Chapter IV
Language and Literary devices in Dalit and African American Autobiography
The view of life conveyed in Dalit and African American autobiographies is different from the world of experience expressed hitherto. A new world, a new society and a new human being have been revealed in autobiography. The language used by the Dalit and African American Autobiographers is uncouth and impolite. It is the spoken language of Dalit and African Americans. This language does not recognize the cultivated gestures and grammar. It is said that language changes after every twenty miles, but this arithmetic turns out to be wrong with respect to Dalits and African Americans. The differences of language are evident in the village and the untouchable quarters.

Varities of language also signal ethnic identity. In fact, probably the most distinctive feature of ethnicity in emigrant groups is not their mother tongue which may rarely be heard outside the home, but the foreign accent and dialect characterizes their use of the majority language. In the course of time, many of these features have become established, resulting in new varieties of the majority of the languages. One of the clearest examples of ethnic linguistic variety is provided by the contrast between the speech of African Americans and White Americans and also between Dalits and Savarnas.

Education enabled the Dalits and African Americans to realize their pathetic situation and they became aware of their miserable conditions and thus with the help of words they started fighting against the injustices of high caste Hindus and white Americans. They expressed their feelings in simple language. They chose their own dialect to express their agonies which rendered it a distinct sharpness and authenticity. Expressing feelings in their own language, especially their mother tongue became very simple for Dalits and African Americans. Their language is uncouth, vernacular,
and their language was harsh and full of anger and expressed their angst against the exploitation and injustices they had faced for more than hundred years.

All the autobiographers have described their life stories in their mother tongue. They have not used the classical language. Both the communities experienced sufferings and were exploited for generations together. Only the mother tongue made the rendition of these experiences powerful and emphatic. The simple narration makes appealing to the reader, no matter to what community they belong.

Laxman Mane represents the Kaikadi community who have their own dialect. Laxman in his autobiography has described various incidents in Kaikadi language. Laxman spoke in the Kaikadi dialect as a result of which his schoolmates always teased him. Another example of the Kaikadi dialect is that whenever Kaikadi’s wanted to speak among themselves without letting anybody to know what they were speaking they spoke in the Kaikadi dialect. Laxman Mane has described the customs, traditions and superstitiousness of a Kaikadi community in a simple language and tone. He has given vivid descriptions without using long and difficult words. For example when his sister was suffering from epileptic attack his father was caught by the spirit – he has described the scene in a simple and vernacular language:

He was possessed by God and began uttering, terrible cries.-
“Leave me, leave me…… hold me…hold me… speak? Who are you? Why are you com? Are you God or ghost? Speak!” repeating these words, clenching his fists and biting his lips, he began moaning and holing, Jaisingea adjusted father’s dhoti which was coming off. When he started jumping. Jaisingea implored – “Oh, my God! Do not torture the tree! The little girl went to bed after dinner. If she is guilty, forgive her! I beg of you. If she has done something wrong forgive
her and protect the child!" God continued to moan and said, “You there! You have shut your eyes to me. You don’t see me – hum……hum.

The humming was continuous. Jaisingea, mother and Pari were sitting most humbly before God looking guilty. The little girl was lying in mother’s lap as before. Jaisingea continued to implore – “Oh my God! What wrong have we done? What do we owe you? And why have you caught hold of this little girl? God continued to hum and concerned. He exited loud cries and then started howling. I felt an urge to piss. But I sat behind my mother my arms about her. God began talking, “Four miles from here – down there…. I have been waiting for you. Have you forgotten?” Jaisingea recalled something. His face brightened. He said, “Oh my God! Well. 15th day of the month of Paush (which is close to January). We won’t forget offer you a goat and coconut. Then God started dancing.

Laxman has described incidents serially in a simple tone and language which attracts the reader towards it and its simplicity leads to understand the text clearly. Another example of simplicity of language in An Outsider is when Laxman and his sister Sami were alone in the house and they were hungry, Sami went to Laxman and told him that she was very hungry. As there was nothing to eat in the hut, Laxman along with Sami went to village for begging. Laxman recalls the incident:

Sami, came to me and said – “Brother, I am very…..very hungry.” I made her stand behind the donkeys. Took a bowl in my hand and went from house to house begging for food, standing in front of each house. I would call out loudly, “Aunty, throw some crumbs of bhakari into my bowl… I beg of you…. Grandma dear throw the stale leftovers into my bowl, please…..for pity’s sake.

Writing an autobiography is a very difficult task because the writer has to reveal all the experiences honestly. Laxman Mane, Laxman Gaikwad and Kishore Kale have very artistically and in lucid language pictured their
experiences. Laxman Mane as we have seen before describes that he used to beg in the village and he had no clothes to wear and so all the students from his school always teased and mocked him.

Another example of an uncivilized and illiteracy in a Kaikadi community is:

Once from a distance Martimama noticed that his wife was combing her hair. Rushing like a furious hawk he pounced upon her dropped her to the ground and sat on her chest snatching the mirror from her hand, he began hitting her face with it. The sharp pieces of the broken mirror made several cuts on her cheeks which began to bleed profusely. She started howling. My parents and all the others who were there intervened and rescued her. She was badly hurt. Anyway this was a quarrel between the husband and his wife could a third person help? He was shouting?” “I cut you into pieces….. Don’t you dare be smart me!” and things like that. He would never allow her bathe or comb her hair. He would say, “When we live on the dunghill, we should live like dirt. We must not imitate the people who live in bungalows. We are street dwellers. We are open to the public’s gaze all the while. What if somebody casts an evil eye on you? 3.

This passage narrates the customs in Kaikadi community which force women to live unclean and dirty so that no one could cast an evil eye on them. Laxman’s uncle never left his wife alone. He always went with her wherever she went. There are some words which we find only in Kaikadi dialect for e.g. tumbler. Tumbler means – a pot which is used for carrying water whenever they have to answer natures’ call. Use of such words tends to give the sharpness and richness to the text which leads to the reality. Laxman’s writing style is simple and he has written the incidents as they happened thus lending a connectivity to them.

Like Laxman Mane, Laxman Gaikwad wrote in a simple language. Laxman, for instance used his own dialect which had sharpness. Laxman
Gaikwad has presented each and every part of his life in a form of book without any hesitation and revealed the secret of living on the dunghills, thus:

Our pigs were nourished and sustained by those heaps of shit that they ate. So we also wished that the women used the spot in front of our hut for their daily shitting sessions.

Laxman’s family was into thieving and so they were not able to earn anything. They used to kill wild animals and eat them. They used to have pigs in their huts because when were not able to earn anything they would survive on pigs.

Uchalya’s were always harassed by the police because of the established fact that Uchalya’s were thieves. The police imprisoned them for no reason and accepted bribes from Uchalya’s and released them. Sometimes they beat them upto their death. Uchalyas feared police so much that at the mere mention of the police they pissed and shat in their shorts. Laxman reveals in a simple language:

Whenever the police visited our hut I panicked as it the very father of Yama had visited us to take my life away. As the police entered ad began to search the hut and thrash and kick the inmates, I often pissed and shat in my shorts.

Laxman’s life was full of sorrows and miseries and he never experienced good days in his life. Laxman Gaikwad lived in rigorous poverty and endured hunger throughout his life. Laxman accepted various small jobs and sometimes for fulfilling his hunger or he secretly sometimes attended the wedding ceremonies. On one occasion he was caught by a man and was abused by the society. He mentions the bitter experience thus:
fuck his mother, the bastard don’t know what Mahar, Mang
caste he belongs to! He has polluted the feast by his unholy
attendance and come and ate through two-three round.6.

Uchalaya’s were degraded and abused by the high caste people. Poverty
was an important factor in Laxman Gaikwad’s life. He worked hard day
and night and overcame poverty. In his childhood, as explained before, he
begged in the village. Laxman regularly attended school and learnt to
speak like other children. He himself noticed change in his personality. He
completed his matriculation and worked as a worker in spinning mill at
Latur. There he was the influenced by the urban culture. His personality
changed completely and his language got refined. The vernacular dialect
vanished from his speech. Laxman started living like a civilized person. He
has very frankly described his backwardness in a very lucid style. Laxman
was invited by his friend Datta Sawant for dinner where for the first time;
had the opportunity to have dinner in a Hindu family. Laxman was
puzzled to see the ways of eating, which he thus describes:

At last I resorted to my usual way of eating. Everybody else
ate using only one hand. I was not used to breaking small
pieces of bhakr using only one hand. Moreover, we were
served ‘chapatis’. I could not tear them into a small pieces
using both the hands and dipped each piece in the milk and
began to eat finally. I used both hand to eat all the food. There
was no method in my eating, I just ate whatever came to hand
and in whatever manner I could. My legs were cramped and
they ached while I was eating the ‘paat’ on which I was
sitting hurt my flesh and bones, making me feel restless and
uncomfortable. Thus somehow I finished my meals and
washed my hands in the plate itself using the water – carafe
kept for drinking water.7.

Laxman has described the situation humbly and accepted the uncivilized
nature of the Uchlaya community. Like Laxman Gaikwad and Laxman
Mane, Kishore Kale through his autobiography has described the saga of the sufferings and sorrows of the Kolhati community. For describing the situations, incidents and experiences Kishore Kale has used a simple narrative style and simple language. There are situations where the reader can feel the anger of the protagonists against their oppressor, the Hindu community. Kishore Kale has very simply and humbly inscribed before us all the incidents as they happened. His writing style is so simple that the reader feels as though he is watching the entire scene of the caste ridden society in which the protagonist lived.

Kishore Kale, without any hesitation and bothering has revealed all the sufferings and experiences with honesty. Kishore has described the customs and traditions in Kolhati community. Girls from the Kolhati community were sold to rich people for large amounts under the tradition of ‘Chira Utarna’. Kishore describes about his mother Shantabai in following words:

So it came to be that Shanta was given Namdeorao Jagtap with all the ‘ceremony’ of the chira utarna the Kolhati virtual of selling a virgin girl. The first man in a Kolhati girl’s life had to pay her family a certain amount of money or agree to pay it over a fixed period of time. The money may be paid in cash, gold or land. On the first night Shanta was dressed in a rich red sari gold jewellery, a mangalsutra and even toe rings – just like bride. A room in her father’s six-room house was decorated with flowers and the teenaged Shanta was handed over to Jagtap with much rejoicing. Jagtap was politician and Kondiba could see his pockets overflowing. In Shanta’s life as per Kolhati tradition, Jagtap took the place of a husband, even though she was an unwilling bride. As long as he maintained her and her family she would not have sex with any other man. He was her ‘Kaja’ or ‘Yejman’ her master.8.
It became very difficult for Kishore to expose the fact of his illegitimate birth, unveil all secrets of his mother and the Kolhati community to the entire society. But Kishore wanted a revolutionary change in the Kolhati community and also in the whole society, therefore he has frankly described all the secrets and traditions of the society. Kishore starved for his mother’s love. Shanta could not get enough time to take care of her child. Some times she was not even able to breast feed Kishore.

Another example of Kishore’s simple language and narrating style is the rendition of his maternal aunt, Baby maushi’s life, who like Kishore’s mother went through the same tradition of chira utarna. Kishore became very desperate about the situation of the Kolhati women, he felt that they were puppets in the hands of their brothers and fathers. Kishore describes his feelings about this disgusting tradition in following words:

‘Baby maushi disliked him. She was sixteen and he was forty. But her father loved his money and easy lifestyle and she was forced to fund it by giving herself to the man who bid the highest for her youthful body. What a travesty it was of the father daughter relationship. Kondiba ajoba had handed over his young daughter still on the threshold of her youth to this forty years old drunkard. In the movies I had seen that brothers and fathers rushed to protect their sisters and daughters when anyone even passed a comment of whistled when they walked past. But a tamasha dancer’s brothers and father went out of their way to attract the attention of men to their sisters and daughters so that they themselves could live an indolent life. What kind of relationship was this I wondered? And why, why did no body oppose it?’

Kishore Kale completed his education and became a doctor despite the pathetic circumstances he was surrounded by.

Dalit and African American autobiographers have not imitated writing styles of high class Hindus and White Americans. They created their own
narration style which is simple, interconnected and attentive. Dalit and African Americans sought education, they armed themselves with knowledge. Laxman Mane, Laxman Gaikwad, Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington have described their birth place in a very simple language. Fredrick Douglass and Booker T. Washington were born slaves. Washington became a free man at the early age of eight but Douglass rendered his childhood and youth in slavery. Douglass had bought his freedom from his master. Douglass describes his birth place thus:

In Talbot County, Eastern Shore, Maryland, near Eston, the county town of that county, there is a small district of country. thinly populated and remarkable for nothing that I know of more than for the worn out sandy desert like appearance of its soil, the general dilapidation of its farms and fences the indigent and spiritless character of its inhabitants, and the prevalence of age and fever. 10.

Douglass was shifted from one master to the other after completing a particular period of service with one master. Douglass in a very simple language has described the condition of slaves on the plantation. The masters legalized slavery and forced the slaves to behave as per law but they themselves never behaved as per the laws of slavery. They often broke the law by whipping their slaves. Douglass describes the inhuman treatment meted out to slaves. He says:

Laws for the protection of the lives of the slaves are as they must needs be utterly incapable of being enforced, where the very parties who are nominally protected are not permitted to give evidence in courts of law against the only class of persons from whom abuse outrage and might be reasonably apprehended. While I heard of numerous murders committed by slaveholders on the eastern shore of Maryland, I never knew a solitary instance in which a slaveholder was either hung or imprisoned for having murdered a slave. The usual pretext for killing a slave is that the slave has offered
resistance should a slave when assaulted but raise his hand in self-defense the white assaulting party is fully justified by southern or Maryland, public opinion in shooting a slave down. 11.

The language expresses the writers wrath and helplessness in various situations.

Like Douglass, Washington also described the condition of slaves in a very simple language. He states:

My life had its beginning in the midst of the most miserable desolate and discouraging surroundings. This was so, however, not because of my owners were especially cruel for they were not as compared with many others. I was born in typical log cabin, about fourteen by sixteen feet square. In this cabin I lived with my mother and brother and sister till after the civil war when we were all declared free. 12.

Washington was born in poverty. He worked along with his father in a salt furnace and in a coal mine and along with work he attended night school. The encouragement of Mrs. Ruffner inspired Washington to go to Hampton Institute. Washington has honestly accepted the uncivilized condition of the Blacks. They did not bathe for many days and their eating style was uncivilized. They never used napkins and clothes. Washington came to know about the civilized ways of living at the Hampton Institute. Washington recalls:

Life at Hampton was a constant revelation to me was constantly taking me into a new world. The matter of having meals at regular hours of eating on a table cloth, using napkin the use of bath tub and the tooth brush as well as the use of sheets upon the bed were all new to me. I sometimes feel that almost the most valuable lesson I got at the Hampton Institute was in the use and value of the bath. I learned there for the first time some of its value not only in keeping the body healthy but in inspiring self-respect and promoting virtue. 13.
Richard Wright too, has used simple language to describe the incidents of oppression to the readers. Wright does not hesitate to reveal all the facts of life. His narrative style is so distinctive and simple that the reader feels attracted towards the text and feels as though all the incidents are actually taking place.

After the civil war Blacks were declared free from slavery. Though they were independent there were quarrels between the Blacks and the Whites. Blacks were limited to certain colonies and whites were also limited to certain colonies. Anyone of them who crossed their boundaries would be pelted by stones. Wright describes:

The round house was the racial boundary of the neighborhood and it had been tacitly agreed between Black boys and white boys that the whites were to keep to the far side of the roundhouse and we blacks were to keep to outside. Whenever we caught a white boy on our side we stoned him, if we strayed to their side they stoned us. Our battles were real and boldly we threw rocks, cinders, coal sticks, pieces of iron and broker bottles and while we threw them we longed for ever deadlier weapons.14.

Richard has used language as a medium to communicate his angst against the whites. Richard was working as a water boy in a brickyard. There was a dog owned by the owner. One day the dog bit Richard, and when he complained about the incident to the owner the owner replied:

‘A dogbite can’t hurt nigger. It’s swelling and it hurt’s’ I said, ‘if it bothers you let me know.’ He said, ‘but I never saw a dog yet that could really hurt a nigger.’15.

Negros were treated below animals by the White Americans. They never missed any opportunity to humiliate the Blacks. Richard became silent and reserved because of the hateful treatment give to him by whites and he constantly thought about his future. He says:
The bleakness of the future affected my will to study. Granny had already thrown out hints that it was time for me to be on my own. But what had I learned so far that would help me to make a living? Nothing, I could be a porter like my father before me but what else? And the problem of living as a Negro was cold and hard. What was it that made the hate of whites for blacks so steady, seemingly so woven into the texture of things? What kind of life was possible under that hate? How had this hate come to be?16.

Because of the threat and fear of White people, Wright fantasized very often. The Blacks accepted slavery to such an extent that they started believing in it as their fate. Whites always threatened and massacred the Blacks for their disobedience. Richard, very attentively and humbly describes hunger. Richard endured hunger in his childhood as he did not receive quality food. His food was an ash cake, bread butter, a burger and roasted peanuts. Richard describes his hunger thus:

Once again I knew hunger biting hunger, hunger that made my body aimlessly restless, hunger that kept me on edge that made hate leap out of my heart like the dart of a serpent’s tongue hunger that created in me odd cravings. No food that I could dream of seemed half so utterly delicious as vanilla wafers. Every time I had a nickel I would run to the corner grocery store and buy a box of vanilla wafers and walk back home slowly so that I could eat them all up without having to share them with anyone.17.

Richard has humbly narrated all the experiences of oppression, hunger and poverty. It is very difficult for an individual to see himself as other individual and to bring out all the facts of life. Richard has presented all the facts and truths of his life in a very simple language.

The language of Dalit and African American Autobiography possess its unique nature and texture. It is full of abuses and vulgarity. They
intentionally used their own vernacular language to depict their experiences and provide sharpness and reality to the text.

Dalit autobiographers selected for the study represent small towns of Maharashtra. They belong to tribal communities and they have their own traditions, customs, laws and dialects. They have therefore used their own linguistic tone and style for the autobiography.

Laxman Mane states that the Kaikadi community travel from one village to the other in search of livelihood by placing their hearth on the backs of donkeys. They speak in a very abusive language. The very beginning of the autobiography exposes the nature of the language used by Kaikadis. Laxman describes an incident when he and his siblings were scolded by his father for sleeping till late hours in morning. On finding the children asleep, after returning from the forest he gets angry and shouts at them:

Lazy bones! Still sleeping? Look! It’s broad day light!18.

The villagers also abused Kaikadis for their small mistakes. Laxman, who went for tending the donkeys, had to tolerate curses and abuses slung by the villagers whenever the donkeys crossed the village boundaries. They would scream at him:

You lazy bam! Your donkeys have ruined my haystack and you are busy pissing into your own mouth! Oh! You beggars! May you die! You are a plague on our village!19.

Kaikadi’s lived like parasites in the village and so they would often be humiliated. They were considered like an epidemic to the village. Language used by them is vulgar they don’t care whether they are talking to a child or an adult.

Laxman’s father roared at him:
Come! Son of a bitch! ..... Come and drink the piss! Want to devour something? Don’t you see that you are crossing the path?20.

Laxman had crossed his father’s path and therefore, indecent and abusive words were hurled at him. Once after eating the meal of a goat which was offered to Goddess Kalubai, Laxman along with his father and his friends were returning home and on the way they cracked dirty jokes. Laxman narrates:

While waking back, they talked nonstop. All sorts of vulgarities and nonsenses. ‘The fellow had come and the bunny withdrew her pussy’. Shirpya cracked dirty jokes in a boisterous mood. I couldn’t understand the joke. But since everybody was laughing. I too laughed. Well! What did he really mean when he said, “The fellow had come?” I was eating quietly. I was the only who was sober. The other were all high…… completely sizzled.21.

Vulgarity and abuses are a part and parcel of Kaikadis life. They do not utter a single phrase without bad words. Once, Laxman drank water in a neighbour’s house and when his mother came to know about it she cursed him saying:

Son of a bitch! You drink water in this filthy house? Have you mortgaged your sense of propriety or what?22.

Laxman along with his friends, attended a marriage of a high catse friend. But he was cursed by the high caste people because Kaikadi’s were never allowed to marriage ceremonies though Laxman had attended it and so the villagers created a scene of that incident and insulted him. When Laxman’s father came to know about the incident, he beat Laxman and his mother. Laxman describes this incident in his language:
Father came home burning with anger. I was sitting by the doorframe eating a piece of sugar cane. As he came, he removed one of his flat shoes studded with hobnails and slammed me with it scolding me as harshly as he could – “I donkey screw your mother! Why did you attend the wedding? ….. to gulp down the piss or what?” he stopped only when his anger cooled. I bore the painful thrashing quietly. My eye had started bleeding. Mother intervened but she too received a few strokes and a volley of abuses. “Big whore! It’s you who’ve pampered the brat! Does he not know our caste and our social status? We are the low castes who live on leftovers. Does he not know that we have to live according to our social status? And it’s you the old bitch, who has spoilt him!” he let off steam.

This incident reveals the fact that Kaikadi’s force their children to behave like them because they are threatened by the Hindus. Like Kaikadis, the Uchalyas also use vulgar language. They can not speak a single word without curses and abuses.

Laxman Gaikwad through his autobiography *Uchalya* has described the language of the Uchalya community.

Laxman’s brother Manik was caught while thieving by the people from the market and was thrashed. They asked him the names of other thieves from the gang. Manik revealed all the names as he was afraid of being beaten up. The next day, Santaram and Tukaram whose names were revealed, took him for fishing and beat him. They abused him thus:

> Manikya, you bastard, f…..k your mother, you coward in fear like ‘Venis and bammans’ when caught red handed, you disclose the names of the entire gang! You’ve brought shame upon the besmirched the name of the tribe of thieves.

Hunger played a very vital role in the life of Laxman. Laxman’s family was suffered from hunger and poverty. Whenever there was a marriage in the village all the people from his community rushed to the place and had
meal by sitting three to four times. Sometimes they were caught and whipped by the villagers. Laxman was caught by the person who was serving the food. He drove Laxman away from the place and cursed him. He had to digest very harsh insult. The person who was serving yelled at Laxman:

`Fuck his mother the bastard don’t know what Mahar, Mang caste he belongs to! He has polluted the feast by his unholy attendance and come and ate through two-three rounds.25.`

While picking the pocket of a stranger Laxman’s brother Manik cut the currency notes and said -

`Fuck your mother! Look at this wretched luck! Went to steal money and got this undergrowth.26.`

Laxman was abused and insulted by the supervisors when he was working as a worker in a spinning mill at Latur. Workers slept in the spinning mill and when they were unable to wake up their supervisors would curse and kick them. They would say:

`Get up you bastard! Fuck your mother! You guzzle and sleep like a buffalo! Who will work? Your father? 27.`

Laxman himself had to suffer because of this. One day his supervisor scolded him because his machine was not clean:


Laxman Gaikwad has described all the realities without any hesitation. Kishore Kale like Laxman Gaikwad and Laxman Mane gave complete description of a Kolhati community their customs, traditions, culture and their language. Their language too, is full of abuses and vulgarity and they
have expressed their anger against the injustices meted out to them in their mother tongue. Kishore Kale’s mother was a tamasha dancer and had to perform on the stage. Seeing her dance men would be so excited that they would run towards the stage and try to hold her. At one instance, when a man from the theater ran towards her and held her hand, Jiji cursed him by throwing chappal towards him:

You bastard, you pimp! She is a dancer not a whore. Her dance is an art. Do you understand?29.

The people who go to see tamasha think that a woman dances for entertaining them and they don’t consider dancing as an art.

Once, Shantabai was asked by the audiences to sing the song ‘Dam maro Dam’ again and again. By singing the song repeatedly her throat became dry and it became difficult for her to sing the song. Then a drunken inspector yelled:

You cunt! Is the money too much for you, can’t you sing properly anymore?” Bai was exhausted and this comment she lost her temper. She picked up the harmonium player’s chappal and hurled it at the inspector. “Didn’t your mother have a cunt?” she yelled, “Where did you come out from then?30.

Kishore has described all such incidents very honestly and in a simple language.

Kolhati’s do not talk in a general way without abuses and bad words. When Kishore did not reach on time to his Aji she cursed him:

You vermin, where have been all this while?.31.
Dalit autobiographer’s language is full of abuses and vulgarity. After receiving education they became civilized. There was a certain transition but it was not complete. They could not completely sever themselves from the tone and texture of their language.

African American autobiographers were, like Dalit autobiographers abused by their masters’ very often, but, in Booker T. Washington we don’t come across abuses and vulgarity in the language. Washington became free when he was eight years old and he studied at Hampton Institute. Learning in Hampton institute, Washington was inspired to start Tuskegee Institute.

Washington describes the oppression very humbly and in a simple language. On the way to Hampton, Washington was not allowed to stay at the hotel because of his colour and race. Washington recalls:

> After all the other passengers had been shown rooms and were getting ready for supper, I shyly presented myself before the man at the desk. It is true I had practically no money in my pocket with which to pay for bed or food but I had hoped in some way to beg my way into the good graces to the landlord, for at that season in the mountains of the Virginia the whether was cold and I wanted to get indoors for the night. Without asking as to whether I had any money, the man at the desk firmly refused to even consider the matter of providing me with food or lodging.32.

For joining Hampton Institute Booker had to sweep the recitation room and after well and neat weeping Booker was admitted to Hampton Institute. After seeking admission to Hampton he was given a very hard job. Booker describes it as:

> I had a large number of rooms to care for and had to work late into a night while at the morning in order to build the fires and have little time in which to prepare my lessons.33.
Frederick Douglass was a born slave and was often abused by his masters. Douglass rendered his childhood and youth in slavery and in 1838 he bought his freedom from his master. Douglass’ slavery started from Col. Llyod’s Plantation. After that Douglass was shifted from one master to the other. Douglass was abused and whipped by every master. The intensity of abuses and whipping varied according to the nature of the master. Douglass was treated like human being at Mr. Auld. who treated him like her own child. But his other Master Covey abused and whipped him many times.

A slave named Barney was whipped by his master on the Lloyd’s Plantation. Douglass describes:

Uncover your head! Said the imperious master, he was obeyed. “take off your jacket, you old rascal! And off came Barney’s jacket.34.

Douglass saw the cruelty of slavery on the plantation and also how the masters abused and whipped their slaves for a single mistake. Little, Douglass was frightened to see the whipping of slaves. He quotes another example of Mrs. Hamilton who owned two slaves named Heneritta and Marry. Mrs. Hamilton always whipped both of them.

Douglass narrates:

She used to sit in a large rocking chair, near the middle of the room, with a heavy cowskin, those girls passed that chair, during the day, without a blow from that cowskin, either upon their bare arms, or upon their shoulders. As they passed her, she would draw her cowskin and give them blow, saying “Move faster, you black jip! And again”, take that you black jip!” continuing “if you don’t move faster, I will give you more.35.
Abuses and whipping became inseparable elements of the life of slaves. Douglass rebelled against Covey because he was abused and whipped by Covey very often. Douglass describes:

My resistance was entirely unexpected and Covey was taken all back by it, for he trembled I every limb. “Are you going to resist, you scoundrel?”

Douglass purchased his freedom from his master but after being free too, Douglass was whipped by the White Americans. In a conflict, four white people attacked Frederick Douglass and one of them planted a blow with his boot in the left eye. When they saw his eye completely closed, his face covered with blood they left him. Many White people saw the incident but not a single person came forward to help Frederick. This situation has been described by Fredrick in following words:

Not fewer than fifty white men stood by and saw this brutal and shameless outrage committed and not a man of them all interposed a single work of mercy. There were four against one and that one’s face was beaten and balterd most horribly and no one said, “that is enough” but some cried out, “kill him, kill him- kill the d-d- nigger! Knock his brains out- he stuck a white person.”

Douglass was abused and whipped by the White Americans almost throughout his life because of his colour and race.

Richard’s language is full of abuses and vulgarity. Richard was beaten in childhood by his mother and grandmother. Richard describes the incidents of vulgarity from his childhood. Once, his Granny was washing Richard and he asked his Granny to kiss him on his anus. Granny became angry and beat him mercilessly. Richard recalls:

I went to her, walking sheepishly and nakedly across the floor. She snatched the towel from my hand and began to
scrub my ears, my face, my neck. ‘bend over’, she ordered. I stopped and she scrubbed my anus. My mind was in a sort of daze, midway between daydreaming and thinking. Then, before I knew it, words-words whose meaning I did not fully know had slipped out of my mouth. “When you get through, kiss back there,” I said, the words rolling softly but unpremeditatedly.38.

Richard has described all the incidents from his life very honestly. Richard came to know that his landlady ran the business of prostitution in her house. Richard saw from the peep hole of his house the naked men and women in his landlady’s house. Richard’s landlady saw him when he was looking through peep hole in her house. Richard recalls:

Quietly I pulled up a chair, placed a box upon it, and climbed up and peered through a crack at the top of the door, I saw in the dim shadows of the room beyond, a naked man and a naked woman upon a bed, the man on the top of the woman. I lost my balance and toppled backwards on the floor.39.

Richard went to his Uncle Clark and where he had to do all the family chores. He was expelled from Uncle Clark’s house because of his vulgar language Richard recalls:

One evening, in doing my chores I took the water pail to the hydrant in the backyard to fill it. I saw half asleep, tired, tense, all but swaying on my feet. I balanced the handle of the pail on the jutting tip of the metal faucet and waited for it to fill, the pail slipped and water drenched my pants and shoes and stockings. That goddamn lousy bastard son of a bitching bucket!” I spoke in whisper of hate and despair.40.

Aunt Jody heard Richard’s words and told Uncle Clark. Uncle Clark whipped Richard and drove him out of the house.
Richard was not interested in attending hymns in the church. He was forcefully taken to church by his Granny. In the church he gazed at the elder’s wife and thought of sexual relationship with her. Richard narrates:

I would gaze at the elder’s wife for hours, attempting to draw her eyes to mine, trying to hypnotize her, seeking to communicate with her with my thoughts. If my desires had been converted into a concrete religious symbol, the symbol would have looked something like this – a black imp with two horns; a long, curving, forked tail; cloven, hoofs, a scaly, naked body; wet sticky fingers, moist sensual lips, and lascivious eyes feasting upon the face of the elder’s wife.41.

The churches spiritual life must have been polluted by Richard. Richard Wright has also a victim of abuses, ill-treatment and violent whippings of the White Americans. The word ‘Nigger’ was prominently used as an abuse.

Dalit and African American autobiographers, through their autobiography have disclosed their anger against their own customs traditions and against injustices, exploitation, sufferings and sorrows which they have been experiencing since hundreds of years. Their language has survived their aim of disclosing their angst against the suppression and oppression.

Laxman Mane completed his education after facing many hurdles in his childhood. Laxman Mane worked in hotels, sold bread and butter, newspapers and completed his education, and even after that he was not able to get the job. He was harassed by his own people. Laxman went to the Social Welfare department to seek financial help because of his intercaste marriage. The government provides financial help to couples who marry outside their caste. He was asked to fill the form again and
again and told to visit the office after 15 to 20 days. Laxman became furious and exclaimed:

Bastards! Have they become beggars or what? Or is it the government that has gone bankers? Four copies to be typed..... and photos to be taken! It meant spending at least ten to fifteen rupees more.42.

After six months, he got the reply from the office that they could help them if one of them was untouchable. Laxman’s anger burst like a volcano. Laxman recalls:

I couldn’t understand whom to call an untouchable. Listen you guys! A ‘Mahar’ has at least his profession of removing dead animals’ skins. He does have a roof above his head though it may not be in a good condition. But I .... ‘Mother Earth has no place for me, my hands never reach the sky.’ A man who resides at places where people come to defecate, is he not an untouchable? If he is not then who is he? And he who moves from place to place to earn his livelihood. What is he? Such questions created a storm in my head.43.

Poverty and hunger made Laxman Mane hopeless and depressed. He married a Maratha girl and after marriage he thought that his education he would be enable him to manage something and earn livelihood and live happily but it was difficult for him and he got frustrated. In frustration he thought of throwing a bomb in the assembly. Laxman recalls:

Once, a fancial idea came to my mind. The government of India and that of the state of Maharashtra rules this country and this state from Delhi and Bombay Madam prime Minister had given us a slogan ‘Eradicate poverty’ I thought of throwing a bomb on the parliament and do away with this disease of poverty, once and for all! And in fact I dreamt that I had thrown a bomb on the parliament which I imagined to be the ‘government of the people’ for the poor and oppressed people like me, and I saw it going to pieces .... The truth is that I was just waiting to explode myself like a volcano buried under tons of soil. When someone talked about the
reservations of the B.C. posts. I felt like strangling him. They were all hypocrites. I felt that I should tear off the masks of these people.44.

The same intensity of anger is evident in the autobiography of Laxman Gaikwad’s *The Branded*. Laxman, at an early age came to know about the banishment, oppression, suppression of lower castes by the high caste Hindus. They were branded as thieves and Laxman raised his voice against this prejudice. Laxman narrates:

We are forced to take to thieving because we are denied work. Why is it then that the whole community is branded as thieves? Why are we denied opportunities to live a decent life? Why is my mother forced to borrow from moneylenders to pay the police? And when the burden of loans piles up, why are my all brothers forced to resort to thieving to pay off the debt? Are we to be proud of this varied heritage because we have been inured to these conditions for ages? I began to understand as I began to read. And when I read the pledge of the first page of the textbook Marathi, I realized how false it was and felt sad. I blamed my fate and continued my schooling, growing up in this branded community praying God and enduring mutely and meekly my pains and agonies. 45.

Laxman Gaikwad started working for tribals. He was busy with his social work. He became angry at the treatment given by the police to the nomadic tribes. He expressed his anger in following words:

But even today in free India the police and the Government administration instead of giving these tribes opportunities to develop, bring false charges against innocent persons like Hirabai and her poor child and arrest them. Many children of nomadic and denotified tribes are accused of being criminals and jailed in their childhood. In fact, it is the police who push there young ones into criminal activity by such barbarous treatment. If a bird is confined to life in a house by clipping its wings lest it flies away it is forced to remain in the same house all its life. Even if it wishes to fly, it cannot. Absolutely
in the same way once a person from these tribes is shoved into jails right at his birth he gets inextricably bonded to it. Even if anybody tries to retrieve such a person from his prison or the person himself tries to escape from it he cannot come out of that hell. Because of his wings are clipped in an early childhood. He bears the indelible brand of a criminal on his forehead for all to see. Even if a criminal tries to improve himself in all honesty and sincerity, he is not allowed to do so by the society in which he lives. This was implanted in me by Hirabai’s infant.46.

Kishore Kale through his autobiography has described the anger against his mother and the social system within the Kolhati community and the society because of which, women were forced to work in the Tamasha. Kishore was very angry with his mother because she abandoned him to be exploited by his grandfather, Kondiba. Kishore’s uncle, Ramesh kaka always told positive things about Shantabai to Kishore but then Kishore in irritation said:

, “No kaka, she’s not my mother. She has abandoned me, she’s horrid.” 47.

Kishore was frustrated at his grandfathers’ house. He had to do all the chores like peeling garlic, making arrangements for dinner and sweeping the house. He did not have time to play like other children. He describes his condition in following words:

What kind of life is this?” I thought, why did my mother give birth to me? My life is like that of a stray dog – any passer by can kick me or shoo me away and I have to run.48.

Kishore’s grandfather, Kondiba never gave money to Kishore for his books. Kishore earned money by doing small chores like bringing ironed clothes and tea for the women at the tamasha. One day Kondiba stole
money from Kishore’s school bag and brought liquor and chicken. Kishore came to know about the theft and shouted at Kondiba:

Give my money back. You should be ashamed of yourself, stealing a child’s money. Grandfathers give money to their grandchildren, not steal from them.49.

Kishore faced many economic problems in Mumbai. He was unable to arrange for meals even. He was continuously asking for money from his father but he was unable to send it. Kishore completed MBBS with the help of Nagin maushi. When Kishore’s classmates and roommates came to know that Kishore is from Kolhati community they insulted him. In frustration Kishore went to his aunt, Rambha maushi at Ambejogai. Kishore told her that because of his continuous visits to the school, his school mates insulted him. Rambha maushi revealed the anger by saying:

Before a tamasha dancer knows why her chest must be covered by the pallu, somebody has filled her breasts with milk under the guise of chira. Isn’t that an insult? For two rupees we are expected to sit on a man’s lap- isn’t that an insult? Don’t forget the few rupees we get for allowing a man to hold and press our hand is what pays for food in our house. Only a rare one like you gets educated and even you feel ashamed of us. Isn’t that an insult for us?.50.

This is the anger against the social system. These high class men come to the tamasha at night and spend the whole night there and when the lady concives they don’t entertain her in the morning nor do they accept their child. Kolhatis are touchables at night but during the day they are untouchables. This is the tragedy of our society.

Frederick Douglass recounts the brutal beatings that Aunt Hester got. She was treated brutally by Captain Anthony. One such beating profoundly affected young Frederick. He recalls:
It struck me with awful force. It was the blood stained gate the entrance to the hell of slavery though which I was about to pass.” Blood, beginning with the blood pouring from the back of Frederick’s Aunt Hester, tied and scourged like a Christ, is a fitting symbol for the slave’s fate. Hester’s blood covers the hell gate through which Fredrick himself must later pass, and Douglass unfailingly recalls such blood whenever he wishes to emphasize the full horror of slavery.51.

Frederick’s own bloody baptism came at the hands of Edward Covey who stroke him on the head with a hickory slat causing the blood to run freely. Frederick ran away to his owner and presented himself infront of him. Heavy work and a very low quality and insufficient food was given to him. The spark of freedom got crushed because of the cruel treatment given by Covey to Douglass.

Frederick Douglass spoke to ships on the Chesapeake Bay. He compared his condition with them and threw out all his desires to become free. His speaking to the ships empowered him to fight against slavery:

You are loosed form your moorings, and free. I am fast in my chains, and am a slave! You mover merrily before the gentle gale and I sadly before the bloody whip! You are freedom’s swift – winged angels that fly around 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 loving! Alas! Betwixt me and you the turbid waters roll. Go on, that I could also go!52.

Douglass uttered these words when he was only fifteen years old. He was, influenced by reading the Colombian Orator and other philosophers which made him long for freedom.

The supreme event of Fredericks wandering form one master to the other was his fight with the slave breaker Covey. Frederick himself described his
own condition in the custody of Covey as the cruelest physical toil which he ever experienced. Douglass described his victory over Covey:

> I was a changed being after that fight. I was nothing before, I WAS A MAN NOW. It recalled to life my crushed self respect and my self-confidence and inspired me with a renewed determination to be A FREEMAN. A man, without force is without the essential dignity of humanity. Human nature is so constituted that it cannot honour a helpless man although it can pity him and even this it cannot do long, if the signs of power do not arise. 53.

The central mythic in Douglass’s autobiography is his victory over Covey. Washington started his autobiography like Douglass, he begins, ‘I was born’ and proceeds to tell the place of his birth his ignorance of the exact date because accurate records were not kept for slaves, and something about his parents, that his mother was a black slave and his father a white man of unknown identity. Washington’s first chapter narrates the harsh living conditions – life in a primitive cold cabin, long hours of hard work, poor and insufficient food but he studiously avoids the mention of physical violence of the African Americans. The slaves were declared free when Washington was nine years old. Washington rendered his nine years on the plantation as a slave and at that time he had seen the cruelties of masters but he avoided all that except that he pictured the faith of white Americans of their slaves and also how slaves were loyal to the masters. Washington recalls:

> In order to defend and protect the women and children who were left on plantations. When the white males went to war the slaves would have laid down their lives. The slave who was selected to sleep in the ‘big house’ during the absence of the males was considered to have the place of honour. Any one attempting to harm ‘young mistress’ or old mistress during the night would have had to cross dead body of the slave to do so.54.
Washington describes the purpose and activity of Klan movement as follows:

The Kl Klax were bands of men who had joined themselves together for the purpose of regulating the conduct of the coloured people especially with the object of preventing the members of the race from exercising any influences in politics.55.

Regulating the conduct of the coloured people is Washington’s euphemism for the terrorizing of blacks by whites the threats, the burning, the beatings, and the lynching. He does admit that some churches were burned, that many innocent people were made to suffer and during the period many coloured people lost their lives but again we find the technique by which Washington is able to both, register a wrong and to understate it to a remarkable degree.

Washington changes from angry defiant tone to an ingratiating one, puts the best construction on events and character. Washington was influenced by General Samuel C. Armstrong, the Whiteman who founded the Hampton Institute, where Washington received his education. Washington describes Armstrong:

I never saw a man who so completely lost sight of himself. I do not think he ever had a selfish thought. He was just as happy in trying to assist some other institution in the south as he was working for Hampton. Although he fought the Southern white man in the civil war. I never heard him utter a bitter word against him afterward. On the other hand, he was constantly seeking to find ways by which he could be of service to the southern whites.56.

General Armstrong was always ready to help the people who were in need. Towards the end of his life, when Armstrong suffered from paralysis he
wanted to visit Tuskegee as a guest in Washington’s house lived there for two months. Armstrong symbolizes a lack of racial prejudice. Whites would not have stayed in a black home, but Armstrong lived in a black’s home for two months. Though Armstrong was reduced by the physical condition he went to Tuskegee to see the development done by his fellow Washington and also promised to help him for his future.

Like Douglass, Washington’s central metaphor is not of resistance, it is of compliance acquiescence and adjustment that can be seen when Booker T. Washington arrived at Hampton Institute. He had no money to pay for tuitions. When he applied to the head teacher Miss. Mackie for admission, he was at first put off, and she would neither accept nor refuse him as Washington recalls:

> for sometime she did not refuse to admit me, neither did she decide in my favour and I continued to linger about her and to impress her in all the ways I could with my worthiness.57.

After sometime the head teacher asked him to sweep the classrooms and Washington swept the room neatly and cleanly and after seeing his work head teacher remarked, “I guess you will do to enter this institution.”58.

Washington was sure that he would get admission at the Hampton Institute. He expressed his feelings:

> I was on the happiest souls on the earth. The sweeping of that room was my college examination and never did any youth pass an examination for entrance into Harvard or Yale that gave him more genuine satisfaction. I have passed several examinations since then but I have always felt that this was the best one I ever passed.59.

With this Washington’s whole life changed. This was the turning point in the life of Washington. He believes that faithful service is the way of
achieving the desired goal; there is no need to fight. Washington believes that when blacks and whites live together, development could be achieved. The character of Washington himself and General Armstrong is an example of harmony of the blacks and whites. From the beginning of his autobiography Washington has emphasized on the absence of bitterness. He recalls:

As a rule not only did the members of my race entertain no feelings of bitterness against the whites before and during the war but there are many instances of Negroes tenderly caring for their former masters and mistresses who for some reason have become poor and dependent since the war.60.

Washington undertook his work with definite ideas about the kind of education the school should offer. He saw around him many poor unskilled black women and men and he was determined to provide them training in practical arts as well as academics. Consequently the institute developed a curriculum for teaching carpentry, blacksmithing, farming, tailoring, dairy farming, brick manufacturing, masonry and home economics besides other subjects. Washington believed that African Americans should work their way up from the bottom of the heap. They were determined to make themselves indispensable to the economy of the nation and felt the need to equip themselves with a host of skills. Through hard work, the blacks could win the respect of their communities along with their improvement and economic and social progress.

Washington started Tuskegee Institute with two or three worn out buildings, one teacher and thirty students and after twenty years Tuskegee Institute grew into a big tree with twenty three hundred acre Campus, seven hundred cultivated land, forty buildings and twenty eight instructors.
Washington describes the campus of Tuskegee Institute where he walked along with his family in Sunday afternoons:

> We can live for a while near the heart of nature where no one can disturb or vex us surrounded by pure air the trees, the shrubbery, the flowers and the sweet fragrance that springs from a hundred plants, enjoying the chirp of the crickets and the songs of the birds. This is a solid rest.61.

Booker T. Washington was not choosy about his speech. He never paid much attention to the style and pattern of his speech. He spoke as per his wish. He recalls about speech:

> I have often been asked how I began the practice of public speaking. In answer, I would say that I never planned to give any large part of my life to speaking in public. I have always had more of an ambition to do things than merely to talk about doing them.’62.

Washington possesses a conservative temperament, unfailing sense of humor and patience.

Richard Wright, in Black Boy displayed his anger against the injustices meted out to the Blacks in South America. Richard has described various examples of the hate for Blacks and their humiliating condition from his life in very simple but straight language.

Even after freedom the Blacks were harassed by Whites. The whites are racially prejudiced against the Blacks.

After civil war Blacks were declared free. Though they were independent and there were quarrels between them. Blacks were limited to certain colonies and whites as well. Wright describes the pelting of stones by Blacks and White at each other on crossing the boundaries of colonies. He states:
The round house was the racial boundary of the neighborhood and it had been tacitly agreed between Black boys and white boys that the whites were to keep to the far side of the roundhouse and we blacks were to keep to outside. Whenever we caught a white boy on our side we stoned him, if we strayed to their side they stoned us. Our battles were real and boldly we threw rocks, cinders, coal sticks, pieces of iron and broken bottles and while we threw them we longed for ever deadlier weapons.63.

Richard worked as a water boy in a brickyard. There was a dog which was owned by the owner of that brickyard. One day that dog bit Richard, and when he complained about the incident to the owner the owner hurled an insult saying:

‘A dog bite can’t hurt nigger. Its swelling and it hurt’s’ I said, ‘if it bothers you let me know.’ He said, ‘but I never saw a dog yet that could really hurt a nigger.’64.

Negroes were treated worst than the dogs. Richard became silent and reserved because of the hateful treatment given to him by whites and by thinking about the future. He laments the life he had to lead on account of his colour:

The bleakness of the future affected my will to study. Granny had already thrown out hints that it was time for me to be on my own. But what had I learned so far that would help me to make a living? Nothing, I could be a porter like my father before me but what else? And the problem of living as a Negro was cold and hard. What was it that made the hate of whites for blacks so steady, seemingly so woven into the texture of things? What kind of life was possible under that hate? How had this hate come to be? 65.

How could one live in a world in which one’s mind and perceptions meant nothing, and authority and tradition meant everything.
Dalit and African American autobiographers are the representatives of the communities that have rendered their generation helpless by experiencing exploitation, suppression and oppression. Dalit and African American autobiographers’ generation was destined to receive education. They took education and by fighting against the injustices forced their community members to take education. The autobiographers obtained identity and dignity in the society in which they were oppressed. They felt the urge to describe their past experiences, their life stories, and their oppression through their writing. They are the first to describe their agonies. They have no models to imitate. Dalit and African American autobiographers penned their agonies and anger in their own language, in their mother tongue. That’s why they have authentic and fresh texture. The language of Dalit and African American autobiographers is full of abuses and vulgarity. We can observe the vernacular tone in the language. Because of this the language, they became uncouth and uncivilized. The purpose of Dalit and African American autobiographers to reveal their life stories is fulfilled by their language. Thus, the unique nature of the language yields an appeal to the Dalit and African American autobiography.
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