

Memory, History, And Past in Women's Slave Narratives

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. . . [I]f you go there—you who was never there—if you go there and stand in the place where it was, it will happen again; it will be there, waiting for you . . . [E]ven though it's all over—over and done with—it's going to always be there waiting for you.

Toni Morrison

The above mentioned quote from Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved* denotes the indestructible nature of the past. In the novel, past is portrayed as a physical presence, something that fills the space. It is the indefinite memory that will always be waiting for the mankind in the near future. Memories born with us and lives even after our death as collective one. Memory insists us to think about who we are, and where our origin is. It leads us to have more probes on our own past. Several studies have dogged the relationship between documented history and unrecorded memories. And in those memories, which have been written, sleeps the magnanimous past and history. When historians began professionalizing in the nineteenth century, they commonly identified memories as a dubious source for the verification of historical facts. A memory image exists by virtue of an emotion. Likewise, autobiographies and narratives are singular and intimate stories of several lives that are made of events that express the mood, feelings and affections. The strident, moral voice of the former slave recounting, exposing, appealing, apostrophizing, and above all, remembering his ordeal in bondage is the single most impressive feature of a slave narrative.

Slavery, Experience and Past

Slavery is an experience, and moreover it is a past, for those people, who have undergone the ill treatments of slavery. It is a phenomenon that affected the lives of crores and crores of people

who were discriminated on the basis of colour and race. Slave narratives reflect the race discrimination of a distant past. The slave narratives reveal the day-to-day lives of the slaves, their values, ideas, hopes, aspirations and fears. Frederick Douglass's second autobiography *My Bondage My Freedom* portrays the life of slaves as:

The ante-bellum slave narrative was the product of fugitive bondmen who rejected the authority of their masters and their socialization as slaves and broke away, often violently, from slavery. . . . Through an emphasis on slavery as deprivation--buttressed by extensive evidence of a lack of adequate food, clothing, and shelter; the denial of basic familial rights; the enforced ignorance of most religious or moral precepts; and so on--the ante-bellum narrative pictures the South's "peculiar institution" as a wholesale assault on everything precious to humankind. Under slavery, civilization reverts to a Hobbesian state of nature; if left to its own devices slavery will pervert master and mistress into monsters of cupidity and power-madness and reduce their servant to a nearly helpless object of exploitation and cruelty (Douglass *My Bondage My Freedom* p 79).

The writer's memory through the slave narrative throws light into the past life, the social and historical condition of the age in which they lived. It reminds a culture that has been portrayed in the 2014 Oscar winning film *12 Years A Slave*, the adaptation of the 1853 memoir by Solomon Northup or the economic conditions picturised in *Oroonoko* by the eighteenth century writer Aphra Ben. In these examples, we can find out that slavery was not a condition, but a culture. Thus we can perceive in mind, a period, which is as equal as the slave culture. It opens us the door to the history. When we cross the door and walk through the way, what we could see, are the tears and tolerance of people, who have been crucified for being born as black. Thus the voice of history is the voice of the oppressed, and the smell of history is that of the smell of blood dripped out of their body. When they remember their experiences, they remember the past. When they write the past, it becomes the written history. The slave narrators give much insight not only into their own responses to slavery, but also into the experiences of fellow slaves and many typical aspects of slavery. Thus 'Memorizing the Memory' becomes a phenomenon.

Memory and History

Any study of thought and experiences of the slaves would not be complete without looking into the history of slavery. It is true that the first effective intellectual arguments against black slavery were advanced in Britain in the 1760's, but Britain's slave trading empire, with its apparent benefits to the Mother country, was largely unquestioned on moral or economic grounds. In the

second half of the eighteenth century, the British shipped tens of thousands of Africans into the Caribbean and the American mainland colonies. Populating the newly-acquired smaller islands, satisfying the endless hunger for slaves, and depositing thousands in the mainland colonies, British slavers had created an apparently insatiable market for black slaves. Many of the economic benefits of the slave trade were invisible. The more obvious gains were of course the finished products from the slave islands, notably sugar, molasses and rum shipped into Britain for processing and sale. Of all the imports from the slave colonies, the most obvious were the blacks who found their way to Britain along the tortuous and usually painful routes of the triangular trade. Let me connect it with the memory of an Englishman named Clarence Darrow, who resigned as general counsel for the Chicago in the twentieth century, where he recollects in a speech made in Detroit on 19 May 1926. In his memory, the history of the Negro race is the story that would melt hearts of stone. He says:

I was born in America. I could have left it if I had wanted to go away. Some other men, reading about this land of freedom that we brag about on the 4th of July, came voluntarily to America. These men, the defendants, are here because they could not help it. Their ancestors were captured in the jungles and on the plains of Africa, captured as you capture wild beasts, torn from their homes and their kindred; loaded into slave ships, packed like sardines in a box, half of them dying on the ocean passage; some jumping into the sea in their frenzy, when they had to choose death in place of slavery (Brian, *The Penguin Book of Twentieth-Century Speeches* p 96).

A double memory and a multiple past echo in his words. The first one is that of his recollection about the slave's life and the second is that of the slave's memory of their ancestors. What Clarence has told as the history of the Negro was none other than the memories of the Negro's itself. This is how I understand the relationship between memory and history.

It was natural that these years of Britain's slaving preeminence also witnessed the gradual evolution of an unmistakable, sizeable and expanding black population in Britain itself. In due time, slavery creates another history in the population of a powerful country then. This is even documented in *The Gentleman's Magazine* in the year 1764 that "[the] practice of importing Negro servants into these kingdoms is said to be already a grievance that requires a remedy, and yet it is every day encouraged, in so much that the number in this metropolis only, supposed to be near 20,000" (Letter to the *Gentleman's Magazine* October 1746).

Memory and Narrative

While coming to the narratives based on memory, it is vital to find out how memory can do the function of plotting slavery. In many instances, narratives about slavery are not just personal, but it also carries a public opinion that has been politicized long back. The primary function of a slave narrative is “to authenticate the former slave’s account, in doing so they are at least partially responsible for the narratives being accepted as historical evidence” (Andrews, *African American Autobiography* p 26). Robert B Stepto terms this phase of narrative as eclectic narrative and the second phase of the narrative which make use of letters, prefaces, guarantees, tales etc and assumes a deferential postures toward his white friends, editors and guarantors—carries much of the burden of introducing and authenticating the narrator’s tale as integrated narrative. Similarly, I would like to classify the types of memory based on the concept of Robert into eclectic memory and integrated memory. Eclectic memory includes basic personal memory and integrated memory includes collective memory that is integrated from other voices in the narratives and documents. Apart from the personal memory, collective memory also gives clarification for the narrative. It is the way a group associates their common remembrances with a historical event or a set of historical events. While the personal memory is non-continuous, collective memory has its continuation and conflictual corresponding to the ways the past is remembered by the individual and groups. In some instances, numerous traumatic events like slavery or slave trade will affect the continuity of memory and the transmission of past experiences will be interrupted. Thus the collective memory becomes historical memory that can be crystallized permanently as museums, monuments or memorials. This can be termed as ‘memorialization’ or ‘heritagization’. Memorialization is no longer characterized by the flow of past experiences in an easy manner but instead a common way by which the group of people or society recreate, recollect, and represent their past to themselves and to public sphere, regardless of whether the individual is involved in the process of memorialization participated in the events they collectively remember. They engages themselves recreating their common past and identifies them from what makes him different from others in the same society and what distinguishes his society from the other one. Slave narratives encompass personal, collective and historical memories to rebuild the society about which the narrative is dealing with. The narrator is usually the first person who has the immediate knowledge and experiences about slavery and the life recreated after the escape from it. In most cases, the collective memory of a public is that of a dominant group—descendants of slaves, slave merchants, slave owners, or in some cases the ethnic or racial group representing those who have benefited

from slavery and slave trade and remain hegemonic for a long period. In this context, the memories of the subaltern groups—the descendants of the slaves or the victimized group who because of their colour of their skin, ethnic origin or because of the race to which they belong to becomes repressed and the so called victims live in a state of amnesia where silence and forgetfulness predominate. But the history again underwent a tremendous twist when some of these victims started sharing their memories and emotions in a public area. For them, bringing past to the present or reenacting the past in the present world is a process that can encompass collective healing. Through this process, the victimized groups also make their past officially recognized.

Memory and Gender

The past may not be the same for both male and female slaves. As a gender of oppression, female slaves would have something more to say about the slavery and the effects caused by slavery upon them. As we reconstruct the history of black autobiography in its formative century, from 1760 to 1865, we find that only rarely did escaped female slaves ask for or received the kind of attention that encouraged them to dictate or write their life stories. Mary Prince was the first woman slave narrator who asked her publisher named Thomas Pringle that she needed a specific suggestion of writing her history. Hers was among the earliest slave narratives designed to tell the ugly but necessary truth about a socioeconomic system prevailed in the British West Indies. At the time of publication of the narrative, only a few people knew the unfavorable circumstances in the land of slavery apart from the propaganda of slave owners—who was the dominant class. The way, Prince tells the truth must have surprised all the readers and the society of that time because of a women's first attempt to make use of her memory and life as an onslaught on many West Indian whites. She detailed and recounted atrocities with frankness. Pringle's *Supplementary to the History of Mary Prince* portrays Mary as the personification of traditional feminine virtues as decency, propriety of conduct and particularly delicacy in all matters of behavior, qualities that endeared her to the women in his family. But for a white man, these traits label the defects of her character. He notes that the former slave woman had "a somewhat violent and hasty temper, and a considerable share of natural pride and self-importance." This definition is applicable only for women. For a male, even when he is a slave he has the right to show his natural pride. That is the reason why a male ex-slave like Frederick Douglass might easily claim as a virtue "a considerable share of natural pride and self-importance." But if a woman, and that also a black woman, exhibited the same qualities, she contradicted all that true womanhood meant in the nineteenth century. A

black woman who felt strongly enough about her self-importance to defend it with violent temper risked the worst sort of physical reprisals from whites. The racist history or the racist mythological past did not treat women as women, but treated severely as 'breeding animals' who had no right to the half of the freedom of a male with respect to the self-regard that is suppressed in a male dominated society. Thus slave narrative is also the remembrance of a society where the freedom and social status of women are questioned. Female slave narratives have several roles to take care of. Here Mary Prince's narrative argues implicitly against the racist history. Prince, as a black female slave declares herself to be more reliable than any other white man who talks on slavery and write without the exact notion and emotion a narrative should carry in the words. In addition, this new genre gives freedom of remembrance to women.

As the motive of slave narratives depends on many factors like experience, past, history and gender, the narratives have also got different tone in the due course of time. When most of the slave narratives are the sources of legislation, some of the narratives depict the recollections of stress-free life of a beautiful childhood, adolescence and the period of education. A number of the narratives depict slavery as a benign institution or, in some cases, even benevolent. Often a narrative, such as the interview provided by Gus Smith, portrayed a tranquil life on a particular plantation with a benevolent master while contrasting it with the life for slaves on an adjoining plantation owned by a cruel master:

. . . My master let us come and go pretty much as we pleased. In fact we had much more freedom than the most of de slaves had in those days. He let us go to other places to work when we had nothing to do at home and we kept our money we earned, and spent it to suit ourselves. We had it so much better den other slaves that our neighbors would not let their slaves associate with us, for fear we would put devilment in their heads, for we had too much freedom. . . (Gus Smith, *Voices from Slavery* p 281).

The autobiographies of Annie.L.Burton and Kate Drumgoold discuss the complimentary notion of slavery of whether a Negro can succeed and enjoy the similar freedom a white do have. Both of these autobiographies are not completely against the white race. They speak only for the black people who strenuously work in several plantations owned by the whites. Both of these narratives show tribute to their 'white mothers' who took genuine concern for their welfare. But both of them recollect their memory of fellow humans who never had a fortune to enjoy the freedom they had on their childhood days. Burton and Drumgoold focus more on the healing effect of the narrative

through recollecting the past. While recreating their experiences through words, they included the misery of slavery with collective consciousness. For them, slavery was not the end of all, but it was the beginning of the new light. With this hope, Burton and Drumgoold wrote their autobiographies believing that God wanted them to write as inspirational examples for the others in the races. Destiny plays a major role in their memory. For the writers, it is this destiny that pushed them into the deepness of slavery and taught them to make use of their time and talent for the growth and development of their race. The bitterness of slavery gave them more energy to work for their personal and social upliftment. Undoubtedly, Burton and Drumgoold both felt that they had made the most of their talents and responsibilities, which is one reason why both autobiographers could look back on the past, even the slave past, and see in it not something to be ashamed of, but something that prefigured, in Drumgoold's words, the "light of another day".

The Employment of Memory in Drumgoold's *A Slave Girl's Story*

Sometimes, a writer's record about themselves, act as the most reliable and powerful source to know about his or her past. Here also, it happens in such a way that we are forced to travel through the memories of the author to find out her past. While her date of birth is unknown, multiple sources estimate that she was born in 1858 or 1859. Her memory confirms that she was born in Old Virginia, in or near the valley, on the other side of the Petersburg to slave parents. "I was born in Old Virginia, in or near the Valley, the other side of Petersburg, of slave parents, and I can just call to mind the time when the war began, for I was not troubled then about wars [. . .]" (Drumgoold p 4). All what she writes about her life from her childhood to adulthood depends not only upon her own memory, but also the collective consciousness seeded by the society and the slave culture. But what she tried to depict always are the most interesting thoughts that filled her mind "and not with something that is dry" (Drumgoold p 4). The effort to find out happiness and satisfaction even in the tormenting days of slavery made her narrative an account of nostalgic memories. Thus past and history is not just a written document for Drumgoold, but it has lot more to say about the innocence and simplicity of the slavery days. Through the work called *The Slave Girl's Story*, Drumgoold's memory reminds us several unique features of a slave narrative which make this narrative different from others.

The Politics of Memory in the Narrative, Past and Experience

The memory is memorialized in a slave narrative through the recollection and recreation of the past experiences of a slave. Drumgoold's experiences of slavery pass through some points of life

which she has been highlighted in various parts of the narrative. Her pastoral life in plantation, the concept of two-mothers, Christianity and Education are the main ideas that take greater prominence in the narrative. All these are not arranged in a chronological way so that her memory becomes a collected reference where we find it difficult to organize the story. Jennifer Fleishner calls it a “cycle of loss, illness/recovery” (Jennifer *Mastering Slavery* p 143-144). But this is the very nature of memory. Drumgoold employs memory in such a way that the story lacks the continuity in some sense. But this is a deliberate account to showcase the involvement of memory in describing the events. So *A Slave Girl's Story* represents memory close to reality with the probable gaps and cessation which is expected. This is what Evelyne Ender also says about the structure of memory after substantiating the Proustian memory. According to her, Proustian memory is almost violent irruption of the past into the present. She says that from a scientists' perspective, memories arise when an implicit, virtual structure becomes representation and through this process, “explicit”.

Her plantation life is the greatest source of childhood memory. In the slave literature, the earlier writings were the beginnings of the pastoral genre of Southern Literature. Thus the pastoral genre holds an important role in the history of slave narratives, particularly ‘Drumgoold genre’ of narratives. The development of the pastoral genre served writers seeking to resolve the tensions between the rural past and the present post-slavery life. Colonial writers such as Thomas Jefferson continued to advocate the agrarian detail in his writings. Historically, pastoral literature has flourished in times of dramatic change, when writers emphasized the past as an idealized lost realm. Thus the idealization of the past includes a positive view of slavery. The pastoral writings can also be used as an attack to slavery by depicting the masters as lazy, cruel and irreligious as in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. But they are more prominently the works that use fiction to extol the virtues of slavery. The narratives like *A Slave Girl's Story* can be called as anti-Tom Literature as it is a contradiction to Stowe's works. This kind of works became an enduring genre in Southern Literature characterized by a gentle, fatherly master and his pure and charitable wife presiding over child-like blacks in the plantation family.

Drumgoold in her narrative makes use of her leisure time with her friends and her sister. Sometimes, she meditate in nature to recollect her memory of her mother who is been sold to Georgia when she was a child. She portrays her free time like this:

On one bright Sunday I asked my older sister to go with me for a nice walk and she did so, for she was the one that was so kind to the rest of us—and we saw some sweet flowers on the wayside and we began to have delight in picking them [. . .] (Drumgoold p 5).

This passage depicts her liberation even in the time of slavery and she memorizes even her short walk with her sister to remember her past. The usage of the word “sweet flowers” indicates the idealization of nature as sweet and a way to spend her time in the beauty of nature.

The “plantation tradition” in Drumgoold’s *A Slave Girl’s Story* is so adequate to provide the information of her memory on the master-slave relationships through her eclectic and integrated memories. I consider Drumgoold’s work as a piece of literature which follows “plantation tradition” or what the modern critics called anti-Tom literature. Her memory works in such a way that she is immersed in the loss of good old days rather than being in the days of liberty. In the work, the master-slave relationships primarily focus on the ‘white mother concept’. The description of her ‘white mother’ makes it sensibly different from other slave literature which usually portrays the white lady as an ‘un-friendly object’.

I shall always remember my dear white mother, of whom I spoke of in the first part, and whom I shall call your attention to in many more pages of this little Life Book, and shall always remember her with love and the kindest feeling (Drumgoold, p 11).

The usage of the word “my dear white mother” itself evinces her fondness and respect for her white owner. This is what makes the “plantation tradition” different from the usual slave narratives. She deliberately chooses the description of her “white mother” to be repeated so as to create a level of bonding that any other relationships cannot offer. While calling own mother “slave mother” in some parts of the narrative, it is often of less significance. The “second mother” literally becomes her own mother in many instances of her memories. And she recalls her white mother’s affection to her as something so natural like an infant-mother relationships:

I told you that my white mother did not like the idea of calling us slaves, and she always prayed to God that I should never know what slavery was, for she said I was never born to serve as did the slaves of some people that owned them (Drumgoold p 5).

In fact, her slavery childhood never broke her individuality and made into a slave in any part of her life. In a general slave narrative, we must expect this situation of a child being portrayed as isolated from their mother, as a situation which makes the child ‘a slave’ in their memory. This is

the main theme in many slave narratives like *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* written by Frederick Douglass:

Never having enjoyed, to any considerable extent, her soothing presence, her tender and watchful care, I received the tidings of [my mother's] death with much the same emotions I should have probably felt at the death of a stranger (Douglass p 3)

Drumgoold never considers her mother's exodus as the dark face of slavery. She remembers slavery as a part of life which is unavoidable in the life of a black man. Infact Douglass argues that the separation of the child from their mother is the tactic of the master's to destroy the natural bondage between the mother and the child. But this never happens in Drumgoold's narrative. She recalls her natural mother and her white mother with the same depth of love. During the first part of the narrative, we can see the amalgamation of memories of both of the mother's in a convoluted way.

For many slave narrators, Christianity or religion is the basic force that impels them to live in the dark age of slavery. They believed that Christianity gives them equality in every sense. But for Drumgoold, Christian symbols are strongly used to make her autobiography a "spiritual autobiography". She believes that her recollection of memory is not possible without the help of God. One of her poems evinces the role of religion in her narrative:

Jesus, Saviour, pilot me
Over life's tempestuous sea,
Unknown waves before me roll,
Hiding rocks and treacherous shoals
Chart and compass come from Thee,
Jesus, Saviour, pilot me. (Drumgoold p 18)

She pleads her God to pilot her all through the ways. This is an example of the sudden transformation of her arrested flow of memories to cadenced form of remembrance of God. Often in the narrative, we see the depiction of God as the tranquilizer which makes the mode of narration more soothing. This is an inevitable factor to make the narrative even more nostalgic sometimes. Drumgoold employs the retelling of her history with an immediate effect of pacification. She believed that God will help in the troublesome moments in the life of human beings. She substantiates this belief with the examples of incidents from her life and her integrated memory from the family members. This is one of the reasons why she treated Abraham Lincoln as the Lord

Protector of Negro race. Her information about Lincoln is all about historical memory and the collective consciousness about the emancipation. She says:

Abraham Lincoln, to be God's leader for the children that were in Egypt in the South, and God with this leader and the race, they came through fire and smoke, and now they can see the light of another day (Drumgoold p 34).

The Employment of Memory in Burton's *Memories of Childhood's Slavery Days*

Annie Louise Burton (1858-1910) documented her life during slavery and the Civil War in the year 1909. She was the daughter, of a white planter and a slave mother, who born in Alabama in Clayton. For anonymous reasons she recollects from her memory that she had the privilege for so many things that other slave people in her plantation were not allowed to do. This is one of the reasons why she named her first section of the narrative as *Recollections of a Happy Life*. The idea of constantly saying that she lived a carefree life in contrast to the other slaves such as the field slaves gives you a general idea of how those slaves must have had it a lot harder than the brutal treatment that Burton herself received as one of the favored house slaves.

Burton's narrative is direct, free-flowing, and spontaneous in all the eight sections of her memories. She is certain and definite in narrating her past. It has got the logical connection between various incidents in her childhood, adolescence and old age. For that reason we can classify her memories at different points of her age. Her childhood memories are the results of more integrated memories; adolescence is purely eclectic and old age as the amalgamation of both eclectic and integrated memories.

Memory and Age

The greatest challenge in writing an autobiographical sketch is the challenge in recollecting the past 'memories'. Without possessing a strong consciousness of our identity, it is hard to assemble the events in our life which has happened long time ago, in the immediate past and sometimes even in the present. Burton did a great job in this respect for categorizing the events in her life into complex, less complex and simple. Prior to that, she progresses the narrative using the apt kind of narrative for different points in her life. The process of memorializing is shown to us by passing through each of these points of age.

When she uses the word "recollections", she depends more on her memory and the past to find out her identity. It is a notable fact that she has written her autobiography during the last years of her life. So what she remembers are the most adorable moments in her life, so that it adds colour

to her life even in her old age. She claims that this ‘memorization’ happens often in her lifetime. She says that “the memory of my happy, care-free childhood days on the plantation, with my little white and black companions, is often with me” (Burton p 3).

The innocence of the childhood memory without the knowledge of discrimination between the white and black is portrayed in the sentence. The “plantation tradition” often helps in attributing a family atmosphere where everybody is treated as friends, brothers or sisters are the beautiful aspects of slavery days. When she remembers the nature of her owners, she makes a classification unconsciously to remember the patriarchal system that upholds a family system where the master comes as the ‘bread winner’, the mistress as ‘the bread maker’ and the rest of the people as their children. She details that “[neither] master nor mistress nor neighbours had time to bestow a thought upon us, for the Great Civil War was raging” (Burton p 3).

As in very rare cases, Burton’s *Memories of Childhood’s Slavery Days* also follows an anti-Tom tradition in depicting her experiences. Though she remembers the dark face of slavery, Burton does not take the opportunity to assault any white people in her narrative. She believed that she was in the midst of so many good people and her memories beautifully cherish those persons. This list starts from the white friends, the white mother, master to the rich white lady. As Burton writes the narrative in her old age, an implicit ‘present’ is always there even though she is in a process of recollection. Thus when she says that she memorizes her past, the readers or the audience functions here as the narrators who memorizes Burton’s life at the old age. This is a process of both eclectic and integrated memories. Besides forming an identity, one important function of Burton’s narrative is that she wants herself to be the reminder of so many fellow beings who spend her life with her during the slavery days. Therefore the indicated audience is not only the white people, but also the people who are nostalgic about their childhood days. Burton says:

“Up to my womanhood, even to this day, these memories fill my mind. Some kind friends’ eyes may see these pages, and may they recall some fond memories of their happy childhood, as what I have written brings back my young life in the great Sunny South”(Burton p 45)

Burton’s advice to the readers states that what she has written is her “true life story”. These words indicate her reliability on her autobiographical memory. This reliability is what makes a narrative different from fiction. Fiction is the creation of a story. But a narrative includes the amalgamation of different kinds of memory and recreation of the incidents through words. Thus past memory is collected in the present and recreated for the future. In a memory, time past, time present and time

future is contained. This is what Eliot says in her philosophical as well as “memory poem” *Burnt Norton*.

“Time present and time past

Are both perhaps present in the time future” (Eliot *Burnt Norton*).

Asserting the Role of ‘Memory’ in Women’s Slave Narratives

I do not think one can assess a writer’s motives without knowing something of his early development. His subject will be determined by the age he lives in . . . but before he ever begins to write he will have acquired an emotional attitude from which he will never completely escape.

-George Orwell, *Why I Write*, 1946

One does not travel far from the lessons that are learned in childhood which helped in the formation of identity. What slave narrators say about their motives of their writing confirms Orwell’s claim that a slave autobiographer can write only as a person who never completely escaped from the memory of childhood. The recognition of the importance of childhood in the formation of our identity is the main drive for so many women slave narrators to look back in their past. Jennifer Fleishner in her book *Mastering Slavery* opines that “. . . individual identity is constituted by personal memories [which] emerges in . . . as a reason for writing, behind the more immediate and overtly political goals of abolitionism or racial uplift” (Jennifer p 2).

Between the Narrator and Audience

From Drumgoold’s and Burton’s narrative, we tend to experience the presence of an implicit audience to whom the narrators wish to share their recollections of past. The readers of the slave narratives include both ‘black’ and ‘white’. But the role of memory plays by the slave narratives will be different for different race. For black people, each narrative is legislation or a writing that authenticates their oppression and resistance. The narratives also perform the function of a motivator for the future generations of the black race. For the white, it is a piece of historical evidence to know the history of African- American culture and to know the relationship between the slave and the master and how a slave remembers their master in the formation of their identity and the role the ‘whites’ played in the inculcation of divinity in the minds of ‘blacks’.

The didactic tone used in this address reveals the adaptation of the black race partially or completely to the realm of religious consciousness. This is an attempt to show that they are no more barbarious. Thus the narrative acquires a tone of notifying the white race about the black’s journey from darkness to light. In one way, this intention can be a true thought of the narrator

based on her experience with white race and the unconditional love and care she got from the white people around her. But the other reason is that most of the narrators know that they write the narrative for a bigger audience and the majority of the readers will be white only. Without the corroboration with the white people, their voice will never be heard outside. The mediators here are the editors and the publishers. Burton realizes this truth more and she tries to add more authenticity to her writings by including more historical documents and the collective memory of the conversations of master-mistress etc. In fact, this is a white narrative strategy to recollect their memories and the process of validating it with the historical references.

In slave narratives, memory performs the function of the mediator in between the reader and the writer. But the memory for the writer and the memory for the reader do perform an opposite kind of reaction when we analyze the slave narrative based on the psychoanalytic theory proposed by Sigmund Freud. The opposite kind of action here denotes the Freudian concept of defense mechanism. The defense mechanism also functions in two ways for the authors and the readers. Freud has developed this theory to study the variations of the personality in an individual. As memory is connected with the consciousness of the mind, this theory can be applied to associate the relationship between the mind of the writer and the reader of the slave narrative. 'Memory', for the author, performs the function of a "defense mechanism", a term coined by Sigmund Freud, one of the prominent psychoanalysts, for the process of the mind to protect the "ego". In Sigmund Freud's topographical model of personality, 'ego' is the aspect of personality that deals with reality. When ego controls our personality, it has also got the function to cope up with the conflicts of 'id' and 'superego'. 'Id' always wants our desires to get fulfilled and superego initiates the ego to act in an idealistic and moral manner. In the case of slave narratives, the 'ego' in the personalities of the narrators finds it difficult to cope up with the action of 'Id' and 'Superego'. An anxiety towards slavery will be developed as a result of the action to safeguard the "ego". Anna Freud, the daughter of Sigmund Freud develops the theory of defense mechanism and categorizes the types of defense mechanisms activate by 'ego' at the time of anxiety. There are two types of defense mechanisms, according to Anna Freud. A study has been done on Anna Freud's Defense Mechanism by Lynn M Levo and published an article on bi-monthly publication of St. Luka Institute. The first one is the "adaptive defense mechanism" (Lynn *Understanding Defense Mechanism* Vol VII) which includes self-assertion, self-observation etc and the second one is the self-defeating defense mechanism which includes regression, passive aggression etc. In the

narratives of Drumgoold and Burton, the adaptive defense mechanism has its greater prominence. Writing narrative is a way of self-assertion and self-observation. The narrator observes themselves and look at their past and trust their memory to assert role of their life in the history of mankind.

The defense-mechanism in the reader's mind happens through the process of the second form of mechanism called "self-defeating mechanism" (Lynn *Understanding Defense Mechanism Vol VII*). In the case of the readers of slave narratives, the dominant white readers accept the black narrative through the process of "reaction formation". According to Anna Freud, this is the way of transforming anxiety. The reader will change the negative thoughts to positive in consciousness. They may feel irritated to read the history where whites are portrayed as the masters of cruelty and tyranny. But in order to accept the reality, ego transforms their anxiety to accept the experiences of slaves.

Through these two kinds of mechanisms, the author-reader relationship in a slave narrative becomes stronger and the 'memory' plays the role of assertive and transformative in the relationship.

Memory and the Narrative Strategy

A historian or literary critic calls a slave narrative an autobiography. But what he sees is a narrative told in the first person that possesses literary features distinguishing it from the ordinary documents providing historical and sociological data. But a slave narrative is not necessarily an autobiography. According to Robert b Stepto, "there are four identifiable modes of narration within the slave narrative" (Robert p 28) and the memory plays the role of distinguishing narrative in each of the issues discussed in the formation of a slave narrative. Robert classifies the narratives into eclectic, integrative, generic and authenticating. Eclectic and Integrative are the basic form of narratives which indicate the personal and public memory inculcated in the slave narratives. Eclectic narrative which explains the personal memory consists of dialogues, voices and comments. The integrated narrative which defines the public memory consists of documents, letters, guarantees and tales.

In the narratives of Drumgoold and Burton, we can see the role of both personal and public memories to arrange and re-arrange the incidents that are past and cherishing. But in both of the narratives, the incidents that are recollected from the eclectic memories are the most nostalgic moments for the writers and the public memory act as historical evidences which represents the anti-slavery notions. In my analysis, Drumgoold and Burton uses their narratives to showcase their

privilege as special persons among other slaves and establishes their ground on eclectic memories. Public memory is used only as the secondary knowledge of slavery.

The third and fourth types of narrative, which are more significant in making the text a document of issues concerning slavery, are generic and authenticating. The generic narrative discusses the issue of identity formation, reconstitution of family, education and the relationship between infant-mother. The authenticating narrative performs the role of making the memory of the narrator as an evidence of slavery, description of the eminent personalities and understanding the status of women in history. Though the narrative pattern is scattered in *A Slave Girl's Story* and *Memories of Childhood's Slavery Days*, both narratives show affinity in the narrative used for defining various issues of the slave narrative.

The generic narrative used in both of the narratives relies on the psychoanalytical approach proposed by Sigmund Freud. The generic narrative depends more on the functional level of the memory to make use of the past to define an individual's identity and their relationship with each character's in the narrative. This process can be explained with the help of Anna Freud's defense mechanism.

In Drumgoold's and Burton's narrative, identity formation can be seen as a type of adaptive defense mechanism. The adaptive defense mechanism is characterized by the process called affiliation according to the study done by Lynn M Levo on Anna Freud's Defense Mechanism. "Affiliation involves sharing problems or difficulty with others without trying to make someone else responsible for them" (Lynn *Understanding Defense Mechanism* Vol VII). The process of writing a narrative also carries out a function of sharing problems with readers, producing a healing effect. This process is subjective and it aims at individual healing of mind. Moreover, this is an act of self-affirmation. Memorizing the past becomes an adaptive self defense to form an identity of one's own by sharing their past to the implied readers, in order to achieve the aim of identity formation. This is how they control the anxiety of slavery. In both of the narratives, there are some particular instances when they are disturbed by the fragmentation caused by slavery upon their life. In the case of Drumgoold, it is through the lack of family and for Burton, through the struggles she had to face while pursuing education. Their immediacy in coping up with the life they got can be seen as the working of defense mechanism by self-observation. Through the process of self-observation, one can easily record their events in their memory and attempt for a self-revelation in later period.

The generic narrative is used most often in the description of female sphere in the narratives. The most discussed female space in both of the narratives is the child- mother relationship. In psychoanalytic theory, it is infant-mother relationship. This relationship gives the narrative a full perfection of an autobiography, which is the function of a generic narrative. The child-mother relationship in the narratives of Drumgoold and Burton are triangular relationships, centered on the narrator- black mother and white mother. According to Freud, the love between a mother and child is “anaclitic love” which basically depends upon the factor of being fed. But later in 1926, he found out a theory based on the unconscious activities of a child of getting anxiety when the mother is away or about to go. This drove him to say about the enduring relationship between the mother and the child and it makes no difference whether a child has really sucked at the breast or has been brought up on the bottle and never enjoyed the tenderness of a mother's care. In both cases the child's development takes the same path; it may be that in the second case its later longing grows all the greater (Freud *An outline of Psychoanalysis* p 188-89). Analyzing this study by Freud, the strong bondage between the white mothers and the narrators in both of the narratives can be explained. Even if they are not the natural mothers of Drumgoold and Burton, they loved them immensely because of the presence of the mother they got from the white mothers in the stages of their development. The experiences of the narrators after the fragmentation of the family and the loss of the black mother urged them to crave for keeping an object relation with the white mother for the gratification of the need of a mother they lost. In the realm of psychoanalysis, this tradition of loving mother as an object for need-gratification is called object- relations theory. In the slave narratives, the memory of this relationship takes the whole narrative in an autobiographical tone from the beginning to the end.

Memory of ‘Black and White’

As the process of memory is different for different gender, it also experience difference in the minds of a ‘white’ writer and ‘black’ writer. In imagining, constructing, scripting our memories, we give a shape an identity to an existence. All narrators are “the “rememberers”, who knows how to craft autobiographical memories, is ever ready to grasp and shape a history made of pleasures and pains, as well as of ideas, actions, and projects” (Ender *Architexts of Memory* p 3). With every memory they construct, they keep the biographical thread that defines their existence. The factors like race, experiences and the social milieu act differently for both ‘black’ and ‘white’ writers. The theory of cross race- effect explains the process that can cause difference in the thoughts and

emotions of the blacks and white. In the deeper study of the cross-race effect, we have holistic processing, where a person of one race identifies another person within the race occurs beyond the facial expressions. This is in the case of identifying the emotions of an individual, outside one's race. In the subjective responses also, black and white aspect differs. The main shift can be noted in the process of how an individual recollects their existence through memory.

Involuntary memory is Marcel Proust's legacy to our experience of remembering. His *Recherche* tells us that the creation of an autobiographical memory is nothing short of the best care one can give to a self and the means of our psychic survival. The art of remembrance of other writers like George Eliot in *The Mill on the Floss* and Virginia Woolf in *The Sketch of the Past* proves that the white writers are "exemplary architects of mnemonic senses" (Ender p 5). Their mnemonic experiences in the writings help us to see how in the mysterious process of verbal articulation and imaginative creation, new memories emerge into consciousness. The slave narrators, Drumgoold and Burton are no more interested in the imaginative world of memory. Memory, for them are the most direct way of conveying the experiences of an immediate past. The art of remembrance in *The Slave Girl's Story* and *Memories of Childhood's Slavery Days* is the art of examining a pre-existing image and recreating it. But for a white writer the creation starts itself from the creation of memory. Israel Rosenfield's description is though provoking in this sense. "When I form an image of some event in my childhood for example, I don't go into an archive and find a preexisting image" (Ender p 5). This is the technique through which most of the white writers frames their memory. But for the slave narrators, their ideas about the past are preexisting images and their intension is only to show case their experiences using the pre-existing image. The main limitation for the black writers to depend upon this preexisting history is the problem of parentage. Most of the slave writers will have the knowledge of maximum up to their grandparents only. This forces them to depend upon the sources and vital clues created by the white writers.

Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* is intertwined with a scientific and philosophical enquiry. The work defines the engrossing vocation of a narrator who harks after silence in order to recapture the waning music of the past. Stumbling over an uneven stone, hearing the tingling of a spoon, touching a starched napkin, each of these sensations gives him an associated memory of something that happened in the childhood. Comparing the process of memorizing used in slave narratives, no such associations can be seen. In fact, in this respect, Virginia Woolf's life writing has affinity towards the slave narratives. For Woolf remembrance is a "matter of art and necessity" (Ender p

204). Memorizing or the process of remembrance is the 'mental time travel' for Woolf, and this is the basic condition for her to write all her works which are the products of the long maturation. Slave narratives of Drumgoold and Burton also prove their belief in the theory of the justification of the necessity. They write to justify their self. In both of the writings, say, in *A Sketch of the Past* and the slave narratives, the justification is done through the portrayal of the loss of the 'mother'. The clearest justification for this claim can be seen in Woolf's *A Sketch of the Past*. She says:

Consider what immense forces society brings to play upon each of us . . . ; well, if we cannot analyze these invisible presences, we know very little of the subject of the memoir; and again how futile life-writing becomes. (*A Sketch* p 80)

Her mother may be dead. But remembering her is a condition for the proper unfolding of Woolf's autobiography. This unfolding happens in Drumgoold's and Burton's work in remembering the lost mother. They think that their narrative is incomplete without the memory of their mother. This may cause due to the infant-mother relationship theorized by Freud.

The second affinity can be explained in terms of colour. In most of the writings of Woolf, she uses colour to convey, in an almost formulaic fashion, to depict the pain associated with the certain representations. "The red and purple flowers on a black background" of *The Sketch of the Past* are related to her mother's disappearance. Likewise Drumgoold also uses the colour code like "green spot" in *A Slave Girl's Story*, when she remembers Father John Brown, an emancipator. If colour for Woolf is the depiction of pain, then for Drumgoold it is the happiness in remembering the person.

The analysis of the black writers' and white writers' strategy of memory constructed my argument so far in the work. My purposive reading into the textbook which focuses on the major Women's Slave Narratives shows the importance of the women's writing in a male centered society. By finding out the employment of memory, history and past in the slave narratives that I have mentioned, we can see the change over that made in an era of writing slave narratives that concentrates on the white audience, rather than the black audience.

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