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The Economy of Being: Temporality and Narrativity in Slave Narratives

Case of: Harriet Jacobs *'Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl'* (1861) and Frederick Douglass's *'Narrative of the Life of*

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Magister in British Commonwealth and American Studies.

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General Introduction

Time is not a perceived item yet it is made concrete through language in narrative and autobiography, in our case. Thus, within the autobiographical piece, meanings of joy, sadness, and loss… that mark a given time are contained within our study. For an accurate analysis of the theme that our study discusses, we will call for a didactic stream to treat theories that underlie time and narrative, the psychological facet to define traumatic realities and above all we will use an analytical method to draw upon the narratives chosen.

When we speak of narrative, we refer to the verb narrate; this act does not necessarily require a novel or short story to take place. Narration happens daily and everywhere, it can be through simple conversations with the self or others, radio, films and lines that one enjoys reading; they all constitute varied forms of narration. If we regard narrative from a cultural perspective, one might say that storytelling matters in the transmission of subsequent events that tell about particular items that construct heritage and history. Thus, human narrative has a deal of significance as it is a reference throughout which records of origins and myths are sought.

Autobiographical writing is also another form of narrative; it is a form upon which historians inscribe fundamental histories of a given area. Narrative theory, though, makes it clear that in literary confines there should be a distinction between narrative and non-narrative, but how to make a distinction? The narratologist Gerard Genette classifies three different notions for the French word ‘récit’ or narrative; narration or the

narrative act of the narrator, ‘discours’ or ‘récit’ to mean narrative text and ‘histoire’ to refer to the story that a narrator tells in his narrative, Fludernick (2009). This latter forms our interest in the present study.

The study at hand offers three chapters, aiming at depicting the issue of temporal aspects as well as narrativity traits in two major slave narratives, for a reason of reflecting upon a link between narrative studies and literature. The choice has fallen on the narrative of Harriet Jacobs under the title of ‘*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl. Written by Herself*’ (1861) and the one of Frederick Douglass entitled *‘Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave’* (1845). That has happened for two main objectives; the first is that both narratives constitute a vigorous account of personal experiences as slaves at a given period of time and also because their publications yielded discussions along with a polemic. The second motive is a didactic one and it relates to the extensive temporal insights that figure out in the two narratives, as well as to depict narrative criteria that underlie both literary pieces despite the fact that the chosen autobiographers did not receive any formal education.

The research is divided into three chapters. The first one concentrates on a theoretical framework that offers accounts on major findings and ideas brought by specialists in the field of literature and narrative studies. It treats the notion of time with regard to different philosophers and it also reviews time as projected in literature. Time with its occult facet adopts various meanings and represents an entity in its own. It possesses a crucial position in literature; it is an item which constitutes every literary piece, be it poetry or prose. It is the temporal side which gives worth to a given novel or story. Within the same chapter, the reader finds out an account concerning narrativity. It provides, as well, a snapshot of the slave narrative genre with a reflection upon writers whose texts were intended to underlie life under slavery.

The second and third chapters are rather analytical as they focus on modeling the theory on the aforementioned slave narratives. It foregrounds temporal and narrative insights into the chosen literary volumes. Both chapters handle diachronic aspects and also content-related sections where emphasis on character, autobiographical crafting and narrative staff are interpreted. Clarifications of the theoretical part are figured in the second and third chapter with biographical passages which intend to shade sides of Jacobs' and Douglass's lives. Both chapters are rounded off with a comparison that draws upon similarities and contrast between the study's narratives and others.

Points of view differ so as to form a clear definition of time as well as its relationship to narration. Along this research, we attempt to delineate the tie between time and narrative in two weighty novels of two authors who survived a given time and interpreted its incidents in words. How could time with its evanescent character be present in their works? Put differently, how can narration call for passing time to render it present again and again using language? Our tentative answer to these questions might be the following: time with its occult facet makes itself relatively present anew; whenever we try to discuss an event, time proves existent through language. In this respect, we mean how time aspects figure out in literature notably in slave narratives.

It is out of suffering and hunger, out of the horrors of slavery that literary voices were born. They succeeded to design a literature of their own, known as slave narratives (19th c). As its name indicates, this genre consists of accounts registered by African slaves who witnessed the ugliest of hardships and the darkest of atrocities in daylight. The great majority of African American servants barely lived a life under that of animals.

Deprived of their natural rights, some other men/women in bondage could discretely though uneasily hand their pens to make their cries heard. These figures thundered against slavery and wanted to unveil the hidden cruelty behind it so as to regain freedom. That could be possible through writings of literate slaves who enjoyed a capacity to read and write in English. Their secret literacy served as their weapon and an enemy of American slavery.

Writers, said differently, ex-slaves' autobiographies along with anti-slavery movement activists threatened the system and its beholders. Of those we mention Thomas Jones in his '*The Experience of Thomas Jones, who was a Slave for Forty Three Years'* (1850), Frederick Douglass with his *'Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave'* (1845), and Harriet Jacobs who wrote her *'Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl'* (1861), to name but a few. These two latter narratives are at the heart of our study.

Chapter One

Arguing on Temporality and Narrativity

1.1 Introduction

In the labyrinth of time, one finds himself facing a challenging path towards a destination that leads to a sound understanding of it. Time, with

the various mechanisms that it carries, bears a sensitive, critical and even delicate being or nonbeing. This forms a dilemma around it and constant philosophical debates to reach a healthy agreement on what a temporal form is. As seen from a literary mind’s eye, and this is our concern throughout the present study, time is linked to a literary essence or support conveying it. In what follows, one is to provide theories that underlie the notion of time and narrative.

1.2 Time Defined

Time as a notion is a bewildering one. The first impression drawn about it is that it is neither a seen nor a heard matter, yet it prevails everywhere. Time figures out in our lives, it counts in history, it makes sense in literary pieces, it marks eternity and it is significant to nature. Time as observed by Kant, among others, refers to the mode that characterizes our experiences. It is more general than space seems to be. Time, with its aspects, relates to change, duration and succession which mark events in our lives.

Time is intimate to man, as it cannot be detached or separable from their notion of the self. Time defines the growth of this self, be it mental or physical, and this causality is perceived only through time. The self mentioned before a while is a reference to the person or individual who is constantly immersed in time whether they like it or not. Temporal changes get a command over some change in them. How can the item of time operate if it allows for alterations?

It is a tricky and confusing quest to answer, for time prevails everywhere and concerns every single component of the world. If we regard nature, we notice the growth of a flower, how it was, how it appears at the moment and how it will look like after some time. Time also engages itself in literature and artistic works where it serves as a medium that pervasively reflects the logic within a given story. Man has for long been interested in cultivating time in works of literature; however the care

increased in granting it extra worth in modern literature. Major researchers have concerned themselves with time in nature and time in science but the trend in the present paper is time in experience; by this we mean human experience, thus human time- ‘Le temps humain’ as Ricoeur (1984) names it. What is meant by time in literature? Why is it significantly treated in literature?

1.2.1 The Philosophy of Time

The world did not have a standard time yet; each area in it kept its own time until the advent of schedules that accompanied certain means of transport. Later, a common standard of time was established to eliminate any sort of confusion. The earth was divided into twenty four regions called zones of time. But what exactly we are measuring by time?

Time is part of our physical world though it is not perceived, yet we feel it passing. Ricoeur (1978) clarifies that on the one side there is time of the world, there is time of million years before and there is human time which proves a tiny branch of that cosmic time. That is, compared to the time of the universe, our human time is just an insignificant one yet a great number of things happen during it.

When we refer to time it proves to be existent long ago in things and people whom we have never set eyes on. Aristotle (in Ricoeur, 1978) reformulated one of the basic paradoxes of time ever. For him time is made up of the ‘no longer’ and the ‘not yet’ so how can it be conceived with its inexistent character? In fact, when he treated time in Physics he divided it into past, present, future, and then he invited us to think about the portion of the present. How thick is the present? The present is nothing; it is just a limit between the past and future. This view marks the crux of the paradox, as the past is something which has existed but does

no longer exist and the future will exist but does not. So, time seems to be a nothing that divides two non-existent things.

McTaggart (1908) in Velasquez (2017: 222) considers this paradox in his pivotal philosophical essay '*The Argument for the Unreality of Time*' where he argues that time is an unreal entity and that many thinkers are right in treating it as such. He notes that *'the past, present and future are incompatible determinations'* and though they are central for time yet it cannot be real for him.

If we think the idea of time over, we will recognize the availability of one present but on the other hand there might be numerous presents for just one moment through mind, memory and simply in words. The idea that McTaggart emphasised denotes the three notions are self-contradictory despite that the trilogy they form is essential for time as it makes its whole.

The present time consists of our speech and movements, simply all the events that are occurring at the present, whereas the past and future are not. They respectively possess a quality of remembering or foreseeing solely.

Kant in Rohlf (2010) from another perspective comes out with the idea that time is basic to the way we structure reality, meaning that we cannot pinpoint anything in our experiences without time and that it is significant to construct reality. (Newton 1643-1727) in his theory of motion differentiated between two components; space, geometry, and time as the independent variable with respect to which things change their position in the world and thereby move. So here both time and space are a priori forms within which all our experiences happen and the layout of these experiences in the mind is recalled through inner senses.

Einstein in Velasquez (2017:225) also convincingly puts it 'you have to accept the idea that subjective time with its emphasis on the 'now' has no objective meaning … the distinction between past, present and future is only an illusion, however persistent'; dividing time into a subjective and

an objective one made another trend in the debate. Subjective time was believed by some to be illusionary as it is flowing from future to present to being past and therefore it is not real, whereas objective time is. This latter seems to be a kind of time but again subjective time is part of objective time if we consider what Velasquez (ibid) suggests when he said that ‘the denial of subjective time is comforting. Perhaps nothing ends, nothing dies, nothing changes. Everything is there, fixed in the frozen vastness of objective time’.

This conviction appears contradictory to human sense because we feel time and we feel the change in it. Also, within the flow of time get older and we perceive the change in the world in the process. No matter what we believe science suggests we are aware of the passage of time; of the present becoming memories and expectations for the future. This view is found clearly established in literature. Major literary pieces are drafted on memories recalled from the past temporal moments, whereas others are plotted on a future or foreseen basis.

Logically, one would notice that the only illusion is that of having two types of time, for how can an abstract entity be divided into subjective and objective. Time flows from a present moment, from a future being a present then past and from past being mentally preserved. One has to admit that there are mysterious phenomena in the human world which prove beyond our ability to reach. Time is an essentia; a whole.

Until here we have learnt a deal regarding time but the aforementioned ideas have altered during the last period. The conception of time has changed. Time was described as absolute, fixed and universal, independent of external bodies. We think of the present as existing, the past as gone but remembered and the future as yet to be but the theory of relativity tells us something else. Science does not deny that for each of us there is an ordered sequence of events with a before and after relationship, but it denies the existence of the past, present and future.

The reason behind this related to the idea that one person's past is another person's present or another's future dependently.

1.2.2 Bergson on Duration

At the first glance it seems well subtle and paradoxical even to found an entire philosophy or an overall explication of the notion of time. We try in what follows to make clear Bergson's thoughts.

To begin with, time was an antithesis to space; it is fine to bridge both notions to elucidate their meaning through the contrast. So the system of Bergson characterizes space with quantity, homogeneity and measurability. Any sort of quantity, be it number or size, relates to space. Inversely, time adopts pure quality and heterogeneity.

The views of Henry Bergson, the philosopher of vitalism, are featured by a strong opposition to positivist ideas of his era. The author of *'Matter and Memory'* (1896) developed a conception of time different than the common one offered by science. He founded his project on intellectual properties, permitting to conceive the essence of time which relates to what is called duration. Science on the contrary worked on the elimination of duration from the equations it generates.

Meyerhoff (1955) states that Bergson (1896) took it genius to differentiate between time of mechanics and time which relates to the datum of consciousness; he disregarded, without rejecting, the block of considerations drawn by other disciplines on time. He criticized the superficiality that reduces time to its meaningless measureable feature. For instance, a clock indicates well a change and progression of time but just quantitatively with addition of hours, yet if we consider an organic being like a tree we find that it entails duration within it in terms of evolution. Growth is a pure expression of time contrary to a simple movement of a clock hand, signalling to time. By this Bergson with his

duration enlivened the concept of time to reach what hours carry in and with them instead of what they indicate to.

Bergson (1896) calls for a sort of intuition rather than the intellect to understand the flow of time (duration). There is no room for mind, calculation and logic in Bergson's reasoning, as they do not correspond to the qualitative aspect that he grants to time. This is why the experience of time can only be done trough intuition to catch the movement inherent in time.

1.2.3 Past, Present and Future

Real time, lived in its subjective manner, can be understood as a more or less long with regard to a completed activity. Elements enrolled in time interrelate without definite contours; the events taking place in the present will fuse with other elements of the past. That recalls Augustine's words about time presented as a subjective construction stretched in two opposed directions.

Bergson (1896) in Farges (1912) on the other hand identified duration as a perpetual change, a passage instead of a succession of different states or situations. This idea in fact relates to the novels within this study, where the autobiographies of the novelists reflect continuity in the recitation of their experiences to the extent that a reader does not feel a cut between the occurrences. There has to be a link which allows to think and carry out a given action in a mechanical way; this corresponds to what Bergson named 'habit memory', whereas 'pure memory' retains the instant.

To put it simply, Bergsonian conception of time can be explained through a metaphor of the snowball; it figures small then it progressively pumps and gets more filled as it rolls. That is the point behind Bergson on duration which feeds on elements from the present while I progresses and keeps the past within it.

1.3 Temporality in Literature

For a given work to be ranked as literary there has to be criteria or parameters with which it constructs itself upon. For a piece of writing to be considered in literature some standards have to be respected. From these we mention the plot which almost makes the whole of a novel, the active/ passive characters that animate the story without forgetting where and when does it occur.

Within the present study the focus is partly on the where, how and why of things nevertheless, special attention is drawn towards the time of whatsoever happens in the narratives that our choice has fallen upon. Speaking of time is not as easy as it might seem; intricate and delicate it is but still an elegant aspect to outline. Throughout our study, the reader will feel that the temporal aspect is looked at as a character in itself.

No work of literature is time-free. When analysing one may discover a variety underlying time and it does not usually project some singularity. Undoubtedly stories are not identical in every respect; themes and subjects vary. For this reason, we find stories following a sort of chronological order, in others there is a random progression of actions while another category might opt for real-time narration and flash-backs.

We distinguish four frames of time when dealt with in novels. First, author time and this has to do with dates when a novel was written. The second frame to refer to is the narrator time which concerns when the narrator actually tells the story. The third to name is the plot time; and this marks when the narrated event (s) genuinely took place. Last but not least remains the time of reading the story by a given reader, Alvele (2017). These different divisions of time can be brought together at once but they are often separate. Take for example the case study within our research; Douglass' narration was written in 1850 (author time), the actions happened since he was young (plot time) and we are reading it years later (reader time) that is the tricky character that covers time. Within a single

story, a reader may notice the back and forth movement in occurrences, for there is no harm in not fully obeying the chronological order when narrating.

The presence of time in literature is abound. There is a considerable number of works thematising it, regretting, loving, praising and even cursing it. Films, science fiction and poetry as well, each of which has treated the issue of time. The old poem of Virgil ‘The Georgics/ Gergica’ contains a reference to time shown as follows ‘but meanwhile it flees: time flees irretrievably, while we wander around, prisoners of our love of detail. The well-known passage from the Bible, uttered by King Solomon, enumerates varied types marking time for many things; *‘there is an appointed time for everything’.*

> And there is a time for every event under heaven. A time to give birth, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to uproot what is planted… A time to weep and a time to dance… A time to search, and a time to give up as lost…’

Add to that, the availability of a large bulk of literary pieces dealing with time even if it sometimes misses being figured out plainly.

1.3.1 Time and Narrative

By the title we mean approaching time as experienced by humans. This is not the singular method; there are others which look at this same conception from a cosmological side which refers to the analysis of time as seen in physics. One major philosopher who pioneered in this area and whose philosophy was revolutionary is Augustine. His Confessions (397-400 AD), a thirteen-book autobiography, is purely theological but it

dictates a part that serves our cause. In the course of his research, Augustine reached findings that are more or less logical yet not free from paradoxes. He admits his incapacity to define time if asked though he knows very well what it means provided that none asks him Ricoeur (1984).

In setting his hypothesis, he considers the triad of past, future and present is nothing but an illusion; instead he offers the view that there is a single present for the three tenses; the present of the past, the present for the present, which corresponds to memory, and the present of the future. Each of these respectively corresponds to memory, expectation and perception Selzer (2016). He then adds that there is one present which is not subject to measurement and as a result it exists; Augustine views the 'now' of things as real therefore, existent unlike past and future which own terms meaning them.

Another major philosopher who draws his theory of time on the ground of Augustine's *Physics* and Aristotle's *Poetics* is Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005), who detailed his views in a voluminous book entitled '*Time and Narrative'*. Ricoeur (1984) views the plot of a given narrative as an organized block of scrambled and dispersed happenings where there is interplay of metaphorical uses as well as simple literal understanding of a given utterance. From another part, the plot in Aristotle's words is known as mimesis; a term regrouping three meanings which we shall refer to in the lines to come. From another side, the plot cannot exist in vacuum; rather it is time-governed. The temporal aspect circling the plot or narrative unity is the work discussed by Ricoeur and which we'll attempt to analyse with reference to two narratives with temporal criteria.

The combination of time and narrative that has been modelled by Augustine and Aristotle is at the heart of our discussion. The first part of Ricoeur's theory directly related to the presupposition that beneath each narrative action, the temporal side is an important commandment but again time cannot be set apart from a given narrative. This in fact

represents the concern of Ricoeur in his first part of *Time and Narrative*. The motive behind Ricoeur's choice of both philosophers is a justified one; Augustine in his '*Confessions'* tackled the item of time outside a narrative framework, whereas Aristotle disregarded the temporal character within his *Poetics* where a considerable contrast emerged.

In the debate related to time, we find ourselves facing the 'aporia' between Augustine and Aristotle's readings. First, the core of Ricoeur's thesis suggests that time is considered as a sort of ambiguous item which only narrative clarifies. In other words, narrative defined temporal conception within a given work. However, the skeptical character of the notion of time makes an opposition as to the definition of time. The aporia around Augustine's reasoning shadows a genuine question related to ontology: what is time then? For if the answer were simple and clear, there would not be much discussion about it. The answer to this questioning requires a call for a number of theories underlying it.

A starting point would be an idea of whether time exists or not. In Ricoeur's words, we speak about the being or non-being of time which finds its origins to what Augustine, in his Confessions, calls *distentio animi* versus *intentio.* A reader of Ricoeur's volumes feels intrigued, as his writings leave an impression of more questioning when it comes to all that his phenomenology provides. The *distentio* is considered in Augustinian terms as having the meaning of extension; which dictates the stretching of the mind 'in opposite directions between expectation, memory, and attention' Ricoeur (1984:21).

Distentio turns around the skeptical side circling the notion of time. The prevalent argument tends to describe time as having a non-being feature, for the present does not remain, the past finished, and the future has not yet occurred. This reason is sharply convincing yet it lacks power when we consider the tenses in terms of language usage; as 'things to come will be, that things past were, and that things present are passing away' Ricoeur (1984). That shows an organization of time's status through words. This underlies a clear demonstration to the interpretation of time through

language which asserts that aporetical temporality is doubtful. In the same vein, there might be some sort of opposition that grants time a deficient character.

The questioning of how we can detect past and future time, the crucial shift is onto space which holds the past and the future. Ricoeur (1984) orients a reader of him towards memory and prediction; these are notions respectively related to narration and expectation. Memory, in this respect, stands for snapshots of the past time which become present again at the moment of recalling them, however for expectation time that is not yet ripe finds its fullness in the present though both form opposite-side conceptions. In Augustine's terms, we measure then the movement of time, not time itself, reports Rosengarten (2013). Consequently, reference to time marks the availability of a certain extended entity which is the soul or put differently, the mind where the future and the past find life in the present.

We speak then of tenses triad in one temporal unity which is the present, for the simple reason that recalling a memorial event (past) happens at the moment of speaking (present). Similarly, predicting or expecting (future) right at an instant temporal experience. The idea of distentio acknowledges the eternal character with which time is marked and finds large space in the mind as it stretches flexibly in cases of flashing back or forward an event.

Temporality is a mosaic entry which bears eternity and 'finds sorrow in finitude' Rosengarten (2013: 174), this perhaps is a gambit with ontological antecedents that if we approach, we may, in Ricoeur's (1984) words end up in a vicious circle of absurdity leading probably nowhere. To put it bluntly, wherever time makes its destination, it remains open to be recalled through narration of events, leaving an imprint able of creating that swift present transition to the past that resides in memory within which temporal experiences find refuge and a new existing shelter.

1.3.2 Mimesis from a Ricoeurian Mind's Eye

The work we are tackling is purely philosophical, given the ideas that Ricoeur (1984) has covered in his '*Time and Narrative'*. The display of the points covered within it is not similar to a literary analysis; rather an account of the arguments he generates from his readings of Aristotle and Augustine. The style with which Ricoeur (ibid) weaves his explanation marks a confusing and problematic assumption, because every idea calls for more and further analysis.

The reader of Paul Ricoeur claims exhaustive philosophical reviews that he has come to draw out of his own reasoning and intellectual investigations. The complexity of his style renders his commentaries on the issue of temporality and narrativity panoramic as well as polemic. Ricoeur, 'the philosopher, the professor, the protestant, and the contemporary', Wender (1997:149) has been influenced by figures like Husserl who contributed in his formation of a model, among others, inciting more than one writer to design his biography in *'Les sens d'une vie'* (1997) where he portrayed him as a highly dedicated and an exceptional professor, to use the words of his students.

Speaking of mimesis *'Time and Narrative'* has reconsidered the notion of mythos that stands for emplotment in Aristotle's argument. While reading Ricoeur's interpretation, in this respect, the word proves to be synonymous to what is known as mimesis in the Greek language, Ricoeur (1984), hinting at the concept of imitation, sometimes named representation. Instances that serve this cause are the so-called '*Oedipus Rex'*, '*The Iliad'* and even *'Julius Caesar'* which plausibly have as a theme a sort of imitation of an action taking place in the real world, Dowling (2011). That seems fine, for the terms chosen to consider the aforementioned works really mirror an existing action not less than it is viewed at in words.

Drawing on Ricoeur's (1984) commentary, mimesis projects a redoubled authentic happening; no matter how this view might be clear enough yet it carries a faulty idea if we concern ourselves with non-narrative texts within which there is no real-life antecedent. For example if

we refer to '*Julius Ceasar'*, it hints to a particular historical event which Shakespeare retraced in a form of a narrative, but this does not apply to *'A Midsummer's Night Dream'* which does not have a real-life reference, Dowling (2011).

Aristotle writes his *'Poetics'* (384-322BC) where the term mimesis meant 'an imitative behaviour and artistic image-making as an instinct of human beings', Herman, Jahn & Ryan, (2005:19). Poetics is taken to hint at the artistic way of designing plots (muthos), is to engage us in comprehending the six constituents of a poetic production and that are set in a hierarchy, among which the plot stands of a significant value. This accords priority to the events, active participants and the core of the literary piece, through metrical language meant to be received from the audience. Though he concerns himself with poetry, his ideas have been a reference to go back to in narratology, a modern treatment of literary texts.

Ricoeur (1984), while analysing Aristotle's philosophy, offers a classification of what Aristotle calls mimesis; he opts for three levels of it: we will confine ourselves with defining mimesis1. The following explanation directs our intentions towards a basic formulation of the conditions that narration needs to be a system. Mimesis1 suggests that a predisposition of knowledge about culture is an important element. This knowledge covers a less effort in understanding cultural signs within one's own surroundings and that is namely what Ricoeur (1984) perceives as a pre-narrative level.

The example given by Dowling (2011) on a Rolls-Royce car owned by an individual implies much more than a lay person possessing a car; that is, to form a meaning beyond the simply apparent one. In this instance, it might imply richness and status and this has to be the symbolism we do when a reader encounters characters within a story. This is conceptualised as semantics of action which has a denotative cultural signification, permitting the reader to go through the pre-narrative stage speciously;

views that there is a variety of explanation for human actions that embody finalities and reasons more or other than the apparent ones. This is one of the ideas within the '*Poetics'* where he explains that if we have to interpret some action; one has to involve extra parameters for that. Thus, action owes precedence over characters.

First appeared in Plato's *'Republic'* (392AD-394AD), the term diegesis forms a binary with mimesis where he recognises the former as a narrator speaking in his proper voice, whereas the latter pictures speech of characters. Contrary to Aristotle who regards all literature as being mimetic, with diegesis sub-included within. The pair is respectively seen as 'telling' vs. 'showing', Fludernik (2009:151).

1.4 Narrative Defined

The Cambridge Dictionary defines a narrative as being a story or a description of a series of events. This is often presented in written or spoken forms. While conveying the meaning of narrative we will call for the terminology that goes hand in hand with it to make understanding accessible. If we look at narrative from the vintage point of rhetoric, Phelan & Rabinowitz (2012: 03) in Shiff (2017 :71) commentary on narrative is a skeletal one as being the fact that 'somebody telling somebody else, on some occasion, and for some purposes, that something happened to someone or something'; by this token, sequences of happenings synthesise a narrative. It can take different shapes, as Maclachlan (2012: 59) finds 'a narrative may be singulative (narrating once what happened once), repetitive (narrating more than once what happened once), or iterative (narrating once what happened more than once).

Narratology as a broad field adopts studies on narratives. It is a set of theories related to narratives, images, cultural hints and events that make a story; Bal (2009: x) considers it as 'a theory that accounts for the functions and positions of texts of different backgrounds, genres, and

historical periods'. Genette (1972), a pioneer in the arena of narratology, founded his narratological ideas on a distinction between *the story* as the series of events reported by the narrative, *the narrative* which represents the discourse itself and *narration* that manifests the act of telling, with taking into account where it takes place.

Genette's theory might be viewed as an achievement in literary theory. The specific objective of narratology is the narrative which is open to textual analysis, the one upon which the two other entities (story and narration) could be considered. Genettian narratology is based on the fact that every text carries features of narration that are object of study so as to apprehend the whole organisation of a narrative.

It is worth to mention Barthes' conceptualisation of the word narrative at length; he articulates that there are endless forms of narrative in the world and that:

> 'There is a prodigious variety of genres, each of which branches out into a variety of media, as if all substances could be relied upon to accommodate man's stories. Among the vehicles of narrative are articulated language, whether oral or written, Pictures, still or moving, gestures, and an ordered mixture of all those substances; Narrative is present in myth, legend, fables, tales, short stories, epics, history, tragedy, drame [suspense drama], comedy, pantomime, paintings (in Santa Ursula by Carpaccio, for instance), stained-glass windows, movies, local news, conversation. Moreover, in this infinite variety of forms, it is present at all times, in all places, in all societies; indeed narrative starts with the very history of all mankind; there is not, there has never been anywhere, any people without narrative; all classes, all human groups, have their stories, and very often those stories are enjoyed by men of different and even opposite cultural backgrounds: narrative remains largely unconcerned with good or bad literature. Like life itself, it is

Narrative then figures in our daily communications and practices; the process of telling what has happened with us at work, outside, when driving and even when remembering. It is something that individuals are engaged in, regardless of their artistic or non-artistic profiles, Abott (2008). A question perhaps arises on why we tell stories; Ricoeur (1984:75) says that 'we tell stories because in the last analysis need and merit being narrated', time is not alien to narration instead they are congenial to one another.

Speaking of narrative as an organised literary piece, there are four fundamental criteria that underlie a narrative. Labov (1997) classifies them as follows:

a. The narrator first selects a most reportable event, $e_{0,}$ which the narrative is going to be about.
b. The narrator then selects a prior event, $e_{-1,}$ that is the efficient cause of $e_{0,}$ which answers the question about $e_{0,}$ 'How did it happen?'
c. The narrator continues the process of Step 2, recursively, until an event e_{-n} is reached for which the question of Step 2 is not appropriate.
d. The narrator then provides information on e_{-n}: the time and place, the identity of the actors and their behaviour as the orientation to the narrative.

The narrator in turn withdraws temporarily to leave the floor for one or more actors to tell what they have to. To be considered as a narrative of personal experience, Labov (2001:05) insists a story 'must contain at least one reportable event' within given temporal confines. Within a narrative text narration may not figure continually, as there might be pauses of

passages forming an opinion or describing persons or places. This is helpful in analysis so as to gauge the aesthetic nature of the narrative. So how are events in a story narrated? Within a narrative there is little chance to find identical styles; appellations vary within the different types of narrative texts; the fabula calls the actor an ‘anthropomorphic figure’, Bal (2009:09) while the story uses the term character and we call a speaker when it comes to the study of texts.

In his *‘Some Further Steps in Narrative Analysis’*, Labov (1997) has delineated elements that serve as story patterns. His research yields six levels by which a narrative is organised; we mention **1)** abstract (how does it begin?), **2)** orientation (who/ what does it involve, and when/ where?), **3)** complicating action (Then what happened?), **4)** resolution (what does it all mean?), **5)** evaluation (so what?) and **6)** coda (how does it all end?). These structural points are an original way with which a narrative is well-understood, as its whole meaning gets decoded in what is known as narrative discourse.

1.5 Narrativity

Not until the last era of the 20th century that the term narrativity has emerged in many fields, literature included. By narrativity we mean the set of techniques, methods, features and mood with which a narrative is distinguished from other non-narrative pieces. Of the features we name the narrative voice, setting, plot, the flow of events and their chronology.

We speak of being a narrative as a genre and of this narrative possessing narrativity as a quality. Herman (2002: 90-91) defines narrativity in the sense by which something is considered ‘more or less prototypically story-like’. It also pinpoints to the narrativeness of a narrative and it has been a contested concept yet it has known an array of

theories underlying it. Issues that relate to what makes a narrative considered as narrative and what makes a less or more *narrative* are elaborated by narrativity.

It is narrativity that makes the judgement; today we reflect upon whether stories are narratives and whether or not they reveal certain narrativity. There has been precursor terminology that had the same meaning in the classical period, before the word narrativity got its current appellation. The previously mentioned *muthos* is an instance, referring to 'the configuration of incidence in the story', Greimas and Ricoeur (1989:551) in Abott (2011). Later comes the word *emplotment*, a term central in Ricoeur's studies on narrative.

Other narratologists concerned themselves with conceptualising narrativity making use of similar wording like tellability and narratibility; still they express an identical sense of it. Prince (2008:19) flexibly defines a narrative as 'an object if it is taken to be the logically consistent representation of at least two asynchronous events that do not presuppose or imply each other'; this narrative has a narrator whose voice perpetuates within the whole textual piece, that is the reason why we speak of narrative voice and because a text projects a voice it evidently makes appeal to narrative discourse.

Narrativity has a say in deciding about the quality of who recites the narrative; then quality builds upon a causality effect that orients the narrative in its formation with a medium to tell the story and who does not correspond to the writer. Instead, the job will be assigned to an agent called a narrator. Being the teller of the story, the narrator is regarded as an anthropomorphic figure whose ways of telling events decides about how much and to what degree is a narrative text understood.

1.5.1 The Author

The author can be defined as the one who gives life to the written text for purposes that are purely communicative. The term is also found in radio, television, music and in some games and within autobiographies, one speaks of autofiction. In a broader sense, the meaning ascribed to it varies but the focus in the present paper is on the author with narratological traits.

In the field of literature, the author holds the responsibility for the communicative intention in a narrative. The modern era attributes much interest to the author who adopts the mediator role to transmit the idea within a work. Benedetti (2005:10) clarifies that it is 'impossible for a work of art to exist except as a product of an author' that is why he initiated the term authoralism as the author shares half of his emotions, personality, voice and character which merge with the story's to build an authorship.

1.5.2 Character

This refers to participants within a story; Jannidis (2009:14) offers us a definition of character as being *'a text or media- based figure in a story world, usually human or human-like'* and which animates the narrative action. Characters may share similar features or opposing ones. Furthermore, in a narrative, Margolin (1995:375) in Jannidis (ibid) finds that in characters 'can have various modes of existence in storyworlds: they can be factual, counterfactual, hypothetical, conditional or purely subjective' that means that they perpetuate with different facets and identity in a single story.

Some characters are not fully described and this fact creates a sort of gap in analysing or understanding their behaviours, leading to an incompleteness round the status of a character; thus, allowing for an interplay between the reader and participants. Feelings and impressions that characters leave in readers are strong as the reader gets immersed in the action/ situation represented by them.

1.5.3 Autobiography

The concept of autobiography is generally used as synonymous to a number of entries; thus it might refer to memoirs and self-portraiture. It is a record of one's own life or a section of it at a given period of time, where the self is treated as a subject and object simultaneously. In an autobiographical piece, the self as a character, is eliminated to resurrect itself as an author.

Saint Augustine's *'Confessions'* is perhaps said to be a consistent autobiography with a retrospective feature and believed to be an oeuvre where he pictured his conversion from Paganism to Christianity. Whether he noticed it or not he did establish a novel literary genre known as the confession or the narration of the self.

Autobiography is generally characterised by being factual and autodiegetic, meaning that it is told in first person narration. One epitomises autobiography as a work of memory which makes its whole structure, its semantic form oscillates 'between the struggle for truthfulness and creativity, between oblivion, concealment, hypocrisy, self-deception and self-conscious fictionalising, autobiography renders a story of personality formation, Buildungsgeschichte', Schwalm (2014). But the present study inscribes autobiographies from a fashionable and colourful perspective; theorising the life-story of American writers of colour in a cultural context and via a historical period of time.

De Man (1984:76) developed a theory of autobiography in his *'Autobiography as De-facement'* where suggests that the term *prosopopoeia* is the trope of autobiography. Prosopopoeia figures in epitaphs, he adds, as for him an epitaph represents a person who ceased to live, an absent one. That applies to reflecting oneself through language where he finds that; 'voice assumes mouth, eye, and finally face, a chain that is manifest in the etymology of the trope's name, prosopon-poein, to

confer a mask or a face (prosopon)' , leading to the idea that autobiography makes one's name 'memorable as a face'. Self-narration.

Autobiography, Bruner (2001:25) believes, 'sets forth a view of what we call our Self and its doings, reflections, thoughts, and place in the world'; with this it depicts a facet of reality. In contemporary terms, this autobiography as a genre is subject to analysis and literary criticism, given that it is built on events or practices that shape its entire form.

1.6 Narrative Time

We start this section with Abott's (2008:03) quote which powerfully expresses the relationship that binds time to narrative; he questions what narrative does for us regarding its whole structure. An answer that he offers considers narrative as 'the principal way in which our species organises its understanding of time'. We, human beings, are uniquely capable of consciously reasoning upon awareness about the passage of temporal mechanisms and relate it to language. Bakhtin (2000:53) speaks of a chronotope, a term encompassing the interplay between time and space within a given literary piece, the fusion of spatial and temporal dimensions possess significance in the determination of the image of the individual in literature where 'time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history'.

We speak then of narrative time, where the unity of the artistic piece of literature refers to events that characters witness in a way that clock time does not affect action, rather it is human events which decide about the timepiece indications. Similarly, in narrative it is the succession of occurrences that shapes our sense of time. Through incidents, there figures human ability to get a command over their narrative.

Coetzee finds that the experience of time gets changed by a narrative, he considers that

> ‘for the reader, the experience of time bunching and becoming dense at points of significant action in the story, or thinning out and skipping or glancing through non-significant periods of clock time or calendar time can be exhilarating- in fact, it may be the heart of narrative pleasure’, this latter renders

In the same vein, Ricoeur (1984) argues for the movement in time that marks our reading of a narrative where the story posits us in the now of events and leads us to expectations relating to the conclusion. Reaching the conclusion invites the reader to look back and forth at the flow of events, the interplay, homogeneity, characters and the plot so as to at least grasp the ending. Time after all, according to Bakhtin (2002) remains the major part of the chronotope in literature.

Any sort of narration marks a linear reference to time within the succession of events. The temporality of a narrative consists of three different types. We distinguish time of writing which refers to the époque during which the writer writes the story. The second type relates to the time of the story itself; when events happen and the order they follow, then comes the time of narration; this concerns the moment when the narrator recites the events, the order followed to report them as well as the rate adopted for this. We differentiate then between:

1.6.1 The Moment of Narration

It is accurate to point out at where the author is vis-à-vis the events of a story. There is no single rule for the author to respect in the recitation, so he can be situated behind the occurrences that the novel where the use of the simple past or the present perfect take place; this is known as an ulterior narration.

Second, simultaneous narration where the narrator situates himself at the same moment when the events unfold, in this case the story employs the present tense and the narrator tells what he actually lives. The third form is about a narration that puts the writer prior the occurrence of the events; it is generally reserved for a brief passage of anticipation, making use of the future simple.

1.6.2 The Order of Narration

The narrator generally follows a chronological order in recounting events. However, the narrator is free not to respect the chronology and opts for what is known as temporal breaks where the author moves back and forth in his story, making readers eager to follow the occurrences.

1.6.3 The Pace of Narration

In any piece of literature pace plays a paramount role; it essentially marks the reader’s transitions from one stage of the story to another. It is impossible for an author to recite all the events within a story at once. He therefore makes use of speeding up or slowing down techniques as a way of pacing what he has to tell. Said differently, the author might report the story in details, precising every single corner within it but he has the choice to summarise or convey a given idea in silence if he wishes.

Within a narrative, time is represented through the action of events; time’s place in a narrative uniquely presents stations that account on several events nurtured by temporal aspects.

1.6.4 The Narrative Mood

When a story is written there are techniques, chosen by the writer and perceived by the reader, that make its whole representation. Guillemette and Lévesque (2016) report that all narrative is necessarily diegesis

(telling), in that it can attain no more than an illusion of mimesis (showing) by making the story real and alive, Genette views.

Two terms creating a polemic; mimesis which appeared in Aristotles's Poetics as an illusion to reality through representation of action. Genette (1983:132-33) in Ricoeur (1984:180) contrarily considers 'literary representation, the mimesis of the ancients… is narrative and only narrative… Mimesis is diegesis' this indicates that Genettean view does not consider language as an imitator, for it only signifies and recounts an action. Mimesis and diegesis are two forms of traditional narrative moods, yet Genette focused on degrees of diegesis with relation to the narrator's involvement in a narrative.

1.7 Slave Narratives, Facets of Personhood

This section demystifies literary slaves' writings with regard to the constitution and construction of the transatlantic slavery memory. It essentially concerns fugitive slave eyewitnesses majorly collected and mostly written by abolitionists. Regrouped under the generic term 'slave narratives', these autobiographical writings have been largely diffused since the day they saw publication though they were forgotten some years after abolition to enjoy later a position of interest, notably in the 1960s. These texts represent an incarnate memory as well as an important heritage for the Black community; it is also a subject of study nowadays.

No epoch has ever known a revolutionary wave of slave writings as that of the late eighteenth and nineteenth century. Four decades of bondage in the United States with millions of slaves uprooted from their native Africa to live elsewhere in conditions of fight, violence resistance, loss and isolation. A long time ago, and regardless of exceptions, history of slavery in the United States before the 1960s represented men and women without a voice or history. It was not until the stride to the civil rights movement that first authentic attempts of writings

unveiled an evident truth and project the ugliness of slavery, from the part of ex-slaves whose pens were primarily considered as a reaction to the insolent regime; Peabody (1849) in Oehl (2006:10) articulates that slave narratives are volumes placed ‘without hesitation among the most remarkable productions of the age, - remarkable as being pictures of slavery by the slave, remarkable as disclosing under a new light the mixed elements of American civilization, and not less remarkable as a vivid exhibition of the force and working of the native love of freedom in the individual mind.’’

Slave narratives were written as a response to the echoing voices claiming Black African’s inability to write. Thanks to the load of reality they pictured and the antislavery spirit they adopted that slavery crushed. If slaves’ narratives gained a polemic status it is because they made clear some truth that was meant to be uncovered before the world. There is nothing much repressive than having slaves overworked in the fields, then having their hair blackened to look much younger and be sold at higher prices. Malden describes the slaves’ narratives as an ‘image of excellence’ in that they succeeded to reveal that most slaves

> ‘experienced the full range of horrors: they were torn from their families, underclothed, overworked, whipped, sold, starved, chained, tortured, raped, made to watch atrocities against loved ones, hunted by dogs, deceived and betrayed under all kinds of circumstances by whites from every social class’

These can in no way be refuted after being recorded in accounts and made known to the whole world.

In its essence, the narrative genre falls under the heading of biographical literature, which is generally regarded as the non-fictional

portrayal of a person's life in words. The narrator's reference to his narrative can be personal, pictorial or memorial and it is important to mention that they interrelate. One has to differentiate between 18th century autobiographies and those written in the antebellum period, before the civil war. First autobiographies were spiritual, with themes related to Indian captivity, sea adventures, picaresque narratives and piety tales, to mention but a few unlike slave narratives which treated the personal scars felt,

lived, experienced and left by slavery. Of similar early narratives we mention '*The Life and Confession of Johnson Green'* (1786), treating evangelical aspects and conversion of the criminal. Another religiously-read narrative is believed to appear as early as (1798) with the title of A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Venture, an Native of Africa that registers a sort of spiritual salvation altogether with the idea that slaves could buy their own liberation, Gould (2007).

There were also forms of epistles that reflected a political facet published and considered as pamphlets, these were basically written as responses to laws prohibiting Black's fluid immigration; Daniel Cocker's '*A Dialogue between a Virginian and an African Minister'* (1810), James Forten's '*Letters from a Man of Color'* (1813) as an example to refer to.

Slave narratives were received with much interest and adopted a popularity among the highly believers in human rights yet some others kept sceptical about the transparency of these narratives.

1.7.1 Women Writers of Slave Narratives

> O, ye daughters of Africa, awake! awake! arise! no longer sleep Nor slumber, but distinguish yourself. Show forth to the world that your are endowed with noble and exalted faculties. O, ye daughters of Africa. What have you done to immortalize your names beyond the grave? What examples have you set before the rising generation? what foundation have ye laid for generations

Those were the lines written by the black 28 year-old widow, Maria W. Stewart, who reached the office of a newspaper (The Liberator) led by William Llyod Garrison, to ask for her pamphlet to be published.

Not a journalist, not a writer, Maria got inspired by her conversion to Christianity and the militant words of David Walker in his *'David Walker's Appeal'* (1829). Garrison, who prefaced Frederick Douglass' narrative, did not hesitate to publish Maria's '*Religion and the Pure Principles of Morality, the Sure Foundation on which we must Build'* which carried similar echoes of liberty and justice claimed by Walker. His ominous words threatened the whites when he warned 'dark and dismal is the cloud that hangs over thee, for thy cruel wrongs and injuries to the fallen ones cries to heaven for vengeance against thee', in Andrews (2003: viii).

Slave narratives were viewed as having a propagandistic character in the Antebellum period (1781-1860) during which slavery abolition calls thrived in the South; the thing has made these narratives' authenticity debatable. Nevertheless, one has to claim the mosaic quality that characterises them, as they reflect an artistic shade deserving more than being counted as propagandas. If we question the period when slave narratives got initiated and circulated, we refer to the years between 1830 and 1865, that is, from the start of the abolition spirit to the civil war, as report Gray and Robinson (2004). How they could be figured as propagandas if they developed from short interviews into lengthy books, treating the issue of Africans' freedom from slavery chains. All the slavery-related reviews, slave literary texts included, authors have led readers to a conclusion averring that slavery is America's never-forgiven sin.

It was racial pride the African Americans felt that constructed their will to regain their rights. Maria accorded great importance to an interest in cultivating African women for the purpose of advocating their education which would promote their strength and eliminate the prejudice against them. She wanted African women to have seats in higher education and to enjoy the same sort of knowledge accessible to the Whites; Maria strictly refused that 'the fair daughters of Africa would not be compelled to buy their minds and talents beneath a load of iron pots and kettle', Stewart (1831) in Andrews (2003: ix). A great number of women considered the Stewart spirit as their model to follow; one of those was Jarena Lee who wrote the story of her life in a work entitled *'The Life and Religious Experience of Jarena Lee, a Coloured Lady, Giving an Account of her to call to Preach the Gospel'* in (1836). With this work she was recognised as the first back religious female figure to record her biography which at the time exclusively concerned men like Richard Allen.

In 1946 appeared another significant narrative written by a female that was Sojourner Truth, an ex-slave from New York. She realised her story of life with Olive Gilbert jointly, they together wrote '*Narrative of Sojourner Truth'* in (1950) in Boston. This piece of text was another contribution to be added to the shelves of female slave narratives. Its full title is *'Narrative of Sojourner Truth, a Northern Slave, Emancipated from Bodily Servitude by the State of New York, in 1828'*; titles of slaves' narratives are noticeably detailed giving the impression that they represent the slave's identity which they were deprived of in bondage. That is a remark that is proper to the accounts and autobiographies that prevail in the available literature about them.

Thanks to Gilbert, who wrote for her, Truth could render the evils of slavery outspoken in her narrative. Though Gilbert's name never appeared within it yet we learn from the lines that the book got printed for the author and informs us that it is a biography not an autobiography where the use of 'she', to refer to Truth, is used instead of the first person 'I'.

The publication of the narrative made of Truth as the most influential and publically renowned African American icon whose accomplishment led to the launching of two works. One major story is with the title of *'Two Offers'* (1859) by Frances Ellen and a novel entitled *'Our Nig'* (1859) whose writer is Harriet E. Wilson. They mark a deal of attention in African American women's literature, in that they advocate women's independence and assert female self-respectability through career despite the burden of single parenting.

In 1861 figured another female voice in slave narratives in Boston, she was Harriet Anne Jacobs with her *'Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl'* written in (1861). Edited by Lydia Maria Child in USA, the writer and anti-slavery activist, *Incidents* exceeded 300 pages treating the life of an African American female in detail. Though the civil war made the narrative discrete it regained fame in the late 1970s in the literary canon. The incidents in the title refer to sexual harassment and the acuteness of slavery. She makes known the sexual exploitation she and other women endured. What was a triumph for her was to see her children around and grow besides her, securing their freedom.

Blassingame (1979) argues on the hilarious autobiographies, sketching a terrific chapter of their lives as slaves. First person slave narratives provide windows through which one transparently typifies the atrocities of serfdom. Some of these accounts were written by slaves

themselves at times yet another deal of them was transcribed by persons else for those whose language did not prove visible enough to recite their mnemonic shots. Written scenes of slavery offer no room for scepticism as they were majorly eyewitness descriptions.

Davis and Gates insists on the visually represented recordings that mirror the life o

> 'the narrated descriptive 'eye' was put into service as a literary form to posit both the individual 'I' of the black author, as well as the collective 'I' of the race... The very face of the race ... was contingent upon the recording of the black voice'.

This acts a form to prove their existence and to defend their origins with zeal. The picture the slave narratives genre displays configures temporal insights illustrated in textual devices; (Mitchell, 1994:186) reflects upon the spatial codes, in Frederick Douglass' narrative for instance, and their indication to a sort of lack when it comes to the intended slaves' unawareness of time-related things around them, as *'temporal consciousness is a privilege of white children, of the master'*. Similar structures and analysis will figure in a further chapter.

Slave narratives could be traced thanks to memorial remembrance. Memory proves significant in the realisation of slaves' experiences as it represents a see-through chamber of past happenings that got transformed into language. Ex-slaves' reference to memory is plain in their records though it is not directly talked about; however there exist gaps and blank entries in that memory. Some memories did not have an equivalent in a slave's own memory, as they were prevented from being lived. No excision of those mnemonic scenes would make them less complex to recall.

Ricoeur (1984) calls for two views regarding memory; he refers to Plato who suggested that memory is a sort of a present representation of a past thing and Aristotle who claimed that memory is of the past. These ideas are undoubtedly reasonable to consider but when it comes

to reciting slaves' stories it is quite inconvenient not to view them from the angle of being present more than once and get recalled via memory. A reader of slaves' accounts feels that forgetting the cruel past could not

happen overnight; ‘corporeality’ (ibid.) of that past era is soul engraved and could be told with the same candour whenever reckoned.

1.8 Conclusion

Throughout this chapter we have learnt a set of theoretical aspects on the issue of time and narrative. The heated debate on time’s character oscillating between being and non-being has reached its peak; scientists, philosophers and literary men have had what to say about it.

Coming into terms with the untenable nature of time is possible through words. Narrative and autobiography, as being two literary genres, adopt a smooth flow of temporal features. It is where we travel back and forth in time. The case is similar to that off our writers who could retell the stories of their life whose happenings resided in their own memory.

Such narratives are not haphazardly formed, in terms of characteristics; rather they possess a literary quality carrying a load of parameters to be analysed or critiqued. That belongs to the field of narratology through its mosaic sub-fields, and narratvity is an instance. This latter decides about and discusses the narrativeness of a narrative.

In the previous section, within which we sought to preview slave narratives as a *point-d’appui* in sustaining slaves’ experiences of bondage and making clear the atrocities that slaves underwent under the system of ‘flesh-mongers’, to use the words of Douglass (1845:17). An account of the different men and women writers of self-portrayal share an identical type of storytelling while they show the worst of what history has kept secret about slavery.

This goes with what Nietzsche in Suleiman and Crosman (1980:10) cites that ‘whatever exists… is again and again reinterpreted to new ends, taken over, transformed; all events in the organic world are a subduing, a becoming master and all subduing and becoming a master involves a

fresh representation', though there were quasi-polemical attitudes round slave narratives yet they revealed the sore truth about American slavery.

Chapter Two

Temporality and Narrativity in Harriet Jacobs'

'Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself' (1861)

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Temporality and Narrativity in Harriet Jacobs' 'Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself' (1861)

2.1 Introduction

Among the gallery of portraits figures out Harriet Jacobs' autobiography which is an unusual testimony in the Afro-American literature. A realistic chronicle of a fight for dignity and emancipation, *'Incidents in the Life of a slave girl, Written by Herself'* (1861) is a courageous soul-stirring and bittersweet confession of a woman who

describes the aberration of the slave society. Emancipated in 1852, Harriet left a fascinating confession on a tormented episode in American history.

The reception of *'Incidents'* was polemic though was well-received, it knew minor fame at the beginning; Garfield and Zafar (1996:04) claim that though Jacobs' work was the first female memoir to appear in the antebellum period yet she 'was decried as inauthentic or dismissed as atypical'. But that view has changed in the contemporary era; *'Incidents'* regained a scholarly attention and comprehensiveness from 1981 on, after a century and a quarter period of faint reception.

2.2 Harriet Jacobs: a Background

Through the publication of her narrative, Jacobs was to become one of the most widely read authors over the years. Her work would render her famous and among the well-known nineteenth century writers. Today, there is a growing interest to open debates through the literary pieces of slave narratives, the complex themes they entail position slavery as an atrocity.

By now the name of Harriet Jacobs is apparent in the literature dealing with slave narratives. As previously mentioned, Harriet's narrative gained a re-ignited status; more research about her life and analysis of her publication were valued. Harriet's life is simply identical to that of other women in her era and whose inability to reject bondage couldn't mitigate their anguish.

The question that may arise is for what has a woman to write her own life? Why not the life of another? A possible answer is that most probably because recording one's life, particularly under bondage, ushers a variety of true incidents, power from frailty and a sort of self-accentuation, 'Harriet Jacobs and her autobiography are brand new and permanent member of United States literary history' Garfield and Zafar (1996: 02).

Harriet Jacobs, the born in 1813 in Edenton, North Carolina, to Delilah, an enslaved ‘mother’, and Daniel Jacobs, a free man. Through her writing the woman would face resistance and a number of counterparts who accuse her sexual oppression as well as her shacked motherhood. Unreliable as they might be, these prejudices would just lead to granting her reputation and recognition in the African American scene. Living with Jacobs via her story is an extraordinary experience and a sad one as well. It is extraordinary in the sense that it instils new ideas, new trend of being and sad in that it reflects loss and joyless moments. Presenting the story of Hatty, Linda or Mr.Jacobs gets one involved and eager to draw out the compelling life she and many other women held in slavery. Harriet, the fugitive woman in the North and South, the antislavery activist and the writer marks heroic efforts so as to address the atrocities made and left by slavery. This section draws attention towards the depiction of temporal aspects and narrative traits on that underlie the narrative of Harriet Jacobs.

2.3 Harriet’s Narrative: The Context

‘*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl’* commences with an affirmative assertion of being a slave by birth, ‘I was born a slave’ (ILSG, 11) such was how Harriet Jacobs starts her autobiography, though she did not realise this status until the age of six. She held a happy life, overwhelmed with the family’s warmth. All that her father, a talented carpenter, aspired to reach was the purchase of his children though this seemed to never happen; how with the fact that he had to pay 200$ a year to his mistress so that she permits him to work on his own, despite his being a free man.

The very idea that Harriet writes the account of her life grows mature after states of reluctance, hesitation and unready state. Harriet continues to build a sort of competence allowing her present and represent the story of her life in a perfect way. She recalls that many years ago she was convinced to write about her incidents by Bishop Paine, but she then expresses her refusal. That only confirms that people around her felt and noticed that Harriet was predisposed to author a story.

This suggestion stood vivid for her and she ‘improved [her] mind somewhat since that time’ (ILSG: 06), Harriet relates. By this she only decides about the appropriate moment and circumstances under which she adds her autobiography to the shelves of literature.

The work was realized and revised by Lydia M. Child. Within the narrative, the ‘*Preface by the Author’* and the ‘*Introduction by the Editor’* makes clear the roles of each; in the former Harriet refers to the real descriptions of events and she constantly hopes for a better reception of her story, ‘I wish I were more competent to the task I have undertaken’ (ILSG: 05). While in the latter, Child acknowledges the piece of literature done by Harriet who was personally known to her; the editing of the manuscript and the words that she wrote are under Harriet’s request: ‘I have not added anything to the incidents, or changed the import of her pertinent remarks … both the ideas and the language are her own’, Child (1861) in (ILSG, 07). By these words, any sort of doubt that Child is the author instead of Harriet is eliminated; Carby (1987:47) confirms that *‘Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl’* is the most sophisticated, sustained narrative dissection of the conventions of true womanhood by a black author.’

Within her narrative, Harriet chooses to change all the names, including hers, to become as Linda. Its style is factual with slight touches of irony. It tells the story of a slave family, which could not help living free some

generations ago. Harriet Jacobs focuses on slave women who, since puberty, not only they became subject to inhuman torment that the system dictates, but also underwent sexual harassment and aggression from the part of masters.

It was not a strange fact that these women got more than one child from them, which will either serve as supplementary slaves for the White men or to be sold at the expense of their mothers' sentiments. Linda sought her liberty and that of her children. Her master Dr. Flint, with his intention to break Linda, refused that she gets bought and her children *idem*.

The novel denounces the cruelty and hypocrisy of slavery as well as the perversity of the majority of slave holders. Linda and her children ended though by winning their freedom after going through multiple difficulties. She later actively militated against serfdom and segregation.

Harriet Jacobs' autobiographical novel was written to get women of the North recognise the injustices and physical possession of enslaved African American women. Powerless to conform to a legitimate relationship, Jacobs expresses her apologies for the reader when she revealed she was a concubine to Mr. Sawyer and this resulted in having two illegitimate children. 'Incidents' reveals varied topics among them psychological trauma, caused by the rupture of families' tie, the relationships between the Whites and enslaved women, facets of resistance and aspects of womanhood.

2.4 The Plot of the *'Incidents'*

Before presenting the plot of Harriet's narrative, one finds it appropriate to start with the editor's notes and introductory remarks about her reasons behind writing so good. In her introduction, Child (1861:08) explains that 'in the first place, nature endowed her with quick perceptions. Secondly, the mistress, with whom she lived till she was twelve years old, was a kind, considerate friend, who taught her to read and spell. Thirdly, she was placed in favorable circumstances after she came to the North; having frequent intercourse with intelligent persons...to give her opportunities for self-improvement'. This fact indicates that she was loved by persons she acquainted and this reinforces her strength to take responsibility to reveal what was kept secret about slavery.

Daughter of Delilah and Daniel Jacobs, Harriet was born in 1813 in Edenton, North Carolina. Her father is a free man and her grandmother had been freed. Though, as she wrote in her 'Incidents' 'I was fondly shielded that I never dreamed I was a piece of merchandise' (ILSG: 11) Harriet would meet hardship soon after she knows the life she leads is not hers neither her family's.

She was born a slave, Harriet Ann Jacobs, since the early days of age, refused to be considered as a livestock under the rule of a perverse master. After hiding for seven years and escaping to the North of United States, Harriet commenced her confessional writing.

She enjoyed a happy life until the age of six when slavery scattered and shattered her secure childhood, intruding into her inner peace and freedom. Soon after, Harriet's mother died to find herself moving to Margaret Horniblow's house, her mother's mistress; this marks one of the instances of the broken family ties no matter how strong. She kindly looked after her, taught her to read, write and even how to sew. However, this was not to last; lady Horniblow passed away with almost no details about her illness, the usually fortunate circumstances that Harriet lived turned into unfortunate, as she was 12. Her ownership then moved to her

mistress’s niece whose father, Dr. Norcom, Dr. Flint in the story, will subject her to a misery and misfortune.

Harriet’s grandmother helped herself with night baking for a wish o earn some money with which she can buy her kids in case bought one day, however this went impossible. She failed to keep them besides her; at the death of her master, they were distributed upon heirs. Harriet’s youngest uncle Benjamin, whom she felt more like a brother, was sold and this touched her grandmother deeply, yet she did not cease to hope regrouping her children again. Under Southern slavery laws slaves are a property and they have not the right to possess any property; to add to her misfortune, the grandmother’s mistress borrowed 300$ from her, a sum which she could never regain.

Harriet speaks of her grandma as a source of love in many ways, as she took care of her and her brother William (Willie). She fortunately found a nearly similar type of care in the enslaving family; her mistress, a foster sister to Harriet’s mother, was kind to her as she promised to never let her children be in need of anything as long as she lives. But this was not to last for long.

Fifteen years old Harriet had to suffer Flint’s endless attempts of rape and sexual annoyance. Harriet mentions that everyone knows of Flint’s ill and controlling character. She refused his will

and as his intentions seemed overt; his wife grew suspicious of what her husband intends to do. The more his sexual demands the less is Harriet’s weakness; she instead responded intensely and forcefully against them. Fearful that Flint would reach his aim, Harriet had enraged by beginning a relationship with a White unmarried man, Samuel Sawyer, Mr. Sands in the narrative.

Harriet mentions that she was never treated harshly and that she was never whipped, she was also assigned light duties other than field work. For years, she was harassed by Dr. Flint whose sexual proposals were never considered by her. She instead made his rage and fury grow, as she deflected his desire for her when she entered in a relationship with Mr.Sands. But this would just increase her vulnerability, as her two children from him will have no privilege of freedom; his protection for them is only a limited one. He would carry the status of a congress man in Washington where he marries a white lady. She bore him a child will be looked after by his black daughter.

Jacobs learnt of Flint's intention to move her and her children to plantation work, as she knew she is less protected, she decided to be a fugitive slave. From a 'loophole of retreat' (ILSG: 114), Harriet found solace in being close to her children, reading, sewing and even writing letters of revenge upon her master; these were smuggled by some of her friends and they caused a deal of frustration to the man.

In 1842 though, she could escape to New York, then she made her way to Massachusetts. There, she fled to meet other abolitionist friends; Amy Post is one among them. She was the one to convince her, the most, to write her memoir. The delivery of *'Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl'* in 1861 coincides with the Civil War. It is a narrative that openly offers a picture of the sexual abuse that enslaved women endured. Harriet strengthens her argument when she pictures her boring and solitary life in the attic instead of being a submissive slave to the doctor. Moreover, her isolation from them did not get her disconnected from what happens in the outer world; news reached her thanks to her aunt and she could learn a deal about Flint's plans.

2.5 'Incidents' as a Polemic

Harriet explains her motives behind writing her narrative within which she does not seek sympathy or attention to what happened to her; rather her aim is to ‘arouse the women of the North to a realising sense of the condition of two millions of women at the South, still in bondage, suffering what [she] suffered, and most of them far worse’, (ILSG: 06). Jacobs cared about adding her testimony to that of other writers to reveal the real truth behind slavery.

And if any reader grows skeptical about what Jacobs recites then the problem lies within them. It is as Child (1861: 08) expresses ‘our ears are too delicate to listen to them’. The role of Child as an editor entails verifying as well as addressing how much brave on Harriet’s part to dare asserting explicitly the degradation that slave women suffered from. Polemics also prevail for the reason that Harriet opts for a pseudo name to account on the calamities against slave women in the course of slavery regime; a few portion of readers could have a contention that Harriet would only discern the wrongs of slavery through masquerade.

This idea figures in Goldsby (1996) when she argues upon critics’ view on the crooked ways of Harriet’s narration and that her work might be dismissed from being a source to reliably refer to when it comes to the realities of slavery. However, this judgment could not last with the advent of new scholars who defend Jacobs’ work and give it its worth and originality.

Amy Post, a Quaker reformer, is Jacobs’ confidante, she was the one to encourage her to pen her autobiography, but Harriet’s hesitation continues to thwart her action. Above Frederick Douglass’s newspaper offices, there she and her brother William founded an anti slavery reading room. Later, at her leaving Rochester she worked as a care-taker for the children of the writer, Nathaniel Parker Willis. There at his home, she started wording her memoir in secrecy, as he was a pro-slavery man. So she wrote lines of her

life after finishing what she had as duties, she wrote her '… pages at irregular intervals, whenever I could snatch an hour from household duties' (ILSG: 05).

Amy Post's words for Harriet, at the end of the narrative, reinforce and back Child's estimation and sisterhood owed to Jacobs, the 'naturally virtuous and refined' (ILSG: 304). Jacobs appropriates a style which in Campbell's (2009) words is known as feminine rhetoric; this latter is used in narratives asserting existence and resistance in instances that concern testimonies of black women who suffered the atrocities of slavery.

Jean Fagan Yellin, the editor of Harriet's work, has had a role in rebutting and calming echoes that make of 'Incidents' untrue by confirming the veracity of the events recited by Jacobs in her narrative.

2.6 Narrative Time: Temporality in *'Incidents'*

The reader of Jacobs in her 'Incidents' swings backward and forward across the line of the recitation of events. In one of her letters to Amy Post, Rohy (2009) reports that Harriet felt terribly frustrated about the delivery of her manuscript and that she expressed her wish to experience Rip Van Winkle's long sleep. Jacobs mediates the possibility of a temporal lapse after which she opens her eyes in a different world. This indicates Jacobs' anticipation of the future that awaits her, as she imagines her amnesia to flee that particular existing moment for her.

The sort of despair that haunts Harriet projects her thoughts onto a hastened temporal alteration visible in the future. To a larger extent, Harriet opts for this analogy with Winkle's 20 years sleep as if passing as one night, to relate on her hiding for seven years in her grandmother's

garret while the world around passes with her. Perhaps she wants to express the stagnation of her clock while hidden whereas time outside flies; bringing about changes that touch her children and society; ‘Brent’s physical immobility produces a temporal immobility, an arrest of narrative movement’ to use Rohy’s (2009:30) words.

Constant description of the hard times caused by inauspicious bondage constitutes a genre of barrier time that shapes Harriet’s entire life under a slave society. That sort of temporal pause is perceived by Harriet as excluded from history, as dilating her existence, therefore living a double captivity ‘sometimes it appeared to me as if ages had rolled away since I entered that gloomy, monotonous existence’ (ILSG: 224). No matter how seasons and years fade away that would have not added any change to her.

One may describe time that Harriet experienced as a dead one; she transports herself back in the unfinished past, for her, which keeps recalled more and more whenever the event is remembered. The representation of her life timeline displays memorial images and accentuates travelling through time to stress inescapable insights of the past, without surpassing the future mourns for freedom.

The narrative opens upon the time by which Harriet was six; this is the reference to the temporal tranquillity that fills her moments; though she was born a slave, she ‘never knew it till six years of happy childhood has passed away’ (ILSG: 11).

But still despite that she had a conviction that her time was not hers, she felt as ‘a piece of merchandise ... liable to be demanded of them at any moment’ (ILSG: 12). This situation makes an interruption, a cut in Harriet’s life, as a slave, into two dissimilar temporal phases.

While reading about infant Harriet, one constantly flies back in time that she transplants us in her temporal circle to argue that she inherits the slave status like one inherits traits and character. Her life at the age of twelve then constitutes a transitional phase wherein she thinks she ‘was old enough to think of the future.’(ILSG: 15). Herein, she constantly questions what would be done with her especially that her nice mistress passed away.

She, by the time, has to perpetuate in a different time and space; being willed to take care of her five years daughter of her dead mistress’s sister. Harriet and her brother William, unlike children who hold a free life, feel good when night comes- not to sleep and rest- but moan and weep ‘on [her] narrow bad... [she] felt so desolate and alone’ (ILSG: 18). Reference to night here is twofold; poor Harriet and William suffer dark and toilsome slave life; this is the gloomy night they both saw in daylight.

Among the temporal scenes is the New Year’s Eve, where people around, expect a new cheerful year except slaves who await being hired or sole to a kind master who perhaps ‘clothes and feeds his slaves well’ (ILSG: 25). Indication to time in ‘Incidents’ on that special day is significant in that it projects the far contrast between free whites and slaves; Linda sorrowfully writes it

> ‘O, you happy free women, contrast your New Year’s day with that of the poor bond-women! With you it is a pleasant season, and the light of the day is blessed. Friendly wishes meet you everywhere, and gifts are showered upon you. Even hearts that have been estranged from you soften at this reason… children bring their little offerings, and raise their rosy lips for a caress. They are your own, and no hand but that of death can take them from you. But to the slave mother New Year’s Day comes laden with peculiar sorrows. She sits on her cold cabin floor, watching the children who may all be torn from her the next morning; and often does she

Drawing on the temporal facet in Jacobs' narrative, a reader notices the hard times witnessed by her as a slave from her early childhood until womanhood. Time has had a static character in that it endured the pain and wrongs of slavery. To tell about time setting in *'Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself'* corroborates a sense of a live-without moment. Starting with the name of the author which does not correspond to the original one; *'Incidents'* is written under the pen name of Linda Brent and so are all the names of persons along with places.

Slaves served their masters all day long and it happens that Harriet's grandmother worked at night as well. She baked crackers that others find delicious; she did that for a hope that she aids herself and children with the money she gains. Day and night are two analogies within the story, picturing a slave as a machine that never stops working and that time was not theirs. The honourable life was far to reach for slaves.

Reference to temporal insights through seasons figure out in Harriet's piece of work; she mentions winter and spring to offer a portrayal of the link between them and the internal state of the soul, Harriet describes 'the beautiful spring came; and when Nature resumes her loveliness, the human soul is apt to revive also. My drooping hopes came to life again with the flowers. I was dreaming of freedom again; more for my children's sake than my own. I planned and I planned. Obstacles hit against plans. There seemed no way of overcoming them; and yet I hoped' (ILSG, 92). This analogy of what Harriet feels and aspires to as compared to seasons of the year, spring particularly, alludes to a renewal of hopes for freedom

despite being under chains. Harriet finds contentment to relate her actual status to spring when nature revives and her dreams hopefully too.

Later, within Harriet's story one feels that the final chapter heralds a sort of alteration in time, and the reader learns that the events take another turn as to the portrayal of her own experience.

2.6.1 The Moment of Narration

The simple language with which Harriet's narrative is presented makes the reader eager to follow the unfolding of events. In her narrative, Jacobs arranges what slavery scattered in her own way. Her use of a myriad of tenses aids in depicting her sentiments at times, the leave-behind scars as well as future wishes and ambitions.

Shades of her experience in bondage keep constantly recalled at any moment no matter how far is a given incident, it keeps alive and open to narration. Recalling the past in the present is the aspect that ex-slaves often opt for in their recitation, as it carries a reference to 'what has been lost is the continuity of the past . . . What you then are left with is still the past, but a *fragmented* past, which has lost its certainty of evaluation', Arendt (1978) in Eyerman (2001, 01).

Jacobs' reference to time through her novel is unparalleled; her text lodges at different stations that mark her route towards slavery and later refuge then liberty. Despite the temporal gap that characterises the protagonist's life as an enslaved women, there shadows exactitude of her time. The uniformity of a slave's life, along with a literally narration of the incidents, reinforce time markers as to slowing down on occasions and speeding on others.

2.6.2 The Order of Narration

Harriet's autobiography dwells upon the chapter of her life under slavery. Respecting a normal order of recitation, she commences by telling occurrences in her early childhood, titling each phase according to events. Like the majority of slave narratives writers, she respects a logical order that suits her objective of narration. As the story progresses, the reader feels that Harriet is telling events with a crucial allusion to time which governs the overall construction of her narrative. Reciting takes place as interdependent with an obvious system of recalling her experience and impression driven from her existence under slavery and constant harassment.

Harriet goes on in the description of the bitter past, discarding any sort of untruthfulness. Awareness upon the order in Harriet's autobiography, from slavery to liberty, is shown in the following statement, 'reader, my story ends with freedom; not in the usual way with marriage...We are as free from the power of slaveholders as are the white people of the North; though that, according to my ideas, is not saying a great deal, it is a vast improvement in my condition.' (ILSG: 302). That is a proof of the order that makes the autobiography; Harriet takes us in her story through several stations, to reach a final one. Harriet recounts incidents in her life flipping back and forth in the representation of the events, possessing ability to switch from an event to another, happening some years before being put into language.

2.6.3 The Pace of Narration

In reciting the incidents of her life in chattel, Jacobs offers details that relate to the events that make up the whole narrative. Smooth storytelling

and the absence of narration gaps invokes the immersion of the reader in the slave's past. This slow record of the author's incidents yields a clear vista over an existence that is not hers.

Successful in depicting the peculiar institution and its horrors, along her narrative, Linda does make use of pacing her narrative. Suspense figures in slowing down the recitation of the incidents in bondage. The chronology round the narrative is noticed; Harriet starts her work with the period of childhood, then she moves on to narrate the moment of being a slave, seeking freedom and finally her escape.

2.6.4 The Narrative Mood

Harriet's autobiography, and according to the incidents within it, possesses desperate contours and triumph over malice, both of people and of the slavery system. The atmosphere of servitude dictates the protagonist's state of mood that governs the whole literary piece. Jacobs seems to have lived half a life, as she swallows the sore pill of being a piece of merchandise so she seems to poke parody at the owners. The ebb and flow of emotions creates a narratorial mode that makes the narrative piece colourful, something throughout which the reader intuits the intense impulse behind her text.

Feelings that circle the narrative are clear to the reader. The writer is not indulgent about the institution that chained her freedom to lead a natural life; patronising slavery continues to exist to the detriment of black servants. The narrative mood appears to display a traumatic and melancholic state felt by the former slave, Harriet, a state which makes slaves alien to them more than the outside white world. The narrative conjures an atmosphere of secrecy, at the end, pain and suffering for Jacobs.

2.7 Narrativity in *'Incidents'*

While reading Jacobs' 'Incidents' one gains the impression that fact and fiction intertwine and there is little chance for one to make a clear cut between them.

The reader of Harriet in her autobiography feels her repeatedly endeavour to reach dexterity in conveying the story of herself and her siblings. Harriet wrote letters to her abolitionist friend Amy Post who thoroughly encouraged her to dare writing about the life she led as a slave. Reluctant to do so, Harriet words her fears not to meet rhetorical standards and gain less acknowledgement of her work.

'Incidents', like the great American romances transforms the conventions of literature. The way with which she weaves her piece of narrative makes it a new story in black literature, in women's writings, and in American letters: a woman's true and just account of life.

Contrary to Blassingame's (1979: 373) judgement about Jacobs' narrative as being 'too melodramatic: miscegenation and cruelty, outraged virtue, unrequited love, and planter licentiousness appear on practically every page... In the end, all live happily ever after'. This does not appear a just judgement, for Jacobs' life would not be her own yet; despite manumission, she remained a domestic servant.

2.7.1 Feminine Style and Rhetoric

This section focalises on the perspective of feminine style termed by Campbell to explain the features of the historicity relating to the feminist

rhetorical writing. Regarding Jacobs' 'Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself' as a discourse, it argues upon the characteristics of that feminist piece, for instance reliance or concrete reasoning, personal disclosure and audience participation, Dow and Toon (1993). These ground the singularity of women's experience.

Both the form and gist of Harriet's narrative entail a rhetoric which functions as a critique of the slavery regime as a whole, and women's destructive sexual degradation in particular. These contradict the natural feminist sense of care, affection and nurturance. Emotive as it might be, Harriet's language entails forceful words that render her narrative prominent in terms of conveying the events that she witnessed as a slave woman.

Speech of women differs from that of men's in terms of expectations. Jacobs' is an example; feminine voice causes polemics in an exclusively male-dominated hub. It was not easy even for her to mention names and places in accounting her autobiography. It was a rarity that a slave woman speaks her mind and addresses the public of ears to attack the system of slavery and its beholders. Claiming that it destructs a natural facet of African American lives and state of mind, slavery gained a large portion of opponents and controversy.

According to Campbell (1986) in Dow and Toon (1993: 288) devices of feminine speech are fine and they

1. rely on personal experiences, extended narratives, and other examples;

2. address audience members as press allowing their experiences to be recognised as authority;

3. invite the audience participation;

4. create arguments inductively that lead to generalizations; and

5. will make an effort to create identification with the experiences of the audience, moving them toward the goal of the feminine speaker to empower their listeners'. With these hallmarks, one realises that Campbell accentuates that feminine style engages an external support from the audience, evoking a common rationale between them.

Harriet in her 'Incidents' embraces her own reliance on ex-personal combat as well as biblical references which suit the very purpose of her writing; yet she disregards other conventions such as 'the seductive speaker, the tentative tone, and laissez faire lecturer', Foster, (1996:110). A reader of Jacobs notices her use of references from authority figures and that is a sort of shaping her pronouncements on a verified basis. She mainly makes use of quotations for the purpose of validating her words; instances of these appear in the introductory title pages of her work. Jacobs recalls a quotation which reads 'Northerners know nothing at all about slavery.

They think it is perpetual bondage only. They have no conception of the depth of degradation involved in that word, SLAVERY; if they had, they would never cease their efforts until so horrible a system was overthrown', this plainly indicts the system of bondage. She attributes the saying to an anonymous 'woman of North Carolina'. Given the racial tension that prevailed at the time, a black woman citing a white woman is just comparable to a white woman asking verification from a white man.

One cannot doubt that such a frankly-expressed statement can only be stated by a white individual. Yet critics doubt the identity of who said the quote, and they think of the possibility that Harriet here just quotes herself keeping her name in anonymity. One suspects this possibility, because Harriet was a resident of North Carolina. And if ever it was said by a white woman, it signals the availability of anti-slavery sentiments within the white community.

Harriet's second quotation, that adds to the authenticity of her text, is from the Bible; she recites Isaiah (xxxii, 09) which goes 'rise up, ye women that are at ease! Hear my voice, ye careless daughters! Give ear to my speech'. This citation, unlike the precedent one, sounds more didactic as it incites free individuals to support their brothers and sisters in bondage. This style corresponds to the literary feminine style which Campbell (1986) finds that it is

> 'usually grounded in personal experience. In most instances, it is tested against the pronouncements of male authorities (who can be used for making accusations and indictments that would be impermissible from a woman)... [It] may appeal to biblical authority... The tone tends to be personal and somewhat tentative rather than objective or authoritative... tends to plead, to appeal to the sentiments of the audience... [to invite] female audiences to act, to draw their own conclusions and make their own decisions, in contrast to a traditionally 'Masculine' style that

This [illegible]der. Indeed, Harriet commences her preface with the word reader; 'reader, be assured that this narrative is no fiction' (INC: 05), with this statement she politely requests the reader's trust in the facts that she tells.

'Incidents' comes out of Jacobs' authorial efforts to produce a piece of work through which she makes an extreme wish and will to outloud the harm caused by slavery on African American women. Her work has been forgotten for a long time for reasons of distrust, '... these days it seems that Incidents is on every undergraduate reading list, and that a half-dozen students in my classes on African American writers have read Jacobs for

another class', say Garfield and Zafar (1996: 02), it later regained resuscitation, valuing the truth of the wrongs done upon her and increase abolitionist sentiments.

On the truthfulness of her account, Harriet (1857: 242) wrote in one of the letters to her friend Amy the following:

> 'I have my dear friend- striven faithfully to give a true and just account of my own life in Slavery- God knows that I have tried to do it in a Christian spirit- there are some things that I have made plainer I know- … I have left nothing out but what I thought- the world might believe that a slave woman was too willing to put out … I have placed myself before you to be judged as a woman whether I deserve your pity or contempt- I have another object in view- it is to come to you just as

The importance of this passage matters in a number of ways; Harriet admits that she deliberately omits sections of her life and that she ambiguously keeps mute about some incidents.

2.7.2 Harriet: an Author of Colour

Authorship of '*Incidents*' has triggered much discussion. Harriet's identity, being the narrator, determines how much/ less it will be adopted and received in the literary community. Difference in race, gender or even class arouses multiple questions related to the authenticity of Harriet's literary piece.

Lanser (1981) in Foster (1996: 57) in her '*Narrative Act*' points out that 'a writer's or a narrator's social identity is never totally irrelevant, but readers automatically assume that the 'unmarked' narrator is a literate white male'- Similarly, when the book reveals the writer as not white, not a man, other cultural considerations 'determined by the ideological system and the norms of social dominance in a given society' (ibid.) prove significant discussion, and in the determination of the narrator's authority. The status of Harriet as a black slave woman writer and of a different race, challenge of the authorship and places her outside the confines of privilege.

Being a non-white, her attempt of writing has inevitably taken on a context that discusses the authenticity of the text and place it above the text itself, even by readers of the same race and status. The portion of African American writers often meets an obstinate category of readers, Foster (1993); in terms of political echoes and mimetic refinements though the intensity of similar oppositions varies in time, setting and circumstances.

The tradition of female slave writings carries particular loads of resistance which seems provoking no matter what degree of truth it transmits; Lanser (1992: 38) believes 'that female narrative voice – specifically the voice of the 'I' who is both narrator and character- ironically laid the groundwork for this dispensation with female 'I', women novelists, especially in a literary climate that discouraged the naming of the author on a title page became superfluous.'

Slave authors' authentication has been thoroughly examined and verified, given the fact that they are illiterate though the bulk of slave narratives mirror an image of learnedness; we notice that from the quotes, eloquence and audacity which meticulously represent the text in its respectable shape, not to forget her presence at the house of the editor

and writer Nathaniel Willis, Armstrong in Lanser (1992: 38) contends that the writing of ex-slave women ‘emerged when it did, not in spite of their sex but because a female author could say something important in feminine terms that masculine writing could not accomplish.’

Gender prejudice is another element that shakes the authority of black slaves in the reception of their texts; even if their authorship gets verified and acknowledged they were still viewed ‘through a veil of sexism that obscured their individuality and revealed only the shadowy contours their readers expected to see’, Foster (1993:60). The romantic facet in African American narratives, the extent of imaginariness and acumen bore a heated struggle on the intelligence and eloquence of slave writers.

Harriet was well acquainted with the tricky zones of writing thanks to her reading of the texts that slaves of her time wrote. She produced her narrative with a belief that the public readers would not easily concede the legitimacy of slaves’ power of words and size of courage to denigrate the system that denigrated their being.

Resistance to Harriet Jacobs’ authorship is pictured in a consideration that the book carries fabricated versions of truth. Harriet already knows of the stereotypes round slaves, yet she decided to honestly recite her personal history. By this, she does not seek pity but reflection on the sexual perils and that she firmly refused to be a victim.

By the mid 1850s, resistance to women’s writing was decreasing, but it has still remained shadowing. In the literary mores, Harriet proves to be a strong, frightening and modern woman to carry a pen and attack the inappropriate slave society. Added to that, Harriet succeeds in bringing about a genre proper to herself, with borrowings from the confessional novel.

Unlike some female authors of the time, in the other hub of the world, whose writings were viewed trivial, Harriet challenged the previously expected prejudice by not adopting a 'male nom de plume' Fludernick (2006:14), instead she used a girlish pen name as a proof that feminine writing is not that much different from masculine's whether in style or rhetoric.

2.7.3 Character in *'Incidents'*

Reading Jacobs' is special in the sense that she more than any other character, is prominent throughout her work; her voice is surprisingly dominant. The strength of the character that she adopts is shown in the fact that she, despite being a slave, could teach herself to write after her mistress. She used to write letters in which she recites to her dead mother what happened around her; Harriet compensated the absence of the tender ear of her mom in words; she actualised the absence of her mother. In one of her letters she writes 'mama, I am not so lonesome if I can talk to you in my book', Harriet (1825) in Lyons (1992:02).

Harriet demonstrates characters in her narrative through a verbal contour that creates the interplay and structure of her story. A constellation of individuals are combined by the writer to form the network of her experience. Defining her characters is a problematic issue, yet she succeeded to picture them in pen names but with real traits. She spoke of the villain persons, including Dr.Flint and other slaveholders, she mentioned kind and empathetic individuals that conquered her soul positively. In referring to Dr.Flint, Harriet spoke in her text about the prayers he had to do 'to wash the dirt off his soul' (ILSG, 91).

Her character is prominent throughout the narrative. Harriet recited sides of her weaknesses as well as strengths especially when it came to her children's well being and freedom. Fighting her master and withstanding to his demands granted her the status of a powerful woman.

Powerful in terms of character and being resistant, she told about herself ‘I had a woman’s pride, and a mother’s love for my children; and I resolved that out of the darkness of this hour a brighter dawn should rise for them. My master had power and law on his side; I had a determined will. There is might in each’, (ILSG, 95). Her defending weapon resided in her beneath fondness and tender soul with weak, fearful expectations.

2.7.4 Autobiography

To account on Harriet’s autobiography, one contends that Harriet is fully inserted in her own story, being told in the first-person. Harriet’s work corresponds to Lejeune’s (1975) definition of autobiography in Montgomery (2012: 119) as being a ‘retrospective prose narrative written by a real person concerning his own existence where the focus is his individual life, in particular the story of his personality.

Harriet succeeds to convince the readers through her rhetoric with which she aims to connect the circumstances of her enslavement across a given historical period when slavery thrived. In her autobiography, Harriet endeavours to express her lost self and explains the unjustified conditions that slavery dictates in an *autodiegetic* form, which suits storytelling. Her autobiography conforms to a unity of a slave woman’s journey into slavery and the quest for freedom, as a sort of reconstructing her condemned situation through language.

The nature of her autobiography sounds confessional; she directly tells her reader about the incidents she experienced as a slave. Within her text, a reader empathises with her story and develops a sense of agreement between what the writer narrates and what the narratee feels throughout the reading they do. Becoming involved in the scenes recited creates an interaction ensuring and alluding to the mutual communicative act.

Harriet's self-effacing trait led her to continuously apologise for any sort of linguistic ineptitude, yet the language in her literary piece has been depicted by critics as perfect in marshalling the events that she experienced. Her self-authored work is sublime in form and profound in terms of meaning, and it conforms to what Peabody (1985) in Phillips (2004: 43) finds remarkable 'as disclosing under a new light the mixed elements of American civilization, and not less remarkable as a vivid exhibition of the force and working of the native love of freedom in the individual mind'.

2.8 Themes within Harriet's Narrative

The range of points that the work of Harriet Jacobs adopts are varied. In the following, we shall be referring to the major ones traced by any reader.

2.8.1 Resistance to Sexual Abuse

Jacobs, being a young virgin girl, knew how to withstand the sexual demands of an older, privileged master. The chastity with which she is typified makes her akin to the character of Pamela by Fielding. Within her narrative, she does not consider black slave women as being the sole victims but women like Dr. Flint's wife are too. Betrayed by the infidelity along with the constant quarrels 'about slave girls' , something which Harriet finds 'should never meet youthful ears' (ILSG:80).

Harriet took it for granted to deplore the dual exploitation of slave women's body. She identifies this by providing evidence of events that mark the life of a slave girl; Harriet clearly expresses her disappointment at the birth of her second daughter child 'when they told me my new babe was a girl, my heart was heavier that it had never been before. Slavery is terrible for men; but it far more terrible for women. Superadded to the burden common to all, they have wrongs, and sufferings and mortifications peculiarly their own' (ILSG: 119). She describes how tough and bad is the effect of bondage on women far more than it might be for men and her

fears that her daughter would be exposed to a similar fate as that of her mother.

2.8.2 Dishonesty and Hypocrisy

Linda Brent's story is full of revelations, sentiments and varied aspects of the atmosphere she and her siblings perpetuate in. In the recitation of her incidents, she reflects on the exploitation and mistreatment she lived. Though she considered her mistress as a kind and comprehensive woman, she did not forget to condemn her hypocrisy. In the process of having Linda learn to read and write, the White mistress gets her realize the bond of betrayal and oppression of black slave women.

The relationship between Harriet and her mistress was not a troublesome one, because she was 'almost like a mother' (ILSG: 15) for her. Yet this does not impeach Jacobs from indicting the behaviour of her mistress; in Jacobs' words 'my mistress had taught me the precepts of God's word: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself'. Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them'. But I was her slave, and I suppose she did not recognize me as her neighbor' (ILSG: 15).

Both quotes highlight an intense feeling of betrayal, but Harriet's love for her mistress let her think that she would do anything just to erase that 'act of injustice' (ILSG: 17) from her memory. All of Linda, her mother and grandmother served faithfully to the honour of their mistress but they were betrayed, she finds.

Harriet also draws attention to the lives of young black and white sisters. She sadly recalls a scene that signals the emotional detachment that marks oppression and the complex social inequalities between women, Harriet (ILSG: 47-48) remembers

> I once saw two beautiful children playing together. One was a fair white child; the other was her slave, and also her sister. When I saw them embracing each other, and heard their joyous laughter, I turned sadly away from the lovely sight. I foresaw the inevitable blight that would fall on the little slave's heart. I knew how soon her laughter would be changed to sighs. The fair child grew up to be a still fairer woman. From childhood to womanhood her pathway was blooming with flowers… How had those years dealt with the slave sister, the little playmate of her childhood? She was also very beautiful; but the flowers and

This, under no right has to happen, Harriet thinks. Born equal but enjoying two different lives, the life of servitude that black women endured was inhuman enough to suppress their existence.

2.9 Slavery: an Experience beyond Representation

It safe for one to say that slavery is America's original sin to report Johnson's (1999) words. Despite the end of what was known as legal bondage years ago, we keep reminded of its peculiar character. Countless records entail the shame that slavery has brought to America's history. Three hundred years of human chattel with chunks of blacks living deprived of their freedom and the least of their rights. In her narrative, Harriet mentions the atrocities of slavery by questioning the slave holder's view 'what does he know of the half-starved wretches toiling

from dawn till dark on the plantations? Of mothers shrieking for their children, torn from their arms by slave-traders? Of young girls dragged

down into moral filth? Of pools of blood around the whipping post? Of hounds trained to tear human flesh? Of men screwed into cotton gins to die?' (ILSG, 83).

American slavery is often divided into two main periods by historians; the period from 1619 to circa 1770, this is known the colonial era, and the period from 1800 to 1863 (Emancipation Proclamation) known as antebellum period, but 'Eighteenth century slavery turned Africans into property. It deprived them of all vestiges of legal or social recourse, leaving them vulnerable to the whims of the dominant class', Williamson (2002: 11-12).

A touchstone in the history of slavery was Nat Turner's slave rebellion which took place in Southampton and it marked an important success. The uprising was an alarming event in the South at the end of the eighteenth century, as it incites scenes of huge slaves' rebellion in St. Domingo (Haiti). The Nat Turner's rebellion is believed to go back to David Walker's (1828) paper under the title of 'Appeal… to the Coloured Citizens of the World' where he passionately states that

> Man, in all ages and all nations of the earth, is the same. Man is a peculiar creature— he is the image of God, though he may be subjected to the most wretched conditions upon earth, yet the spirit and feeling which constitute the creature, man, can never be entirely erased from his breast, because God who made him after his own image, planted it in his heart; he cannot get rid of it. The whites knowing this, they do not know what to do; they know that they have brutes, will retaliate, and woe will be to them; therefore, that dreadful fear, together with an avaricious spirit, and the natural love in them, to be called masters . . . bring them to the resolve that they will keep us in

This saying carries the meaning that slavery is a wrong done upon humanity and upon African Americans for ages. It was not an easy life that slaves held in bondage; a life replete with empty time, some time that was not theirs. Treated as objects, African Americans slaves had no time of their own yet they lived eagerly waiting it to ripe for some good chance to happen.

The routinely moments under slavery endured with the great bulk of slaves unable and not allowed when they were born; forced into anonymity of their existence. Slaves, as a property, were divided in an inhuman description by the master Captain Anthony, he claims that

> Men and women, young and old, married and single; moral and intellectual beings, in open contempt of their humanity, leveled at a blow with horses, sheep, horned cattle and swine! Horses and men- cattle and women- pigs and children- all holding the same rank in the scale of social existence; and all subjected to the same narrow inspection, to ascertain their value in gold and silver- the only standard of worth applied by slaveholders to slaves! How vividly, at that moment did the brutalizing power of slavery flash before me! Personally swallowed up in the sordid idea of property! Manhood lost in chattelhood!

It is with great agony that one reads or hears similar words which former slave narratives' writers turn into a melodramatic piece of literature. The narrative under research has got other twin works in different genres that share topical similarities. We speak of the major literary piece by Harriet Beecher Stowe entitled '*Uncle Tom's Cabin'* written nine years before the publication of *'Incidents'.* In what follows, one is to tackle the points in common and contrast that characterise both works.

2.10 *'Incidents'* as Compared to *'Uncle Tom's Cabin'*

It is commonly said that truth might sometimes appear stranger than fiction. The present section shows how two or more works share specificities related to their production. Among the numerous instances that might well be an object of comparison, we chose to compare our original choice of ILSG by Harriet Jacobs to Beecher Stowe's 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'.

The two works treated in the actual research have similar or twin novels which go hand in hand in terms of story, themes as well as the depiction of characters. Starting with ILSG, one might compare it to UTC, also known as *'Life among the Lowly'* written in the year of 1852 by Beecher Stowe, a few years before Jacobs' crafts her narrative. The American female author Harriet Beecher (1811-1896) was born in Connecticut from a deeply religious family. She wrote her novel to indict slavery. She began writing as early as the 1820s with her theological pieces and an unfinished tragedy under the title of 'The Mayflower', or 'Sketches of Scenes and Characters among the Descendants of the Pilgrims'. The success that her novel scored gives it a chance to be translated into nearly twenty three languages, despite the unwelcomed reception of it in the South by slaveholders.

She then published 'A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin' in 1853 where facts and documents about the realities in her novel are presented to show the unexaggerated story underlying her work. In 1856, she followed it by another book entitled 'Dred: A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp', but these were of lesser fame compared to her masterpiece UTC that Abraham Lincoln depicted her as a little woman making such a great war Bloom

(2008). The very idea to write UTC came when Harriet witnessed the flogging of a slave. Thus, in an attempt to compare and contrast both works, one is to start with accounting upon points of commonalities between ILSG and UTC.

The reader of ILSG and UTC by their writers will deduce a number of points that they have in common. Both writers make use of the written form of the narrative to convey their strong negative attitudes towards slavery and its viciousness. Far from any empty praise intentions, both pieces convey arguments and realities about the wrongs done by slavery and slaveholders upon black slaves. This was the reason behind the anger and unrest that these books cause for the portion of slavery defenders.

Within both works, a reader finds that protagonist slaves were well-treated by their owners, yet they aspired for escaping and enjoying a free life. Stowe and Jacobs' use of intense emotional description of the scenes lived by slaves is predominant. The extensively and intensively show feelings of pathos towards the hatred and immoral behavior that black individuals in bondage experienced. Both texts refer to the issue of detaching mothers from their children, selling them away in a manner which destroys the natural motherhood ties.

Stowe's major female character is Eliza, a slave mother, one who is compared to Linda Brent in Harriet's narrative; Eliza escapes to the North with a hope to protect her son from being sold into slavery. Yet, similarities between these two characters end here; they do not meet in the rest of sexual harassment and marital affair. While Brent is a heroine by the end of the narrative, Eliza is not; the hero of Stowe's work is the master's son, George Shelby who emancipates all the present slaves to find themselves finally freed.

2.11 Conclusion

The second chapter started with a brief overview about Harriet Jacobs' novel entitled *'Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself'* (1861). We tried to review its context and plot. The major concern within it is to relate the two dimensions of time and the craft of weaving a narrative, with all that it entails.

We have argued upon temporal facets that govern the whole work, in terms of past, present and future we have situated instances from the narrative in these three frames. Added to that, we have opted for characterizing the way in which Harriet's autobiography organizes her work, starting from herself as an author and the extent to which the characters interplay to realize the autobiography. We have researched sides of Harriet's life pictured through her narrative which caused a polemic, for it is written in a pseudo name and it veils scars left on women during the critical period of slavery.

The chapter also offers an analysis of the aforementioned literary work. It has also dealt with major themes that are at the center of Jacobs' narrative. This latter that conforms to temporal instances without which narrativity cannot ascribe a status. Throughout her narrative, Harriet through the character of Linda Brent dares reciting her sexual abuse experience to the whole portion of readers; by this she renders it more or less political.

Chapter Three

Temporality and Narrativity in

‘Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave.’ (1845) by Frederick Douglass

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Temporality and Narrativity in Frederick Douglass’s ‘Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave’ (1845)

3.1 Introduction

A writer is as much to tell as a producer of a certain work that conforms to a given incident. The writer's ability to describe some truth at a particular time relates to a sense of the making, marking and forming of a subject. Frederick Douglass is no exception; within his 'Narrative' there is a real conceit of the issue of slavery, for he draws a vista that reflects much about how it affects blacks at the individual level as well as the racial one.

Undoubtedly, there is a parallel between Jacobs' work and Douglass's when it comes to shadowing the era of bondage, torture (physical and psychological) that slaves underwent. Douglass's words articulate mush more than it might be apparent; his work incites a large audience to see, not just read, that episode of his life under slavery, of refuge, fame, courage, fear, liberty and success, to mention the least of what can be argued.

His discourse about slavery challenges other prominent works. In his ‘Narrative’, Douglass informs the notion of a certain movement from a situation into another, through a frame of temporality that is shaped in his literary piece. His autobiography communicates an affinity to the ancient sketches of brave storytellers and it even sets forth a similarity to the character Huckleberry Finn in Thomas Hardy’s novel. The dominant trait within Douglass’s work is the sequential plotting that maps the sphere of his slave life and handles the aspect of time by making use of techniques and devices that relate to his narrative.

The 1845 memoir on slavery and its abolition written by the well-known former slave Frederick Douglass mirrors anti-slavery shades that condemn American slavery. Famous for his eloquence and acumen, Douglass succeeds to realize a narrative which would have weight as a piece of literature. His narrative also fuelled the 19th century abolitionist movement in the United States. His eleven chapter memoir screens Douglass’s life under the slavery regime and his ambitious desire to smell freedom. Douglass was a major orator and writer; his status as a slave was a curse in his life yet it had an excellent push in making him a prominent figure and an abolitionist.

Renowned for his anti-slavery spirit, Douglass did not miss any occasion to condemn slavery and its negative impact on his race. Moreover, he is best known for his three autobiographies which achieved unprecedented fame; each of which is regarded important in reinforcing banishing the system of bondage. His speeches and preaches, indicting the act of enslaving people, were well received by a large bulk of audience and they annoyed slave holders. He was a fervent defender of human rights and his works are marked as the finest publications within the American culture.

Douglass, known as a leading figure of the African American literature, gains a sort of popularity which encouraged studies. His texts have been object of scanning, by virtue of their technical craft in recounting the journey of slavery. Reading his story gets one moved in its deepest description of the struggle he and his fellow slaves had to face and his shift from the status of slave into an autonomous, important man in the abolition movement.

The present chapter argues on time aspects that relate to his autobiography as well as accounts on narrativity particularities underlying it.

3.2 The Context of ‘Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself’

This part sketches major stations in Douglass’s narrative and gives an overview about it. His aim from writing was to stitch together pieces in his life that slavery scattered. Frederick Bailey was born into slavery in the year 1818 or 1817, in Maryland. Unsure of his date of birth, Frederick would score an unprecedented fame. His contact with educated free children allows him to learn reading. His later escape to New York at the age of twenty made him marry Anna Murray, a free woman. The fugitive status he had by the time urged him to change his name into Douglass instead of Bailey and he chose to settle in Massachusetts for security purposes.

He started questioning the ‘why’ of being a slave since his childhood and why he was born a slave while others are meant to be masters. He astutely observes that not all blacks are enslaved and not all whites are slaveholders. Reflections alike signify his remark of the anomaly of such a

system; in his *'My Bondage and my Freedom'*, Douglass (1855:179) says 'I found that there were puzzling exceptions to this theory of slavery... I knew of blacks who were not slaves; I knew of whites who were not slaveholders; and I knew of persons who were not slaveholders; and I knew of persons who were nearly white, who were slaves.'

Douglass carried on his self-education while working as a labourer, meanwhile, in the 1840s, the abolitionist movement was at its peak. At his arrival to Massachusetts, he was interested in reading William LIyod Garrison's newspaper *'The Liberator'*. By the time when they met, Douglass's spirit was so well-welcomed by Garrison that he suggested to appoint him

as the speaker for the American Anti-Slavery Society. They together organized daily speeches that convict slavery and the brutality with which slaves were treated. He was well-spoken that the bulk of audience doubted his being a slave and refuted his experience.

The opposition he faced was the result of the rhetoric and intelligence that his words carry. He wrote his own narrative, prefaced by Garrison and Wendell Phillips, to attest that he is its original writer. Unlike Jacobs who opted for secrecy in her *'Incidents'*, Douglass's use of real appellations of persons and places is a proof that he was truthful in his storytelling and of the fact that he was an ex-slave. This trouble was not to last as two of his friends purchased his freedom. Frederick's narrative, considered as a contribution to the African American literature, pictures slavery as an assault on humanity. Within his autobiography, Douglass recites his life in chattel in four phases. The first typically concerns his early life as a child with a long journey awaiting him for the search of identity; as he had an account of neither his parentage nor his birth. It was his lost self in dark servitude and his marginalised race that plagued him; thus, his will to confirm his existence encouraged him to save his oppressed brothers drawing on the personal violence he underwent. Frederick's first freedom was a mental one through a process of educating himself and this had a

major impact in enlightening his mind about the cruelty as well as the poisonous chattel life.

3.3 The Plot of the *'Narrative'*

Unaware of his birthday, Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey was born a slave in Tuckahoe, Maryland. The son of Harriet Bailey ignored who his father was, but it is probably thought that he is a white master. Frederick grew away from his mother like the majority of slaves in his era, this was 'a common custom, in the part of Maryland from which I ran away, to part children from their mothers at a very early age' (NFD: 17). He lived with his grandmother, Betsey Bailey, who looked after Harriet's kids until they are old enough to start working.

As six years of happy childhood passed, his grandmother informs him that they will make their way to a long journey; it was the first steps towards slave life. After walking miles, they reach a place where many children were playing. The grandmother points out at some boys and girls; she tells Frederick that they are his brothers and sisters whom he has never seen.

Traits of miserable slavery are now plain to Frederick; children on the plantation 'were fed cornmeal mush that was placed in a trough, to which they were called, Frederick later wrote, "like so many pigs." Using oyster shells and other homemade spoons, the hungry children
competed with each other for every bit of the gruel. A linen shirt that hung to their knees was all that they were given to wear. None had beds or warm blankets', Russell and Wagner (2005: 07) mention.

Captain Anthony, a clerk, is Frederick's master and he works for Colonel Llyod. The large plantation that goes to him is known as *'The Great House Farm'* where numerous slaves work. Not any slave joins it, but it was a high privilege to be in the farm.

At the age of seven, Frederick moves to Baltimore to serve Anthony's son in-law, Haugh Auld. He would enjoy his days there. Haugh's wife, Sofia, was nice to him at the first glance and she used to read the Bible outloud, the matter which led Frederick to request her to teach him to read; this was their routine until her the husband knew of it and forbade her to carry on the process of teaching Frederick, for doing that for a slave would open his eyes upon the wrongs drawn upon him. Sofia, submissive to her husband's order, quitted teaching the slave boy and even her behaviour towards him changed.

The modest deal of words he knew could transform his life and ideas at a very early age; Frederick recalls saying

> The more I read, the more I was led to abhor and detest my enslavers. I could regard them in no other light than a band of successful robbers, who had left their homes, and gone to Africa, and stolen us from our homes, and in a strange land reduced us to slavery. I loathed them as being the meanest as well as the most wicked of men. . . . I would at times feel that learning to view of my wretched condition, without the remedy. I opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out. . . . It was this everlasting thinking of my condition that tormented me. There was no getting rid of it. It was pressed upon me by every object within sight or hearing, animate or inanimate. The silver trump of

Smart Frederick did not give up made a friend any white boy he acquaints; his book accompanied him when sent of errands by his master, he explains that he always returns with a lesson. Frederick also used another trick; he used to carry bread to feed hungry pauper white boys, ‘this bread I used to bestow upon the hungry little urchins, who in return, would give me that valuable bread of knowledge’ (NFD: 46). As young Frederick grew, his reading let him think that he might remain a slave for the rest of his life. The awareness he got from his modest literacy was his blessing and curse at the same time.

The Haughs considered Frederick as an uncontrollable slave. For this reason, he was sent to a place where he would undergo an utmost hostile treatment. He was hired to Edward Covey for one year. He was known as a slave breaker and his harsh behaviour with slaves; one of the ‘human flesh-mongers’ (NFD: 18), Frederick describes. Covey, the notorious slave owner, has almost wiped Douglass’s will to learn.

Life seemed like hell under Covey’s surveillance, so poor Frederick escaped to ask for protection from his master, nevertheless he was sent back to endure the same sort of chastisement, ‘Mr. Covey succeeded in breaking me. I was broken in body, soul and spirit. My natural elasticity was crashed, my intellect languished, the disposition to read departed, the cheerful spark that lingered about my eye died; the dark night of slavery closed in upon me; and behold a man transformed into a brute!’ (NFD: 64-65). Tired of being whipped, Frederick tried the help of his slave fellow, Sandy, who superstitiously advised him to carry a root on his right hand and this way Mr. Covey would not approach him anymore.

Indeed, that worked for a while but it was not to last for long; for no obvious reason Mr. Covey attempted to beat Frederick once again while busy currying and rubbing horses in the stable. This is where Frederick chose to fight; he said ‘I seized Mr. Covey hard by the throat… Covey seemed taken all aback. He trembled like a loaf’ (ibid. 70). This was a turning point in Frederick’s life and felt gratified by his triumph and found

that ‘it rekindled the few embers of freedom, and revived within me a sense of my manhood’ (ibid. 71).

Frederick was later hired to another white man called William Freeland where he managed to flee with some slave fellows, but he failed. Mr. Freeland, afraid that Frederick would drive other slaves into rebels, thinks that he had better be away. He was hired to William Gardner, a ship builder man, to stay there for eight months to be back again to Auld after a fight with an apprentice.

Eventually, in 1838, Douglass’s escape from bondage succeeded but with little details recited about how he fled; that was to protect his slave brothers who might follow his path; in this respect Kethan in Taylor (1999: 525) finds that the fact of secrecy ‘might have been disastrous, like leaving the filling of a pie, since the escape portion of the slave narrative would have been eagerly awaited as the most suspenseful and thrilling segment.’ Finally, Frederick smelled the odor of freedom in the New York land.

Still fearful to be caught, Frederick moved to New Bedford where he married a free woman named Anna Murray and would change his name from Bailey into Douglass. He worked as a caulker to become later a famous orator for the slavery-abolition cause. This is the point at which Frederick Douglass’s narrative ends.

3.4 A Former Slave with a New Self-Image

The n[illegible] / Bedford if compared to

> Almost everybody seemed to be at work, but noiselessly so, compared with what I had been accustomed to in Baltimore…I heard no deep oaths or horrid curses on the laborer. I saw no whipping of men; but all seemed to go smoothly on. Every man appeared to understand his work, and went at it with a sober yet cheerful earnestness, which betokened the deep interest which he felt in

Frederick’s life regained status of an independent individual; not only was his liberty halted but all of his inner and outer self was meant to be damaged. The feeling that he, by now, regained his self-image is a satisfying one despite that his employment was ‘dirty, and hard work for me; but I went at it with a glad heart and willing hand. I was now my own master’, (NFD: 101), after all nothing can be identical to the damaging slave life he had.

It was enough for him to breathe the air of freedom; he finds the inferior conditions of his job much better than the dirtiness of slavery which grants the right to someone to own another and have a command over his life. Yet his employment went problematic because of the already prevailing racist prejudices; White caulkers in the North had a problem in co-working a black individual. This fact was not to thwart his steps forward; Frederick was ready to do any other job no matter what it might be. His worthy self-image commences to be constructed the moment when he got in touch with Garrison, though he would later quit Garrisonian principles.

Meetings and discussions with abolitionist spirits from white and black races constitute a mainstay in Douglass’s life. New experiences in the anti-slavery society make his name first appear in *‘The Liberator’* on March 29, 1839, Chesebrough (1998). Speeches delivered by Frederick gained

interest and prominence; they were acknowledged by the audience, for they revealed the image of slavery from the inside.

Douglass's name has always been associated with persistence and resistance. His constant slave master struggle concerns the unhappiness and traumatic states brought by slavery. Thanks to his autobiography, Frederick leaves a powerful testimony of the battle that existed between two different races with one dominating the others' lives at all levels. As a slave, his thoughts of the abnormalities drawn by the enslaving community turned to be detailed and outspoken to the whole world. The juxtaposition of the status of Frederick as a slave and his being an orator years after signals how titanic his efforts were to eliminate the system which under no right dehumanises the African race.

3.5 Narrative Time in *'NFD':* Temporal Aspects

The aspect that characterises slave narratives is the implicit and intermittently explicit reference to time or a sort of atemporal incidents. No work of literature is time-free and cannot be conducted outside particular temporal confines that shape its contextual structure. The events within any story are strictly unfolded in a particular setting and at a definite frame of time. Being transmitted from one generation to another, slave narratives are meant to remind readers of the particularity and peculiarity of a given time and how it has altered or remained stagnant. Each work of literature is a unique timepiece belonging to a given historical period. This section offers a glance at the temporality covering the *'Narrative'* of Frederick Douglass which contains a plethora of instances indicating to time.

The opening statement in Douglass's autobiography is a sharp indication to the White masters' intention of keeping slaves unaware of time around them, allowing them to perpetuate within an atemporal environment. Being uncertain about major dates in any individual's life

gives the air of an intended and forceful erasure of time awareness, as a manner throughout which Douglass with his siblings submerge in ignorance and vaccum.

One cannot doubt the sense of lack which deprives slaves of their knowledge of a natural fact similar to birthday. Consciousness about temporality is not considered but a right proper to the Whites and this corresponds to what Mitchell (1994: 186) links to ‘lack and plenitude, erasure of time, memory, and history.’

Douglass in his narrative has thoughtfully presented indications of time throughout which the reader learns a deal about the inured notations of temporal units that prevail in his writing. Temporal patterns like ‘I date the entertainment’, ‘darkest hours’ (NFD: 39), added to the calendar of his era, indicate a description and reference to a precise chapter of his life.

Twenty years a slave; hours began with Frederick as an unknown boy born a slave and would end with him a free man. Time started with him as barely knowing how to read and would cast him as a famous orator. Freedom days began with his influence by Garrison and would end with him as a generator of crucial abolitionist thoughts. Within the narrative, there are multiple events that manifest time which figures as ‘an unperceivable element though there are several spatial indicators that point out at it’, Sheffel, Weixler and Werner (2014) assume.

Slaves’ lives a temporality out of their own choice; it was imposed upon them to live out of time. Yet, the African American literature, through Douglass’s narrative, reveals how a slave grapples with the atemporality imposed upon his existence to persist at the face of servitude. Douglass lived his own time despite the continuous attempts by his masters to crash it out. His way to come into grips with time was to gain literacy to affront the principles brought by the system of bondage. The pauses of time that he experienced engender a moment of fear that his future will be identical

to his past, if not worse; engage him in connecting his then-time to a better one that he aspires for.

Douglass seems to be in a constant race with time; his taut will to release himself from the chains of bondage orders a firm relationship of time-marked stations within his life. There is a perceived interval between one chapter and another, ranging from the very staring point until the last path that Douglass reaches. Gaps in time exist, as chapters unfold upon Douglass at different ages and each chapter represents a novel stage in terms of experience, time and place.

3.5.1 The Past, Present and Future in Douglass's *'Narrative'*

Frederick's bondage from the perspective of a free man resides in the chained past that he witnessed, and his freedom was longed for in the future that he was resolute to reach. The linear extension from the past reaching the present into the future represents a genuine form of temporality within the narrative. It is a continuum where the past does not drop to leave way for the future; instead it endures in the present and remains the starting point that is constantly referred to.

To exemplify, we consider how Frederick's past influences his present which predicts a different future for him. The past in the *'Narrative'* did not collapse, it instead resides a starting point upon which further events got referenced. With his freedom, Douglass's lost temporality gets reclaimed though belatedly,

The temporal circle within which he lived shows an active anticipation of his status. At the midpoint of his autobiography he articulates 'you have to see how a man was made a slave; you shall see how a slave was made

a man' (NFD: 66), precisely by the time of his fight with Mr. Covey which reflects a sense of regaining his status of man. At that level of the narrative, Douglass's present links and disjoins his past and future; the two edges of temporal continuity; from being in bondage into freedom, from serfdom to an elegant sense of manhood. His promise labels a changeabout in what was wrong concerning the time he had to live. Within later chapters, the reader remarks a rushing temporality governing the rest of Frederick's story. The stagnation lived as a slave turned to a fast succession of events by the time when he became a famous orator.

McDowell in Rohy (2009:28) proposes that Douglass's work 'acts in two directions at once; the here and now and the there and then' this retrospection in his text projects events that precede the step of writing. The trajectory of Frederick's life in his narrative points out to a movement backward and forward in the recitation of his account as a slave and as a free individual.

That sort of enlivened conflation pronounces that Frederick's text marks an enlivened tendency to tell his autobiography along a vivid temporal trajectory. His handicraft replicates a compressed description of details portrayed through an acute temporality that rims the whole piece of writing. It is a progressive story where the past signals and is linked to the future, with slavery being a constantly recalled event that cannot be forgotten and that will be remembered by those having experienced it as well as others who are left autobiographies picturing life under bondage.

The text of Douglass tells time as well as tale; temporal reference makes the frame of the narrative as it associates the incidents with the issue of time. This latter constitutes the cosmos of the conscious human experiences that Frederick and his siblings underwent; time with its facets extends beyond any other considerations. He situates himself in varied

blocks of time between earlier or past incidents and current later ones in his life. If readers recall upon Douglass's past thoughts and aspirations for freedom, they will conclude that there is a tie between his past and future. These two temporal edges are interconnected in terms of the change that they bring to his life.

3.5.2 The Moment of Narration

Slave narratives are generally written by former slaves; Douglass's is an instance. Throughout the whole memoir he recites a moment or moments recalled from his own memory. His narration knows no frontiers as long as his experience extends along his internal record of the slave life he held. Douglass's moment of narration goes far beyond the limits of words; the memories of his chastised infancy, his wretched soul and his movement from slavery to freedom are recited to mirror a self that is no longer actual but mediated by autobiography. His moments of life, whether as a young slave or as a mature personality, and his lively quest for liberty turn to be the reader's as well.

If Douglass's masterpiece is of a worth discussion, it is then, regardless of factors, because he did it without receiving any sort of education. Frederick words seem not to have limits, for not only has he written his '*Narrative'* as a description of a part in his life but also other works that picture his slavery. There is no room to doubt the *originality of his 'My Bondage and My Freedom'* (1855), *'The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass'* (1855); his narrative ambition is as vague as the blankness he witnessed since his early childhood. Frederick appears to have had endless words to tell his account of life in more than a single literary piece, still with the same eloquent style and narrative quality.

There are also instances where the narrative invites its readers to set up still temporal moments. The representation of action at the onset of major scenes in Frederick's life signals shifts from one incident into another, in a manner which scatters time dimensions but ensures the animation of the plot.

3.5.3 The Order of Narration

The very beginning of Douglass's narrative informs the reader that he was born into slavery. This shows the chronological order that he favours to start with. Stages of the hardships he met are told one after the other as well as the chaotic chronology that slavery brought about. Tormented by peculiar slavery and coerced into it, Douglass offers his readers his sequential form of events to convincingly get them to connect their own reason with that of the story.

The impression that can be drawn from the chosen order of Douglass's *'Narrative'* is that he appropriates and relates actions to their temporal structure. The mapping of his autobiography conjures to a series of recorded units that tell Frederick's life in time and space. Within his work, the reader feasibly moves from a slow representation of the events along a temporal scale in a natural and logical order, connecting one occurrence to another.

The juxtaposition of events and relating them to one's state of mind goes noticeable in Douglass's narrative. To reify segments that made his life as a slave and later a free man would demand chronological rectitude especially that he orders his autobiography in varied stations, providing the reader with an ability to relate simultaneous happenings in two different locations. Reference to beginning, middle and end does not go inscrutable within his work as a way to convey the narrator's attitudes.

Dates and allusion to periods of time are prevalent in his work, leading the reader to develop an idea that the writer takes pleasure in framing his own temporal side of which he was deprived since birth.

3.5.4 The Pace of Narration

While reading Douglass's 'Narrative', among others, one assumes the writer's eager to reveal the abundant painful stations in his life; from the plantation days until liberty. All that he witnessed as a slave in terms of cruelty, discrimination and coercion is recited in the narrative text with details offered. The way Douglass's paced his narrative is varied as it allows for a tense digest of his story. The combination of his thoughts and the expression of the fears that haunted him along with the interplay between characters create a naturally paced literary piece, containing literary devices and rhetoric.

The flux of narration in Frederick Douglass's autobiography allows the reader to return several times to one event for the purpose of reflecting upon others. The pace of his narrative action varies in that the sequencing of the events differs, starting from the opening of the text on. At times, a reader feels in hurry to move to the next page to discover what happens next. Other passages on the contrary, detailed as they might be, create the shift to another sequence that is majorly to integrate a kind of pacing down between the scenes, permitting a sort of pause between actions. This variety in the tempo of Frederick's narrative is important to guarantee a full engagement of the reader and cast away boredom.

The rate with which the story moves offers the reader a chance to keep interest and skip boredom to reach the end of the story. Given the length that characterises Douglass's autobiography, he could well pace its events through the use of descriptions and intense words and even suspense as a key to capture his readers' attention. His word choice informs the highly care that Douglass grants to his narrative to rev the degree to which readers clutch to the story.

3.5.5 The Narrative Mood

The mood underlying the *'Narrative'* situates it in the context of slavery and abolitionism. It entails an originality round Frederick's autobiographical voice, its strength, irony and rhetorical strategies. We have previously mentioned that the writer decides about the mood of the narrative (see chapter one, pp.27) and Douglass is his text is no exception. He went through the crucible of slavery with great courage through his self-made literacy and oratory which made him a well-known black person during the nineteenth century. His choice to start his life story with the statement that announces his status of a slave designates the mood of unhappiness and hardships that Frederick wants the reader to anticipate.

In the process of reciting his story, Douglass's text appears to consist of *diegesis* in that it consists of much telling of the events happening with him, people around him and plantation life. The *diegesis/mimesis* dialectic figures out through Douglass's text; the representation and telling of the slavery experience as related to the temporal framework with its past, present and future prevails within Douglass's text.

Diegesis, in our context, takes a shape in the account of what a given period in Frederick's life carries and implies vis-à-vis beliefs of the world around. With Douglass being the main character of his own narrative, multiple functions are laid by him. This multiplicity vehicles a connection between the form of the narrative and the psychological side of both, the writer and the reader. In our narrative, *diegesis* is shown in Douglass's capacity to affect his audience as they go further in his account through a process of telling, exclusively.

Given that *mimesis* is proper to direct discourse and does not usually concern real-life depictions, one argues that Frederick's

autobiography offers no clear mimesis, regarding that its basic component is the mimetic action. *Diegesis* or telling governs Frederick's literary work and it is thus placed above any mimetic considerations. Yet, the reader might recognise that the rhetoric used by Douglass is so original that it gets them imagine the reality of these scenes told by him. The tone in the 'Narrative' starts with an infantile observation of the stereotypes of masters towards African slaves. But as the story progresses, events turn to be much more focused on the occurrences of Frederick's life as he grows in age and the tone was more or less shifting to be personal and individual.

3.6 Narrativity Traits in Frederick's 'Narrative'

As a brilliant piece of literature, Douglass's narrative constitutes a discourse which relates history to words. The main narrative feature within his piece of work establishes a rapport between the enslavement of Africans as a fact and its description within the confines of a literary piece. Narrative configuration structured through a temporal basis.

This interrelation between verbal representations and temporal arrangement brings about or constitutes a vivid memoir. The discordant aspect that underlies this link is made concordant through an act of narration.

3.6.1 Douglass's Heroism as an Author

The autobiography written by Frederick Douglass to account on his bondage and liberation transcends the status of a literary work. Given the fact that it has had an impact on slavery abolition, it implies a sense of prominence regarding its writer. A reader of Douglass's *'Narrative'* qualifies him as a hero who promulgates the scars left by the chains of slavery against all odds. His steeled wish to liberate himself and his desperate race resulted in a strong and recognised figure whose

authorship amazed the large bulk of readers. Distinguished with his outstanding style, Douglass makes a remarkable writer through his prolific memoir.

He makes a hero, starting from his early self-elevation, though he has never stepped school, to his being a representative of his African American community as a whole. The pervasive status, that Douglass's narrative gains, goes back to his unique authorship; his biblical, elevated and straightforward language with which he writes his account of life might be a symbol of a high degree of literacy, yet no matter how language might carry meanings, it cannot really emulate his inner feelings. An example of the style of language that he adopts would be the following, in a description of his Aunt's whipping,

> ' I remember the first time I ever witnessed this horrible exhibition. I was quite a child, but I well remember it. I never shall forget it whilst I remember anything. It was the first of a long series of such outrages, of which I was doomed to be a witness and a participant. It struck me with awful force. It was the blood-stained gate, the entrance to the hell of slavery, through which I was about to pass. It was a most terrible spectacle. I wish I could commit to paper the feelings with which I beheld it.'

The crafted author that he acts contributes in conveying his purpose from writing his life story. Douglass's authorship distinguishes him as an opponent of slavery and a defender of human rights as well as his race. His heroic status goes back to the literacy he developed earlier despite the tough hurdle of slavery; his fame was shielded by the fact that it oriented him towards the road of freedom.

Assessing Douglass's role as a teller of his autobiography is a support itself, as it proves his power to describe what events happened where and how, giving a chance for the reader to reflect upon what good the Whites find in slavery to defend it. He must have been a hero to adopt an authorship of a critical subject as that of slavery which might yield political trouble, Levine (2007) in Fish (2007:106) mentions that 'Douglass underscores the heroic individualist achievement of his resistance'. His heroic authorship draws attention toward an ideology of self-making through knowledge thus, gaining power which is represented in the narrative as his literacy. The self-making value is paramount in the Western arena and that has perhaps intensified the heroism and championed authorship.

The role of Douglass as an author and narrator of his text is not a nebulous one; first-person discourse prevails everywhere and this is no strange, given the autobiographical sort of the narrative. Douglass does not stay aloof from the context of his text; he creates his own discourse in a manner that renders his voice overt throughout the piece of writing.

3.6.2 Character in the '*Narrative*'

Among the characters making up the narrative of Frederick Douglass, his character is much more prominent. Being the protagonist of his own story, Douglass forges his identity throughout the whole work; he represents a factual character determined to unchain himself from the slavery institution. Garrison (1845: 06) in the preface of the *'Narrative'* comments on the character of Frederick by describing him 'as a public speaker, he excels in pathos, wit, comparison, imitation, strength of reasoning, and fluency of language' His traits as a main character correspond to the phases of his life. He started showing himself that he grows missing maternal affection, yet he persevered at the face of such a loss of family warmth.

Other characters within Frederick's text, being real, all have a particular impact on the shaping of his life. The character of his mother, Harriet, who sacrificed her time to rest by night to enjoy being next to her son a couple of hours, so that he closes his eyes upon her tender face. The inhuman characters are the masters who make his life utter through sore words and behaviours; he was belittled by them to feel grandiose later through liberty. Besides, the character figured as the master in the *'Narrative'* is considered by Gray and Robinson (2004: 47) as one who is a ''demon,'' a ''robber,'' a ''pirate,'' a man-stealer, a woman-whipper, and cradle-plunderer. In short, master essentially translates as sinner.'

His mother's timing to see her son indicates that she did not have permission to see him in day; Frederick did not 'remember ever seeing her by the light of day because it was 12 miles between her workplace and his abode. Despite the gruelling walk, she made brief sporadic visits to see him after her workday ended and left early enough the following morning to resume her tasks anew', Thompson, Conyers and Dawson (2010: 31).

3.6.3 Autobiography

It is with an unprecedented fame that Douglass's 'Narrative' was received by the White and African American populace. Attractive in terms of title and story, Frederick's first-person writing constitutes a cornerstone and a push in the anti-slavery movement. With strong words, it was put at the hands of the public to blemish the wrongs done upon his racial roots. His autobiography resents the conditions that slavery imposed upon him in terms of denial of Frederick's existence. His first-person account of life adds more authenticity and self-centredness to the narrative. Douglass empowered his status by writing about himself in a talented way which renders him a hero in his own manner.

Considered as a *chef d'oeuvre*, the autobiography portrays him as 'a major figure in the development of the American I-narrative tradition. Through first-person writing Douglass gave form and significance to a self-consciousness that in its engagement with issues of personal autonomy evokes a comparison with that of Benjamin Franklin, Margaret Fuller, Henry David Thoreau, and Booker T. Washington', Andrews (1996:04) claims. This comparison of Douglass to famous personages like the aforementioned is enough to draw a conclusion that he makes for himself an indispensable place among valuable writers. His 'Narrative' implies a sort of structured first-person story. The personal experience under slavery and the adventurous escape he tells about figures an authenticated account of events.

'Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself' applies to what the autobiography genre dictates; the use of *autodiegetic* structures mixed with the truthfulness of the events grant it a flavoured reputation. His elegantly written autobiography implies a divine writing that firmly translates his own experiences as a slave into words. It is worth mentioning how Frederick carefully covers the details of expelling the chains and seeking freedom in the form of a literary piece that inhabits the scope of his journey across words, time and space. His autobiography echoes a visible narrative identity, through a process of a determined opposition and resistance at the face of slavery. The thorough words with which he wrote it express his outrage at the misdemeanour treatment of slaves from the part of their masters.

3.6.4 Authenticity of Frederick's 'Narrative'

At his escape 1838, Douglass started delivering his speeches. Thrilling and admiring as they might be, they were subject to scepticism. The purity of his English led the audience to think he never perpetuated in slavery.

That was the main motive behind his very thought of lining his autobiography, but ‘Douglass’s statements ring true because he has lived and breathed the tales he tells’, Gale (2001). The expertise with which his text is characterised is motivated by a sense of self-worth and the right to hold an honourable life.

The popularity of the book was enormous and appealed to the public of readers. It shows his literacy and calmed the noise of refutations about what he states; the newspaper *The Liberator* publishes that

> ‘Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass’. This long-desired Narrative is now presented to the public, in a neat volume occupying 125 pages. It was written entirely by Mr. Douglass, and reveals all the facts in regard to his birthplace- the names of his mother, master, overseer, etc., etc. It cannot fail to produce a great sensation wherever it may happen to circulate, especially in the slaveocracy. The edition is going of rapidly... It is for sale at 25 Cornhill. Price 50 cents. Accompanying it as a finely executed and

This was to represent him as a public figure which silences the ridicules of others and transmits his allegiance to himself first. This is shown in the confidently expressed snapshots of history of slavery and the narrative power that characterises his work. He views that without his literate spirit, freedom would never be reached at the end, and that the mastery of words he could become his own master.

Frederick concerns himself eagerly with slavery abolition; his speeches are influential in the sense that they incite the American society to react.

One of his oratory scenes caused the passing of the Emancipation Proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln, a paper that grants freedom for ex-slaves. His works do not make part of the African American culture, but they are also a specimen in American history. Throughout his memoir, Douglass made allusions to a number of prominent figures; that would be understood as a point that adds to the degree of his literary significance as well as intensifies the authenticity regarding his own work. He mentioned Shakespeare's saying 'rather bear those ills we had, than fly to others, that we knew not of', (NFD, 79) and Luke's 'he that knoweth his master's will, and he gave me drink; I was a stranger, and he took me in', (NFD, 59) as a method to show his well-educated self and that he is the original narrator of his own story in his own language.

Part of his rhetorical language, Douglass's use of figurative style of writing prevails throughout his work. Metaphorical language figures in his constant thoughts about freedom and wishes for a better tomorrow without the shackles of bondage. A best example is his depiction of the freely sailing ships which designates how skilled he was in forming the image of his analogy between his servitude and ships' liberty.

3.6.5 Text and Voice in the *'NFD'*

Orality and writing make two significant forms of voice. Douglass must have felt freedom when writing and speaking about his antislavery attitudes. His freedom shadowed the day when he stood up indicting the system before the public of white and black individuals alike. In the majority of slave narratives, 'the acquisition of literacy, the power to read books and discover one's place in the scheme of things, is treated in many slave narratives as a matter equal in importance to the achievement of physical freedom', Andrews (1988: 13) explains.

Indeed, in Frederick's 'Narrative', he speaks of how much his literacy aided him in breaking the chains of his bondage and overcome an

inevitable would-be- status of brute if he develops an ill will towards educating himself; Russel and Wagner (2005: 30) depict Douglass's book as 'a story of the triumph of dignity, courage, and self-reliance over the evils of the brutal, degrading slave system. It is more than an autobiography; it is a sermon on how slavery corrupts the human spirit.'

As a writer, Douglass employs a rhetorical mode in his autobiographical discourse, claiming reality and fidelity to his roots. His sole preoccupation is to establish the ground of facts on which his narrative is built; Garrison in Phillips (2004: 43) gives his testimony about Frederick's talent when he first heard his speech ''I shall never forget his first speech . . . – the extraordinary
emotion it excited in my own mind – the powerful impression it created upon a crowded auditory. . . I think I never hated slavery as intensely as at that moment.''

It was with an intense fame that Douglass realized his 1845 narrative, at the age of twenty seven. The ex- American slave published one of his most powerful memoirs against slavery. He recites his childhood on plantation, family separation, omnipresent violence, his escape and his revelation that has made him on the road of freedom.

The slave whom slavery intended to transform into a brute learned alone how to read and write. With a scathing pen, he tells the inhumanity of the slavery institution as well as the barbarity of the masters. The fluidity that characterizes his text makes it distinct in terms of telling his experience and the collapse of his race's culture caused by the corrupt institution.

Voice is a major component within Frederick's text and it is dual. His inner religious voice always informs him forcefully that God had put him in such a situation for a particular purpose. His premonition that his slavery was not to last for long proved true due to the deep Christian faith he had and divine beliefs; 'from my earliest recollection, I date the entertainment of a deep conviction that slavery would not always be able to hold me within its foul embrace', (NFD:40). His sprit was hopeful that one day he will depart the abhorrent system and through his text, he could transmit the varied examples of the incompatible behaviour of the whites with their religion.

3.7 Instances of Trauma in Frederick's *'Narrative'* and Jacobs' *'Incidents'*

It goes without saying that an individual under slavery would experience enough bad treatment and intense moral torture that creates a traumatic state for slaves. Trauma is a figure of a handicap that attains a person, caused by some anomaly in an undergone situation. Brewin (2003: 05) in Brewin (2007:209) defines trauma as 'some kind of internal breach or damage to existing mental structures'. Slavery, like war, shatters the lives of those who experience it as they become laden with its burden. The traumatic aftermath brought by slavery does not consist of having an impact at the level of the individual solely, but on the suppression of the whole African American identity.

How can one expect that a slave's memory would be sane and peaceful if 'eighteenth century slavery turned Africans into property? It deprived them of all vestiges of legal or social recourse, leaving them vulnerable to the whims of the dominant class', Williamson (2002: 11-12). Coerced into servitude and hard labour, the majority of slaves could not help fighting back and rebel, and those who ventured to do so received endless whippings. Physical and mental dominance of slaves did not pass

without a state of trauma which they translate on plantations in the form of musical mutterings to express their voice and existence despite what was done upon them by masters.

Each note is high in profoundly wishing freedom and aspiring for breaking the shackles of slavery; despite being indecipherable these chants, prayers and cries revive a sense of belonging and an unforgotten plight against them. Douglass mentions the depressing effect that these songs had on his state in considering ‘the hearing of those wild notes always depressed my spirit, and filled me with ineffable sadness... found myself in tears while hearing them...Those songs still follow me, to deepen my hatred of slavery, and quicken my sympathies for my brethren in bonds’, (‘NFD’, 25). Unlike the idea that masters developed, slaves were not showing their happiness through singing, but they were a fusion of hallelujahs, prayers, fears and even loss.

Memorial stations of former slaves were not an idyllic one. Sprit-broken Frederick felt on a number of occasions. The whipping of his aunt and other slaves in front of his eyes caused him terror and an unprecedented fear, haunting him as a child. He was constantly thinking that he might be a victim one day or another; Orlando Patterson (1998:40) in Eyerman (2001: 02) writes, “another feature of slave childhood was the added psychological trauma of witnessing the daily degradation of their parents at the hands of slaveholders . . . to the trauma of observing their parents’ humiliation was later added that of being sexually exploited by Euro-Americans on and off the estate, as the children grew older.” Trauma grows within African American slaves’ souls, since very early ages; it is instilled within them to create emotional anguish, wounds, and a tear in the affective ties that are shaped in family cohesion.

Frederick and Harriet experience a life of disavowal granted by potent slavery, whose repercussions provoke a sense of dislocation and violence. Freedom of the black race in America was irrevocably lost, the matter which traumatises individuals and let them live torn and dismayed; thus, our writers find solace to brace the self through writing. Despite the eloquence that characterise both autobiographies, at some point authors

admit the inability of words to convey their traumatic states; yet, as a young boy, he reveals his feelings and salvations whenever looking at the ships in the pure waters, he said he looked at them ‘with saddened heart and tearful eye’ (NFD: 65). His condition was tormenting that he envied the free movement of the ship he saw and wished to be in its place instead of his wretched enslavement. He draws on his miserable state of mind and soul, addressing those ships,

> You are loosed from your mornings, and are free; I am fast in my chains, and am a slave! You move merrily before the gentle gale, and I sadly before the bloody whip! You are freedom’s swift-winged angels, that fly round the world; I am confined in bands of iron! O that I were free! O, that I were on one of your gallant decks, and under your protecting wing!Alas! betwixt me and you, the turbid waters roll. Go on, go on. O that I could also go! Could I but swim! If I could fly! O, why was I born a man, of whom to make a brute! The glad ship is gone; she hides in the dim distance. I am left in the hottest hell of unending slavery. O God, save me! God, deliver me! Let me be free!... Why am I a slave? I will run away. I will not stand it... Meanwhile, I will try to bear up under the yoke. I am not the only slave in the world. Why should I fret? I can bear as much as any of them. Besides, I

Frederick, through his narrative, notices the conflicting link between the fact of owning a slave and being highly religious, he regards that ‘being the slave of a religious master [as] the greatest calamity that could befall [him]’, (NFD, 72). Trauma’s first signs figure, as young Frederick knew that his grandmother did not tell him all about his status as a slave

until he had to cease being under her care. It is an undoubted fact that her agony was greater than that of her grandson; Thompson, Conyers and Dawson (2010:31) write that ‘Douglass’s brother Perry, begged him to stop crying and offered peaches and pears to soothe him, but the younger child flung the fruit away. He was indignant and hurt’. Slavery got their lives rambling and worthless except that our writers had a determination and will to redefine their free human being status.

3.8 Comparing Jacobs’ and Douglass’s Narratives

The two narratives dealt with in the present study are common in genre. Both authors are African American citizens born into slavery. It is a shared motive for them to accentuate the number of commonalities as well as differences in terms of style, tone and relatively the plot.

With slavery being a major event that has had linked Americans to Africans, Harriet’s and Frederick’s aim is therefore to offer details concerning their own compelling experiences, evoking readers’ attention through autobiography. While both manuscripts insist on the calamities done by slavery, Frederick’s and Harriet’s method of telling an identical truth largely differs.

Jacobs chooses to communicate the heart of the reader and reaches their affect by opting for a sentimental stream of writing. Touching to the reader’s emotions and feelings makes them eager to go further in the writer’s story and designates this latter as much more appealing, particularly by the portion of readers of the same gender. Harriet grants priority to family relationships and ties; she also focuses on a side of womanhood that slavery intends to destroy. The clear shadows of bitterness are plainly exhibited in both narratives in forceful and sharp words so as to offer the reader the magnitude of their pain in servitude.

Jacobs pronounced the good and evil she saw from slavery by appreciating the kindness that she received from the enslaving family and she expressed her gratitude as she recalled humanely acts. Unlike

Douglass who could not remember any bright side brought to him by slavery with almost no merciful acts relating to his experience. However, the discrepancy between our writers is not a large one, as they were equally fervid and valiant writers of their daring stories.

Douglass, on the other hand, marginalises an overt sentimental recitation of his text, given the fact that he adopts a male stream of telling and also because he experienced a form of slavery different than that undergone by Jacobs. Emancipating himself was the result of his being disrespected and deprived of his natural rights by slave owners. Frederick has also witnessed separation from his mother at an early age but this was not to cause him fury as much as seeing instances of flogging and inhumane treatment. Unlike Jacobs who was never beaten nor whipped, brutality often shook Douglass.

As young as he was, Douglass refuses attacks and dehumanisation of the individual. At infancy, he could realise the wrong underlying slavery. He proves to be daring to tarnish the figures and places wherein cruelty prevails contrary to Harriet who opts for secrecy and pseudo names. However, she was daring in her own way to outloud the issue of sexual harassment of masters on slave women; this act has brought shame to slave owners as well as their wives. Harriet, though not witnessing brutal treatments, she did not miss the occasion of writing to tell how other slaves in the plantation (seen by her) are badly treated, humiliated, and robbed of their respect, worth and dignity.

Harriet has accounted on the great degree of oppression exercised on women who, under some conditions have been sex slaves, her case is an example, she considers this as an extreme form of oppression. Added to that, slave husbands were not to interfere or protect their wives. Douglass on his part wants and seeks equality in rights for both races. His text is also general in that it emphasises on varied characters, instances, himself

included, while Jacobs has a clear focus on women though they both meet at the point of slavery abolition and recognition of the black race in America.

Both works acknowledge literacy and consider it as a weapon which has power to put an end to slavery. They challenge circumstances to learn how to read and write in the language of their masters as a response to their mistreatments and prejudices, through imaging instances of physical as well as mental abuse. Fighting back through language is the first success scored by our writers before that of abolition. They share an unquestioned authenticity which is injected in their own narratives.

When it comes to literacy, young Harriet and Frederick were sympathetically taught how to read at an early age by their owners; this was perhaps the sole positive point that might be well recalled and appreciated by both ex-slaves. Though Mr. Auld was firm not to allow his wife to enlighten Frederick’s mind through, for he considered it a threat to get him education. The master’s objection here is intended, as he knows of the immorality of slavery and if slaves learnt how to read and write, masters would doubtlessly have to receive rebellion. Contrary to Harriet’s mistress who did not see harm in letting her servant grow fluent, particularly that she noticed her smartness and wit.

One motive might perhaps signal the reason why a reader feels that Douglass was much more affected by slavery much more than Jacobs; this might go back to the fact that he endured it at a very early age unlike Jacobs who lived well in family warmth years before being chained.

Two major differences that figure out in both narratives concern the titles of each. While Douglass asserts the word American slave, Harriet opts for noting a slave girl, why not writing an American girl? Also, while one might understand that Douglass intends to account on his own life, Harriet chooses to write about varied incidents that not necessarily or

exclusively touch her own experience. However, they both choose to add ‘written by Himself’ and ‘written by Herself’, as an assertion that the two pieces of writing are their own and not written for them.

Harriet’s ILSG and Frederick’s NFD are both a female and a male writings respectively. They are two versions of the same truth and two accounts of one story of deprivation, rotten life and inequality told by the words of mouth of eyewitnesses.

They considered slavery as immoral, through picturing brutal occurrences of whipping and torture against slaves. Nevertheless, their voices differ in tone; with the first being reluctant, shy and emotive and the second being forceful, entailing confidence and loudness. By the end of both autobiographies, Douglass shows himself as being a slave made a man while Jacobs still feels shacked and scattered by the incidents round her, that she did not reach the end heroines do.

The reality drawn upon in both novels is not exclusively Douglass’s or Jacobs’ but it touches to other fellows, as the writers’ narratives could belong to any other slave and they are not only limited to themselves. They write pervasively about the racial hypocrisy that underlies the betrayal of the human being in the name of class and superior race.

3.9 Conclusion

The current chapter has concerned itself with an analysis of a prominent slave narrative under the title of *‘Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself’* (1845). We tried to reveal its contextual frames, starting from a preliminary section that defines the narrative and offers its plot to the discussion of its temporal side as fused with the art of writing an autobiography.

Storytelling entails Frederick’s personal recitation of the agonistic period of time under which he lived as a slave. The plot was viewed by critics as amazingly interwoven, despite having been a slave; his literacy gets the audience to stand surprised at the rhetoric that he pokes to his work. The section also tackles aspects that make the narrative special in terms of the author’s role in granting the autobiography its worth as well as the choice of characters and describe them accurately. Within this part, points like Douglass’s heroic criterion and building his proper manhood are also integrated.

One learns how slaves could jettison the constraints of slavery through regaining their natural, human status and score a victory over ignorance and darkness that slavery meant to delve blacks in.

General Conclusion

The present thesis shows through slave narratives that the principle behind them is to account on slavery that violates their human rights. Scenes that exceed power to be described are made plain through the former slaves' eloquence and clarity of expression; the thing which shows their self-education as a weapon to decry the evils of the system. First-person stories engendered polemics and controversy regarding their

authenticity, as they engaged in reciting the horrors of slavery. Yet, they succeeded in gaining a wide range of audience who showed their interest in reading ex-slaves' autobiographies in male and female versions.

Minutia of slaves' lives is presented in autobiographies and allows for the emergence of a new genre named slave narratives. These make part of the African American culture and they are widely studied. The popularity that slave narratives gained is incomparable and because they were a transparent gate in revealing the unethical treatment of the white masters.

This paper has chosen two major slave accounts to be studied in the frame of time and narrative quality that they possess. The first relates to Harriet *Jacobs' 'Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl'* which fashions a style of her own; this figures out in the devices used to vehicle her story. Reading Harriet arouses sympathy, but also chunks of perseverance and resistance. She longs for a different life other than the one she lives. In her memoir, Linda aspires for an acknowledged reception of her narrative, as she doubts the perfection of her rhetoric.

Her aim was to take risk with the 'serpent of slavery' and to reveal its 'many and poisonous fangs', we learn later in the novel that she did so but still there is 'a dark cloud over [her] enjoyment', (ILSG: 96). Harriet chronicles her story to expose the cruelty and toxic situation she and other women went through. She has woven her narrative and was vehement about it as a sort of relief via her revelations.

Regarding the second narrative written by Frederick Douglass under the title of *'Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself'* (1845), it is considered as masterpiece in the Afro-American literary canon. His work bitterly criticises the American ideology which finds no harm in enslaving African humans. His autobiography has not faced a discouraged reception; instead more than 4.500 copies were sold and passionately read. It is an autobiography wherein Douglass recites the distorted parts of his soul and life caused by slavery and how

he could manage to rearrange himself through fighting with his strong will and pen.

Feelings of triumph weave at this success and he foresees a wide probability that slavery would be abolished and that his race is finally rescued and saved. The fine rhetoric penned by Frederick lets him present autobiography in an admired form. Both novels conform to what Homi Bhabha in Rohy (2009: 23) has called ‘‘double time’. Jacobs and Douglass record a tension and the fact of anachronism and the fantasy of linear history. While both texts claim the temporality of the simple past, present and future, both protagonists also enter calendar time in tandem with the specific anachronism of the future perfect... both accounts fall back on temporal convention.’ It is the aspect of time that bridges the gap caused and left by what slavery engendered in terms of dislocation. Time has been an entity which separates and reunites fragments of scattered pieces within the experience of our writers. This marks an interplay with language that carries their stories in the form of autobiographies.

We have noticed how much the issue of time relates to literature and the degree to which they are interwoven. Temporal parameters correlate with language to create an experience inherent in human time. Narrating a story directly links to aspects of time which makes the contour of the whole literary piece. It goes unquestioned that time occupies a similar worth as the events of a narrative and this way it acquires its fullest meaning only through the presence of both items, particularly that time in this respect has to do with history. The reader discernibly recognises this perspective, as the issue of slavery is a historical chapter before being noted in narratives in the form of autobiographies.

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ملخص

إن نقطة ارتكاز العمل الحالي تكمن في العلاقة التي تربط عامـل الـوقت او الزمـن بـالجوانب السردية في روايتين رئيسيتين تجسدان حياة الرق. نحن نتكلم عن العبيد هارييت جاكوبس في روايتها "وقـائع فـي حيـاة فتـاة الرقيـق" (1861) وفريـدريك دوغلاس فـي كتـابه "قصـة حيـاة فريدريك دوغلاس، الرقيق الأمريكي" (1845) كحالتين للدراسـة. إن هـدف هـذه الدراسـة هـو الكشف عن عدة رؤى زمنية في تصـوير حيـاة الكـاتبين كعبيـد. كمـا يحـدد هـذا البحـث مسـألة الوقت التي كانت موضوع عدة مناقشـات وجـدل و وجهـات نظـر مختلفـة بشـأنه. و فـي هـذا الصدد سوف نستفيد من آفاق فهم السردية الذي يعـد مصـطلح حـديث التـداول ذلـك أن هـذه المذكرة تعتمد على تحليل السرد الذاتي للعبيد الأفارقة الأمريكيين من زاوية زمنية محددة من خلال حياتي جاكوبز ودوغلاس. وهذه الدراسة لها أهداف تتمثل في مناقشة مدى عامل الـوقت الذي يلعب دورا محوريا في سرديات العبودية ومدى تحقق خاصية الفعل السردي بهما.

Resumé

Le pivot du présent travail réside dans la relation qui lie le temps aux aspects narratifs et narrativité dans deux grands récits d'esclaves. Nous parlons des ex-esclaves; Harriet Jacobs avec son «Incidents dans la vie d'une fille esclave» (1861) et Frederick Douglass dans son autobiographie intitulé «récit de la vie de Frederick Douglass, un esclave américain» (1845) comme une étude de cas. La genèse de cette étude est de révéler les différentes perspectives temporelles dans la représentation de la vie des auteurs en tant qu'esclaves. La recherche délimite la question du temps ou temporalité qui a fait l'objet de plusieurs débats et controverses. Les différents points de vue concernant le temps vont être exposés. D'un autre coté, nous allons tirer des horizons de compréhension de la narrativité. Ainsi, la thèse présentes appuie sur une analyse de l'auto-narration des esclaves dans des cadres temporels. Dans une tentative de voir à travers les expériences de Jacobs et Douglass, nous avons opté pour

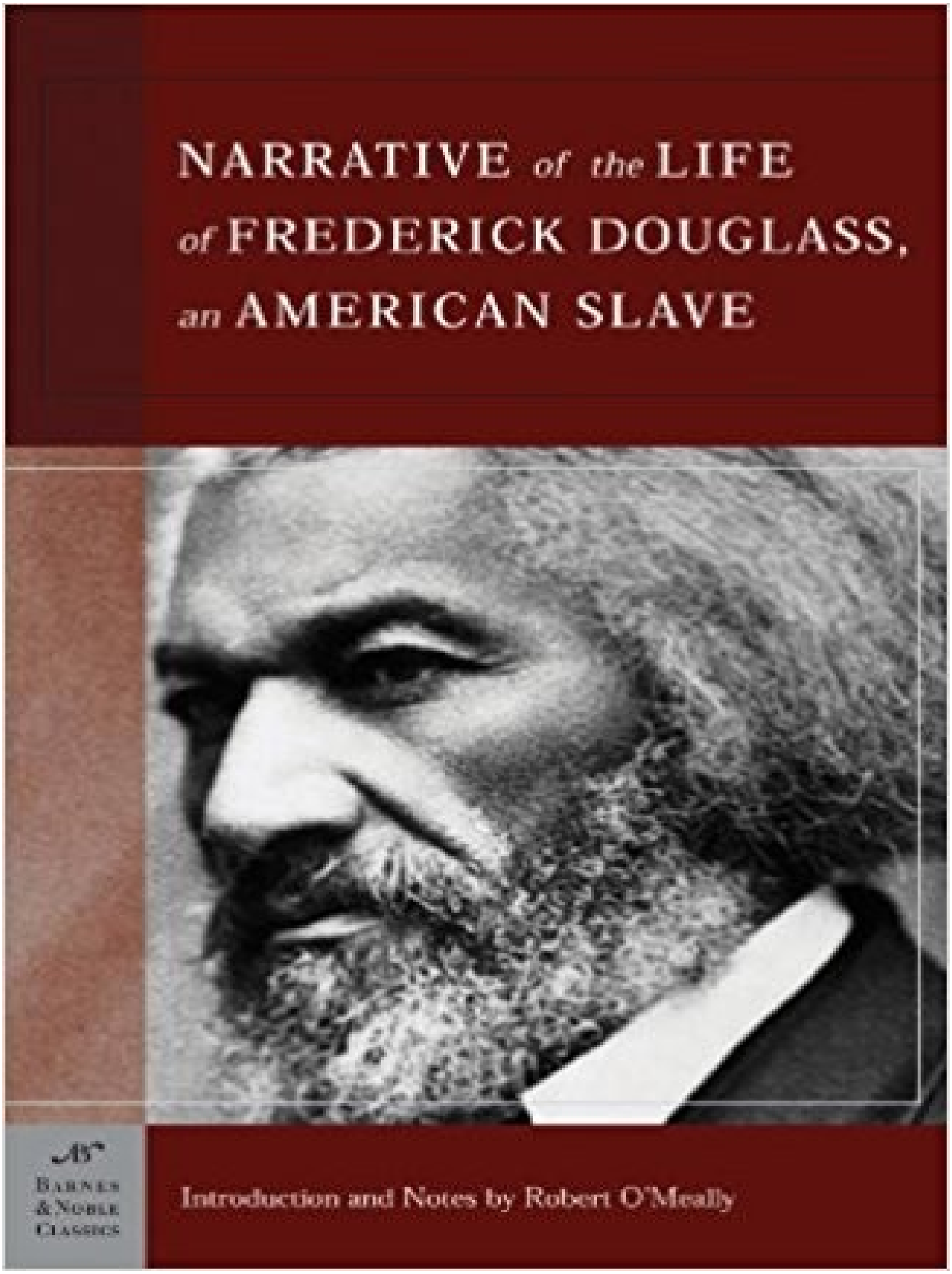
cette étude qui a des objectifs, à la fois la discussion de la façon dont le temps joue un rôle central dans les récits esclaves et jusqu'à quel point la condition narrative est présente.

Abstract

The fulcrum of the present work lies in the relationship that binds time to narrative and narrativity aspects in two major slave narratives. We speak of the ex-slaves; Harriet Jacobs with her *'Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl'* (1861) and Frederick Douglass in his *'Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave'* (1845) as a case in point. The genesis of this study is to reveal the several temporal insights within the portrayal of the authors' lives as slaves. The research delineates the issue of time which has been subject of several debates and controversy. The different views regarding time are to be exposed. From another perspective, we will draw on horizons of understanding narrative chemistry. Thus, the present paper builds on an analysis of slaves' self-narration in temporal confines. In an attempt to see through the lenses of Jacobs and Douglass we have opted for this study which has objectives ;both the discussion of how far time plays a central role in slave narratives and how far the narrative condition is there.

Index

Frederick Douglass’s autobiography 1845



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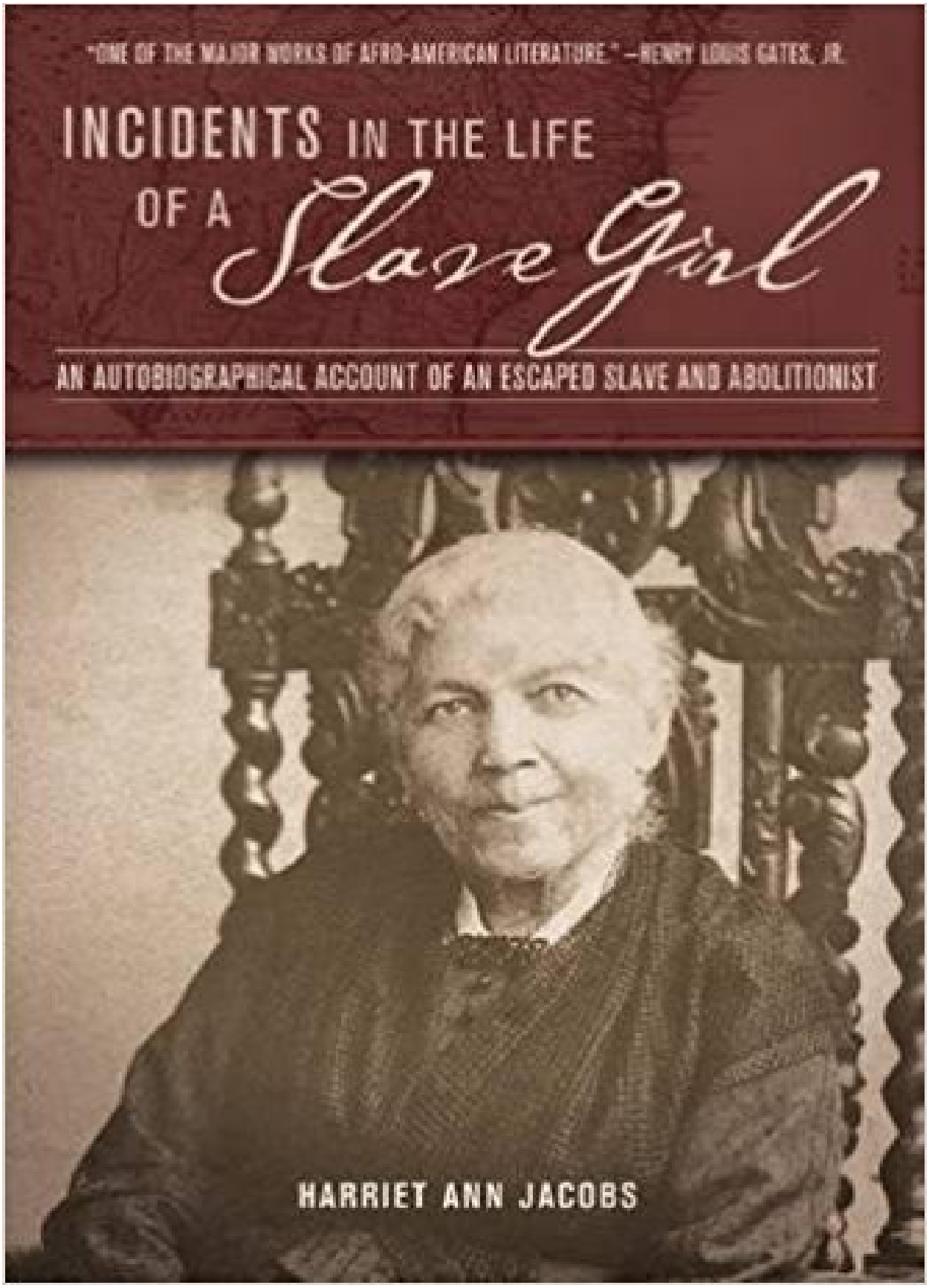

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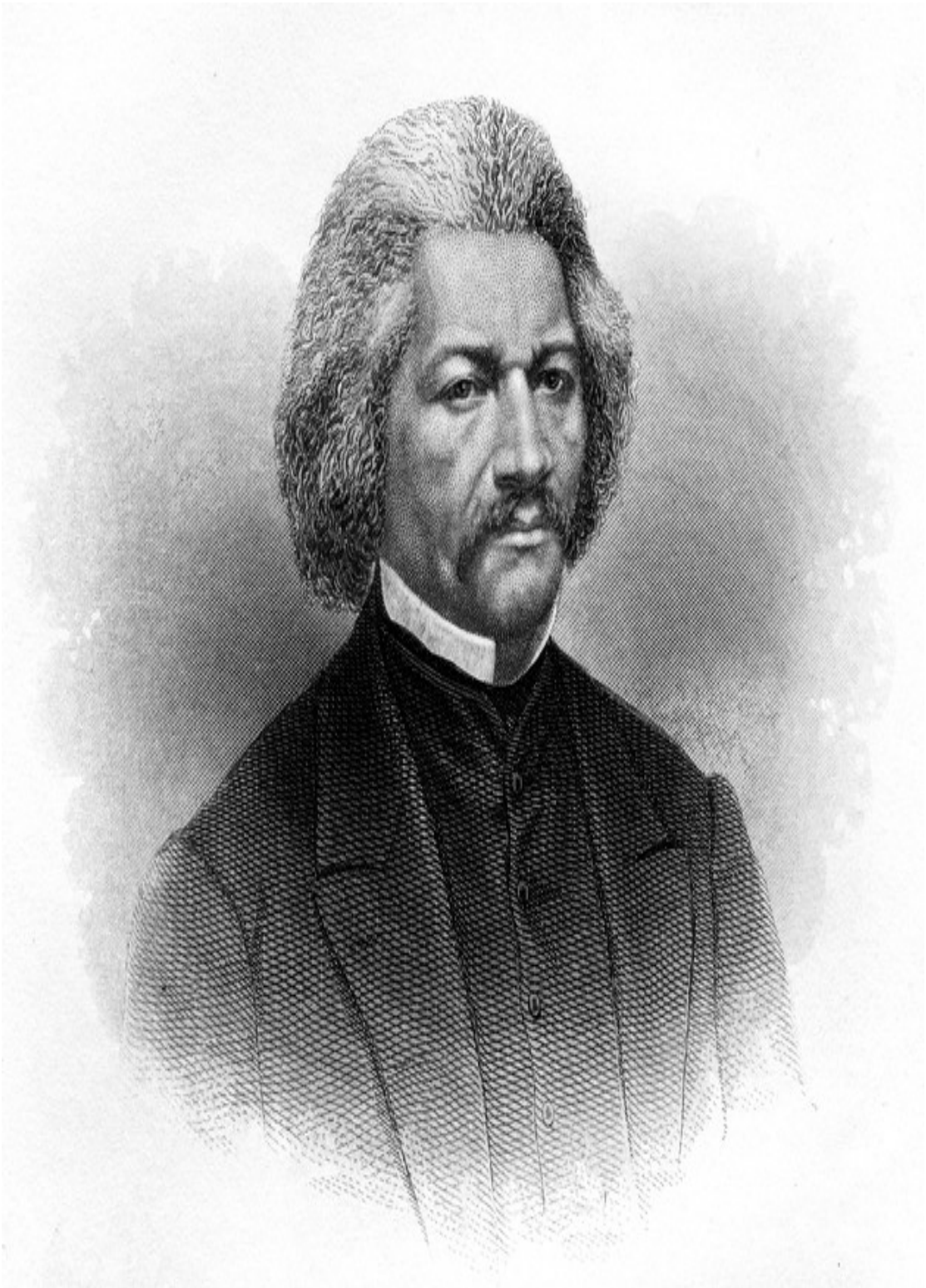

Harriet Jacobs: A Portrait