: An Address Delivered in Boston,” speech given on January 28, 1842: “They are refused the claims of the man. They are not allowed the rights of the husband and the father. They may not name the name of Liberty.”<sup>71</sup> Similarly, in Douglass’ “The Right to Criticize American Institutions,” Douglass continues on with this sentiment of charging at the Constitution for its shortcomings: “How can I, I say, love a country thus cursed, thus bedewed with the blood of my brethren? A country, the Church of which, and the Government of which, and the Constitution of which, is in favor of supporting and perpetuating this monstrous system of injustice and blood? I have not, I cannot have, any love for this country, as such, or for

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<sup>70</sup> Frederick Douglass, “Recollections of the Anti-Slavery Conflict,” Louisville, Kentucky, April 21, 1873,

<sup>71</sup> Frederick Douglass, “The Southern Style of Preaching to Slaves: An Address Delivered in Boston,” January 28, 1842.

its Constitution. I desire to see its overthrow as speedily as possible, and its Constitution shriveled in a thousand fragments, rather than this foul curse should continue to remain as now.”<sup>72</sup>

Lucy William’s piece “Blasting Reproach and All-Pervading Light: Frederick Douglass’s Aspirational American Exceptionalism,” refutes other scholars’ findings and believes Douglass employed more of a moral framing for his anti-slavery rhetoric — focus being placed on Aspirational American Exceptionalism. Again, religious framing was mainly used for speeches given before 1845. Similarly, moral framing was mainly used for speeches abroad and speeches delivered between 1845 to 1847. Finally, political framing was what was used for the speeches given after 1847. The findings of this study support Brut and William’s piece since Douglass did use political and religious rhetorical framing for many of his speeches during all time periods. Furthermore, the findings refute Collin’s work since legal framing is not used as much by Douglass as the other options. My findings side the most with William’s work since it is common for Douglass to touch upon the topic of American citizenship and progress. As a matter of fact, Douglass’ speech “Our Composite Nationality” delivered on December 7, 1869, in Boston, Massachusetts outlined multiple arguments in favor of the immigration of Chinese individuals: “I have said that the Chinese will come, and have given some reasons why we may expect them in very large numbers in no very distant future. Do you ask if I would favor such immigration? I answer, I would. “Would you admit them as witnesses in our courts of law?” I would. Would you have them naturalized, and have them invested with all the rights of American citizenship? I would. Would you allow them to vote? I would. Would you allow them to hold office? I would.”<sup>73</sup> This speech illustrates how much Douglass has grown especially since his focus is not

<sup>72</sup> Frederick Douglass, “The Right to Criticize American Institutions,” May 11, 1847.

<sup>73</sup> Frederick Douglass, “Our Composite Nationality,” Boston, Massachusetts, December 7, 1869.

just on slavery but on a global scale. This is because Douglass brings up the issue of Chinese immigration and how that connects to human rights: “I submit that this question of Chinese immigration should be settled upon higher principles than those of a cold and selfish expediency. There are such things in the world as human rights. They rest upon no conventional foundation, but are eternal, universal and indestructible.”<sup>74</sup> Another speech titled “The Right to Criticize American Institutions” illustrates this human rights sentiment which appears only after Douglass comes back from his lecture tour abroad: “ I love humanity all over the globe.”<sup>75</sup>

The findings from my research show that Douglass' speeches evolved throughout his life, especially as a response to his lecture tour abroad. Analysis of the speeches reveals how Douglass' slavery rhetoric changed from focusing on his life as a slave to championing human rights on a global scale. The speeches delivered before 1845 and during Douglass' lecture tour (between 1845 to 1847) have a uniting purpose: to gain momentum and support for the anti-slavery movement. It is interesting how Douglass understood the globalization of the nation at the time and how global pressure could influence nations to change. Douglass went abroad to persuade people in the British Isles to support his efforts and halt their indirect support of slaveholders and the institution of slavery through blood money. When Douglass used this type of rhetoric it was coded as having an economic frame. The speeches given after 1847 had a different purpose which was to remind audiences about the history of slavery in the U.S. and to advocate against discrimination faced by Black Americans after slavery was abolished. Additionally, this last section also brought attention to the oppression others faced on a global scale while providing his opinion on political and international matters. Without a doubt, this is why the speeches given after 1847 were mainly framed in a political manner.

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<sup>74</sup> Frederick Douglass, “Our Composite Nationality,” Boston, Massachusetts, December 7, 1869.

<sup>75</sup> Frederick Douglass, “The Right to Criticize American Institutions,” May 11, 1847.

## VI. Conclusion

The way in which public speakers, notably Frederick Douglass, frame their arguments varies depending on certain factors including the audience, the date, location, the type of speech, and transformative experiences they may have undergone. The goal of a speaker is therefore to persuade, which can be carefully done through different framing of arguments including but not limited to moral, religious, economic, legal, and political frames. As a reminder, the research question this thesis focuses on is: How has Frederick Douglass' slavery rhetoric changed before, during, and after his lecture tour in the British Isles?

The vast majority of Douglass' writing has the goal of gaining momentum behind the Abolitionist movement. It is imperative to note that this goal does change once slavery is abolished because it shifts his focus on countering racism and advocating for human rights globally. In many of his speeches, Douglass provides a glimpse into what life as a slave is like to reveal the horrors endured by this population and gain the empathy of his audience. By employing a lot of moral framing in his rhetoric, Douglass encourages his audiences to re-evaluate the status quo regarding the position of a Black individual in the U.S. Not only did his anti-slavery work influence those who attended Abolitionist events, but it also spread internationally through his lecture tours in the British Isles. Politicians, including Abraham Lincoln, were influenced by his slavery rhetoric, however to what extent he had an impact on these figures was not researched in this study. The way in which Frederick Douglass, and public speakers in general, frame their arguments reveals how they think as a person and influences the success of their arguments. Douglass is very skillful at framing his arguments to ensure they resonate and appeal to his audience. He makes sure to use his former life as a slave to his

advantage in his speeches since it sets him apart from the other Abolitionists at the time. At the time, the majority of Abolitionists were White which is why Douglass used his status as a Black former slave to his advantage. While Douglass includes personal accounts in his speeches, he also includes stories of others in addition to laws that illustrate points he makes regarding the oppression of slaves. As the results of this study reveal (See Table 3), the dominant frames Douglass used overall in his slavery rhetoric were: religious, moral, and political frames. During different periods one of these was more dominant. For example, before 1845 the most popular rhetoric frame was religious. During 1845 to 1847 Douglass used moral arguments the most and this changed to using political arguments after 1847. Framing theory furthers our understanding of how Douglass used different argument frames on the matter of slavery.

This thesis only covers a small number of argument frames and speeches given by Frederick Douglass. While coding the speeches new argument frames began to pop up which would make great future research that can provide a more holistic understanding of Douglass' slavery rhetoric. Future research in this regard should consider looking at Douglass' appeal and employment of science in his speeches since it is very prevalent. Douglass seems to have been interested in the field of ethnology especially as it was used to dehumanize and oppress slaves which he highlighted in his speech "The Claims of the Negro Ethnologically Considered" delivered on July 12, 1854, in Ohio to the Philozetian Society: "I propose to submit to you a few thoughts on the subject of the Claims of the Negro, suggested by ethnological science, or the natural history of man."<sup>76</sup> Researchers should go beyond speeches by focusing more on the vast amount of writing out there by Douglass on the matter of slavery. In particular, a look into Douglass' journalistic career and how his writing was influenced by his experiences abroad

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<sup>76</sup> Frederick Douglass, "The Claims of the Negro Ethnologically Considered," Hudson, Ohio, U.S. July 12, 1854.

would make a great contribution to academia. Future research should also consider examining his use of historical events and figures in his speeches. This would help provide more insight into the mind of Frederick Douglass and how certain historical phenomena shaped his mind.

Similarly, it would be interesting for there to be more research on the number of how often his personal experience as a slave was incorporated into his speeches. As is common knowledge in the study of Douglass, he has a tendency of including a lot of inconsistencies in dates and details in his speeches and writings which this would help address.

Overall, Frederick Douglass' work for Abolitionism and then after the abolishment of slavery for anti-racism helped change the status quo for the better. Unfortunately, it would be incorrect to proclaim a false reality that this nation has improved regarding the status of Black Americans. Even after slavery was abolished Douglass recognized how it was heavily interwoven into this nation's founding which is why the oppression of this population continued despite the many efforts carried out. Despite retiring multiple times, Douglass continued to fight against the discrimination Black Americans faced and was not satisfied with the situation as expressed through his last words on his death bed. Douglass' life, work, public speaking abilities, and slavery rhetoric serve as a case study for leaders in this society who are continuing the fight against the oppression of Black individuals. While there is a saying that history should be consulted for our mistakes to not be repeated it is also fair to say that we shall do this but to learn from those who led progressive movements to have the same level of success. Overall, Douglass' work was successful since he helped abolish slavery but the institutional oppressions of Black Americans are still present to this day which is why he did help improve the lives of Black individuals but there is still much more left to do.

**Table 1: Definitions**

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| <b>Moral</b>     | "Of or pertaining to character or disposition, considered as good or bad, virtuous or vicious; of or pertaining to the distinction between right and wrong, or good and evil, in relation to the actions, volitions, or character of responsible beings; ethical"<br>( <a href="https://www.oed.com/oed2/00151262">https://www.oed.com/oed2/00151262</a> ) |
| <b>Economic</b>  | "Relating to trade, industry, and money"<br>( <a href="https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/economic">https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/economic</a> )  |
| <b>Legal</b>     | "Relating to the law"<br>( <a href="https://www.lexico.com/definition/legal">https://www.lexico.com/definition/legal</a> )   |
| <b>Political</b> | Relating to government or a person's political views or beliefs"<br>( <a href="https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/politics">https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/politics</a> )  |
| <b>Religious</b> | "Action or conduct indicating belief in, obedience to, and reverence for a god, gods, or similar superhuman power; the performance of religious rites or observances. Also in plural: religious rites"<br>( <a href="https://www.oed.com/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/161944">https://www.oed.com/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/161944</a> )                      |



**Table 2: Number of Sentences Coded for Rhetorical Framing**

| <b>Speech</b>   | <b>Moral</b> | <b>Economic</b> | <b>Legal</b> | <b>Political</b> | <b>Religious</b> |
|---|--------------|-----------------|--------------|------------------|------------------|
| Speech 1: “The Church and Prejudice” (1841)   | 4            | 0               | 0            | 0                | 8                |
| Speech 2: The Southern Style of Preaching to Slaves: (January 28, 1842)                 | 6            | 1               | 5            | 1                | 14               |
| Speech 3: The Anti-Slavery Movement, The Slaves Only Earthly Hope: (May 9, 1843)        | 10           | 1               | 2            | 12               | 2                |
| Speech 4: I am Here to Spread Light on American Slavery (1845)                          | 30           | 4               | 17           | 6                | 19               |
| Speech 5: “American Slavery, American Religion, and the Free Church of Scotland” (1846) | 83           | 48              | 32           | 21               | 134              |
| Speech 6: The Horrors of Slavery and England’s Duty to Free the Bondsman (1846)         | 63           | 8               | 20           | 23               | 49               |
| Speech 7: Temperance and Anti-Slavery (March 30, 1846)                                  | 13           | 2               | 0            | 4                | 5                |
| Speech 8: The Right to Criticize American Institutions (1847)                           | 46           | 5               | 6            | 22               | 14               |
| Speech 9: Country, Conscience, and the  | 37           | 5               | 8            | 38               | 16               |

|  |    |    |    |     |    |
|--|----|----|----|-----|----|
| Anti-Slavery Cause<br>(1847)   |    |    |    |     |    |
| Speech 10: The Claims<br>of the Negro<br>Ethnologically<br>Considered (1854) | 44 | 2  | 5  | 4   | 5  |
| Speech 11: The Mission<br>of the War (1864)                                  | 39 | 5  | 16 | 129 | 1  |
| Speech 12: Our<br>Composite Nationality<br>(1869)                            | 7  | 11 | 0  | 10  | 0  |
| Speech 13: Recollections<br>of the Anti-Slavery<br>Conflict (1873)           | 36 | 12 | 18 | 11  | 23 |
| Speech 14: The Decision<br>Has Humbled the Nation<br>(1883)                  | 25 | 0  | 52 | 7   | 4  |

**Table 3: Summary of Data**

|                    | <b>Before 1845</b> | <b>International Speeches (1845-1846)</b> | <b>1845 - 1847</b> | <b>After 1847</b> |
|--------------------|--------------------|---|--------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Total</b>       | 345                | 785                                       | 345                | 1387              |
| <b>Moral</b>       | 20                 | 314                                       | 83                 | 151               |
| <b>Economic</b>    | 2                  | 61  | 10                 | 30                |
| <b>Legal</b>       | 7                  | 69  | 14                 | 91                |
| <b>Political</b>   | 13                 | 54  | 60                 | 161               |
| <b>Religious</b>   | 24                 | 207                                       | 30                 | 33                |
| <b>Other</b>       | 279                | 80  | 148                | 921               |
|                    | <b>Percentages</b> |   |                    |                   |
| <b>% Moral</b>     | 5.8%               | 40.0%                                     | 24.1%              | 10.9%             |
| <b>% Economic</b>  | 0.6%               | 7.8%                                      | 2.9%               | 2.2%              |
| <b>% Legal</b>     | 2.0%               | 8.8%                                      | 4.1%               | 6.6%              |
| <b>% Political</b> | 3.8%               | 6.9%                                      | 17.4%              | 11.6%             |
| <b>% Religious</b> | 7.0%               | 26.4%                                     | 8.7%               | 2.4%              |
| <b>% Other</b>     | 80.9%              | 10.2%                                     | 42.9%              | 66.4%             |

## Primary Source 1: Letter to William Lloyd Garrison

To William Lloyd Garrison

My dear Friend Garrison:

In my letter to you from Belfast, I intimated my intention to say something more about Ireland; and although I feel like fulfilling my promise, the *Liberator* comes to me so laden with foreign correspondence, that I feel some hesitancy about increasing it. I shall, however, send you this, and if it is worth a place in your columns, I need not tell you to publish it. It is the glory of the *Liberator*, that in it the oppressed of every class, color and clime, may have their wrongs fully set forth, and their rights boldly vindicated. Your brave assertion of its character in your last defense of free discussion, has inspired me with a fresh love for the *Liberator*. Though established for the overthrow of the accursed slave system, it is not insensible to other evils that afflict and blast the happiness of mankind. So also, though I am more closely connected and identified with one class of outraged, oppressed and enslaved people, I cannot allow myself to be insensible to the wrongs and sufferings of any part of the great family of man. I am not only an American slave, but a man, and as such, am bound to use my powers for the welfare of the whole human brotherhood. I am not going through this land with my eyes shut, ears stopped, or heart steeled. I am seeking to see, hear and feel, all that may be seen, heard and felt; and neither the attentions I am receiving here, nor the connections I hold to my brethren in bonds, shall prevent my disclosing the results of my observation. I believe that the sooner the wrongs of the whole human family are made known, the sooner those wrongs will be reached. I had heard much of the misery and wretchedness of the Irish people, previous to leaving the United States, and was prepared to witness much on my arrival in Ireland. But I must confess, my experience has convinced me that the half has not been told. I supposed that much that I heard from the American press on this subject was mere exaggeration, resorted to for the base purpose of impeaching the characters of British philanthropists, and throwing a mantle over the dark and infernal character of American slavery and slaveholders. My opinion has undergone no change in regard to the latter part of my supposition, for I believe a large class of writers in America, as well as in this land, are influenced by no higher motive than that of covering up our national sins, to please popular taste, and satisfy popular prejudice; and thus many have harped upon the wrongs of Irishmen, while in truth they care no more about Irishmen, or the wrongs of Irishmen, than they care about the whipped, gagged, and thumb-screwed slave. They would as willingly sell on the auction-block an Irishman, if it were popular to do so, as an African. For heart, such men have adamant—for consciences, they have public opinion. They are a stench in the nostrils of upright men, and a curse to the country in which they live. The limits of a single letter are insufficient to allow any thing like a faithful description of those painful exhibitions of human misery, which meet the eye of a stranger almost at every step. I spent nearly six weeks in Dublin, and the scenes I there witnessed were such as to make me "blush, and hang my head to think myself a man." I speak truly when I say, I dreaded to go out of the house. The streets were almost literally alive with beggars, displaying the greatest wretchedness—some of them mere stumps of men, without feet, without legs, without hands, without arms—and others still more horribly deformed, with crooked limbs, down upon their hands and knees, their feet lapped around each other, and laid upon their backs, pressing their way through the muddy streets and merciless crowd, casting sad looks to the right and left, in the hope of catching the eye of a passing stranger—the citizens generally having set their faces against giving to beggars. I have had more than a dozen around me at one time, men, women and children, all telling a tale of woe which would move any but a heart of iron. Women, barefooted and bareheaded, and only covered by rags which seemed to be held together by the very dirt and filth with which they were covered—many of these had infants in their arms, whose emaciated forms, sunken eyes and pallid cheeks, told too plainly that they had nursed till they had nursed in vain. In such a group you may hear all forms of appeal, entreaty, and expostulation. A half a dozen voices have broken upon my ear at once: "Will your honor please to give me a penny to buy some bread?" "May the Lord bless you, give the poor old woman a little sixpence." "For the love of God, leave us a few pennies—we will divide them amongst us." "Oh! my poor child, it must starve, for God's sake give me a penny. More power to you!

pennies—we will divide them amongst us." "Oh! my poor child, it must starve, for God's sake give me a penny. More power to you! I know your honor will leave the poor creature something. Ah, do! ah, do! and I will pray for you as long as I live." For a time I gave way to my feelings, but reason reminded me that such a course must only add another to the already long list of beggars, and I was often compelled to pass, as if I heeded not and felt not. I fear it had a hardening effect upon my heart, as I found it much easier to pass without giving to the last beggar, than the first. The spectacle that affected me most, and made the most vivid impression on my mind, of the extreme poverty and wretchedness of the poor of Dublin, was the frequency with which I met little children in the street at a late hour of the night, covered with filthy rags, and seated upon cold stone steps, or in corners, leaning against brick walls, fast asleep, with none to look upon them, none to care for them. If they have parents, they have become vicious, and have abandoned them. Poor creatures! they are left without help, to find their way through a frowning world—a world that seems to regard them as intruders, and to be punished as such. God help the poor! An infidel might ask, in view of these facts, with confusing effect—Where is your religion that takes care for the poor—for the widow and fatherless—where are its votaries—what are they doing? The answer to this would be, if properly given, wasting their energies in useless debate on hollow creeds and points of doctrine, which, when settled, neither make one hair white nor black. In conversation with some who were such rigid adherents to their faith that they would scarce be seen in company with those who differed from them in any point of their creed, I have heard them quote the text in palliation of their neglect, "The poor shall not cease out of the land!" During my stay in Dublin, I took occasion to visit the huts of the poor in its vicinity—and of all places to witness human misery, ignorance, degradation, filth and wretchedness, an Irish hut is pre-eminent. It seems to be constructed to promote the very reverse of every thing like domestic comfort. If I were to describe one, it would appear about as follows: Four mud walls about six feet high, occupying a space of ground about ten feet square, covered or thatched with straw—a mud chimney at one end, reaching about a foot above the roof—without apartments or divisions of any kind—without floor, without windows, and sometimes without a chimney—a piece of pine board laid on the top of a box or an old chest—a pile of straw covered with dirty garments, which it would puzzle any one to determine the original part of any one of them—a picture representing the crucifixion of Christ, pasted on the most conspicuous place on the wall—a few broken dishes stuck up in a corner—an iron pot, or the half of an iron pot, in one corner of the chimney—a little peat in the fireplace, aggravating one occasionally with a glimpse of fire, but sending out very little heat—a man and his wife and five children, and a pig. In front of the door-way, and within a step of it, is a hole three or four feet deep, and ten or twelve feet in circumference; into this hole all the filth and dirt of the hut are put, for careful preservation. This is frequently covered with a green scum, which at times stands in bubbles, as decomposition goes on. Here you have an Irish hut or cabin, such as millions of the people of Ireland live in. And some live in worse than these. Men and women, married and single, old and young, lie down together, in much the same degradation as the American slaves. I see much here to remind me of my former condition, and I confess I should be ashamed to lift up my voice against American slavery, but that I know the cause of humanity is one the world over. He who really and truly feels for the American slave, cannot steel his heart to the woes of others; and he who thinks himself an abolitionist, yet cannot enter into the wrongs of others, has yet to find a true foundation for his anti-slavery faith. But, to the subject.

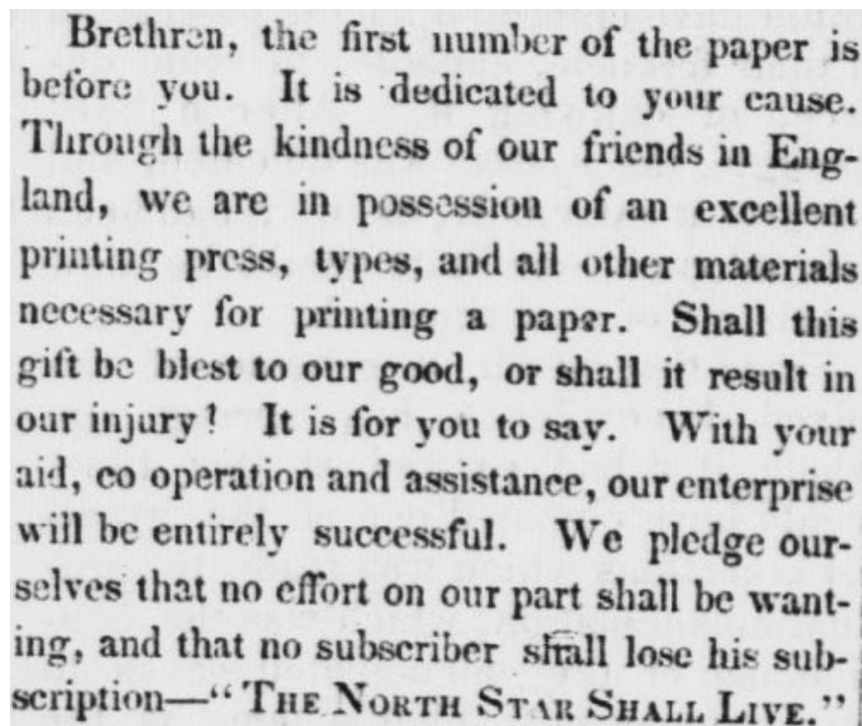


*The immediate*, and it may be the main cause of the extreme poverty and beggary in Ireland, is intemperance. This may be seen in the fact that most beggars drink whiskey. The third day after landing in Dublin, I met a man in one of the most public streets, with a white cloth on the upper part of his face. He was feeling his way with a cane in one hand, and the other hand was extended, soliciting aid. His feeble step and singular appearance led me to inquire into his history. I was informed that he had been a very intemperate man, and that on one occasion he was drunk, and lying in the street. While in this state of insensibility, a hog with its fangs tore off his nose, and a part of his face! I looked under the cloth, and saw the horrible spectacle of a living man with the face of a skeleton. Drunkenness is still rife in Ireland. The temperance cause has done much—is doing much—but there is much more to do, and, as yet, comparatively few to do it. A great part of the Roman Catholic clergy do nothing about it, while the Protestants may be said to hate the cause. I have been frequently advised to have nothing to do with it, as it would only injure the anti-slavery cause. It was most consoling to me to find that those persons who were most interested in the anti-slavery cause in the United States, were the same that distinguished themselves as the truest and warmest advocates of temperance and every other righteous reform at home. It was a pleasure to walk through the crowd with gentlemen such as the Webbs, Allens and Haughtons, and find them recognized by the multitude as the friends of the poor. My sheet is full.

Always yours,  
Frederick Douglass

Douglass, Frederick, Letter to Lloyd Garrison from *The Liberator*, 27 March 1846; Reprinted in Philip Foner, ed., *Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass*, vol. 1 (New York: International Publishers, 1950), p. 138. Documenting the American South, Yale Macmillan Center <https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/douglass/support12.html>

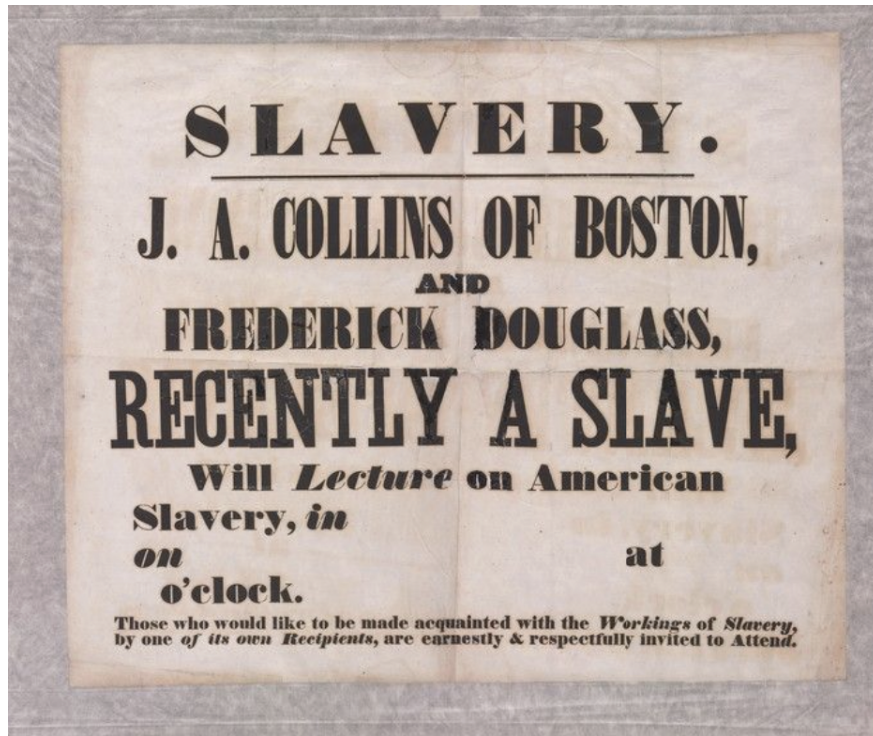
## Primary Source 2: North Star Newspaper Excerpt



Brethren, the first number of the paper is before you. It is dedicated to your cause. Through the kindness of our friends in England, we are in possession of an excellent printing press, types, and all other materials necessary for printing a paper. Shall this gift be blest to our good, or shall it result in our injury? It is for you to say. With your aid, co operation and assistance, our enterprise will be entirely successful. We pledge ourselves that no effort on our part shall be wanting, and that no subscriber shall lose his subscription—“THE NORTH STAR SHALL LIVE.”

Douglass, Frederick. “The North Star Newspaper Excerpt.” Library of Congress. (Rochester, NY), December 3, 1847. <https://www.loc.gov/item/sn84026365/1847-12-03/ed-1/>.

### Primary Source 3: Broadside on Douglass Lecture



Evans, Walter O, "Broadside Announcing Frederick Douglass Lecture on American Slavery," Yale University Library, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, 1856-1918, <https://collections.library.yale.edu/catalog/17382470>

## **Appendix A**

### **Code Sheet**

Title of the Speech:

Date of the Speech:

Length (number of sentences):

Location:

Audience:

Code number of sentences devoted to slavery framed as:

- Moral
- Economic
- Legal
- Political
- Religious

**Notes:**

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