CHAPTER-VI
DEPICTIONS: FRAGMENTED, IRREGULAR AND CONFUSED

6.1 MEN'S FOCUSED NARRATION

Finally, according to Gusdorf, an autobiography cannot be a pure and simple record of existence, as in an account book or a log-book. In the writing of an autobiography, the literary, artistic function is of greater importance than the history or objective function claimed by the positives.

It is believed that men can focus on their narration and therefore the can present their story in a linear manner. Unlike women they live a non-fragmented life which reflects in their style of writing. Men can maintain the chronology of the life events whereas women on the other hand are far more emotional and they have to face a lot of hormonal changes throughout their lives. They cannot judge the situation with neutral mind. Their actions are not free from emotions. Their narratives are very often fragmented, emotional, and discontinued. They are capable of expressing their love, hatred, likes and dislikes with sheer honesty. Unlike men they are not able to exclude the unfortunate events of their lives.

Furthermore, autobiography also assumes the task of reconstructing the unity of a life across time. It is not simple repetition of the past for “recollection brings us not the past itself but only the presence in spirit of a world forever gone” (Gusdorf, 1980:38). In My Experiments with Truth Gandhi maintains coherence and chronological order in the narration of the events of his life. The autobiography is divided into five parts which are subdivided into chapters. The uniformity is evident in his concentration on one period of his life, one theme, or one aspect of his personality at a time. Throughout we find
harmony and orderliness in Gandhi’s autobiography. This is in accordance with the male tradition of autobiography writing.

Men’s autobiographies project the image of self-image of confidence and determination, the self-image constructed by women is often the opposite. Men tend to idealize their lives or show how to cast them into heroic moulds to project their universal import. They may exaggerate, mythologize or monumentalize their boyhood and their entire lives. Perhaps for the fear of appearing sentimental, they often desist from revealing crises in their childhood but are more likely to relate adult crises, usually turning points in their professional lives. The self-image, thus projected is of contrast to the self-image projected in women’s autobiographies which reveals self-consciousness.

6.2 WOMEN'S LACK OF FOCUS

Simon de Beauvoir in her Second Sex argues:

The reason that women lack concrete means of organising themselves into a unit which can stand face to face with a correlative unit. They have no past, no history, no religion of their own; and they have no such solidarity of work and interest as that of the proletariat… They live dispersed among the males, attached through residence, housework, economic condition and social standing to social men – Fathers or husbands more firmly than they are no other women…(de Beauvoir:19)

Jelinek brings the fact to light that women do not follow male writing pattern. They develop their own unique style of narrating their life-stories.
By means of chronological linear narrative, they unify their work by concentrating on one period of their life, one theme or one characteristic of their personality. It is not surprising that with men socially conditioned to pursue the single goal of successful career, we find such harmony and orderliness in their autobiographies... On the other hand, irregularity rather than orderliness informs the self portraits by women. The narratives of their lives are often not chronological and progressive but disconnected fragmentary or organized into self – sustained units rather than connecting chapters... (Jelinek:17)

This second reading of experience is truer than the first for there is always a consciousness and the narrator always knows the outcome of the story he tells.

So far as discussion of narrative techniques and architectonics of the genre of the autobiography is concerned, critics have often asserted that the male autobiographers consciously shape the events of their lives into a coherent whole. By means of chronological, linear narrative, they unify their work concentrating on the period of their life, one theme, or one characteristic of their personality. It is not surprising career, we find such harmony and orderliness in their autobiographies. Such unity shows a faith in the unity of the world and their own self-images. The 'directionality' of men's lives is appropriately cast into such progressive narratives, notes Jelinek.

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6.3 DISCONTINUED CONTINUITY

The focus of an autobiography written by men is on their professional success – a reason behind its unity of chapters. By means of a chronological, linear narrative, they unify their work by concentrating on one period of their life, one theme or one characteristic of their personality. Not surprisingly, men are socially conditioned to pursue a singly goal of a successful career. Such harmony are orderliness can be seen in their autobiographies.

Critics believe that male critical theories are not applicable to women’s autobiographies. More significant discrepancies are on matters relating to their forms and content. Autobiography is the story of a person’s life, both etymologically and in practice. Before contrasting their stylistic difference, we shall first compare the content of women’s and men’s life studies. The diary records Nin’s attempt to create a whole identity in a culture than defines WOMAN in terms of her fragmented roles as mother, daughter, wife and sister. Nin, defines the mothering of the male artist as the basis for all women’s creativity:

The woman was born mother, wife, and sister. She was born to represent union, communion, and communication. She was born to give birth to life and not to insanity….Woman was born to be a connecting link between man and his human self.....Women’s role in creation should be parallel to her role in life. (Diary II, 234-35)

Thus the final criterion of orderliness, wholeness or harmonious shaping with which critics characterize autobiography is not applicable to women’s autobiography is not applicable to women’s autobiographies. The
various forms in which women write their life studies are often appropriate for rendering the author’s intentions and/or personalities and autobiographical critics do a disservice to these many fine works and to the genre itself when they saddle the autobiographical mode with their confining criteria. Jelinek in her *Women’s autobiography: Essays in Criticism* (1980) notes:

> From the earliest times this discontinuous forms have been important to women because they are analogous to the fragmented, interrupted and formless nature of their lives. But they also attest to a continuous female tradition of discontinuity in the women’s autobiographical writings to the present day. (Jelinek: 19)

This discontinuous form is seen even in the 20th and the 21st centuries female autobiographies like Stein, McCarthy, Hellman, Margaret Lawrence, Atwood, Maya Angelou, Indira Goswami and many of the contemporary autobiographies. As Jelinek rightly observes, the controlled chaos of Kate Millet’s autobiography *Flying*(1974), *Sita*(1977),with its mixed chronology, flashbacks within flashbacks and its stream of consciousness, clearly reflects the fragmentation she experiences in her multiple roles as writer, teacher, film maker, critic, sculptor, political activist, bisexual and feminist. Another such autobiography by a contemporary Canadian woman Mary Meing entitled *Box Closet*(2002) stands out in memory as the one which not only portrays a fragmented way, but also, like a typical postmodern text erases the generic boundaries completely. The said Canadian text makes use of all the techniques like first person narration, travelogue, letters, diaries, dialogues, poetry etc; each one telling a part of her story in a piece of a jigsaw puzzle manner, making the readers keep on expecting more and more to happen, keeping them asking what ‘next’ and finally creating a perfect life story told in a ‘back and forth style’ with all kinds of narrative techniques.

For women patriarchal power works at three levels-domestication, prescription and expectation. Domestication of women is done by prescribing
norms for them. Meyer Spacks, in her Imaging a self: Autobiography and in Eighteenth Century England (1975) notes:

There is no feminine nature, only a feminine situation which has in many respects remained constant through the centuries....The notion of ‘femininity’ is a fiction created by men, assented to by women untrained in the rigors of logical thought or conscious of the advantage to be gained by compliance ith masculine fantasies...Man offers. Women safety, the temptations of passivity and acceptance; he tells her that passivity and acceptance are her nature.(29)

Thus, under patriarchal order omen are oppressed in their very psychology of femininity. One needs to note here that critics/theorist Irigary, Cixous, Heilburn, Showalter, Benstock, Rowbotham, Chodorow and Kakar are all contemporary intellectuals. The 'outdated', or 'essentialist,' concept of binary opposition of sexes originally was introduced by Freaud and his followers.

Despite the fact that women’s life studies are excluded from the evidence from which the characteristics of the genre are drawn, it is assured that they will either conform to them or else be disqualified as autobiographies. As Jelinek notes:

Our earliest male autobiographer Augustine narrates his life story progressively up to the time of his conversion and then crowns it with three chapters of brilliant intellectual analysis. Franklin wrote his autobiography during several sittings over a period of eighteen years, yet he resumed the narrative each time where he had left off (Jelinek: 17).
In the contrast to this, irregularity rather than orderliness informs the self-portraits by women. The narratives of their lives are often not chronological and progressive but disconnected, fragmentary or organized into self-sustained unity rather connecting chapters. Surveying quite a number of bibliographies from various countries and periods, one is struck by the number of women writing diaries, journals and notebooks in contrast of many more men writing autobiographies proper.

Bhutto’s autobiography begins with her father’s assassination which shows that it was probably the most important event of her life. Instead of writing about her on self, she prefers to write about her father. His death had the most powerful impact on her mind. She did not want to start her story with any of her achievements, or triumphs. Right from the beginning she put him at the centre of her narration. The very first line of her autobiography reads:

They killed my father in the early morning hours of April 4, 1979, inside Rawalpindi Central Jail. . . . . I felt the moment of my father’s death. Despite the valiums my mother had given me to try and get through the agonizing night, I suddenly sat bolt-upright in bed at 2:00 am. No “the scream burst through the knots in my throat ‘No’, I couldn’t breathe, didn’t want to breathe (Bhutto-3)

Mead, like many other women autobiographers, starts her autobiography by quoting an episode from her past. She starts her story when she was sixteen. Then she goes back to her childhood. Thus it does not follow a linear pattern. She also has a tendency of recalling the past, time and again. The beginning of her autobiography reads:

When I was sixteen years old, I read a text set like a flowered valentine on the office wall on an old country doctor:"All things work together for good to them that love God". I interpreted this to mean that if
you set a course and bent your sails to every wind to further the journey, always trusting that the course is right, it will, in fact be right even though the ship itself may go down at any time during the voyage.(Mead:1)

Thus, we note that Madeline Slade’s *The Spirit’s Pilgrimage* differs from Gandhi’s *My Experiments with Truth* in its comparative absence of spiritual strength. Though Gandhi does not glorify or boast of his success, his is a story of high tide of success. Gandhi himself was very clear about the objective of his life-writing. It was nothing but search for the ‘Truth’ which in his view was at par with God. To quote Gandhi: “If I had only to discuss academic principles, I should clearly not attempt in autobiography.” (xi) While Miss Slade’s is the story of an inner growth rightly called *The Spirit’s Pilgrimage*. Unlike Gandhi’s volume, which targets at the lofty objective of national freedom, Miss Slade’s focuses on personal dedication at Gandhi’s feet. Whatever high tides of success come to Ms. Slade she dedicates all of them to Bapu. Thus, in some ways both share spiritual quest, but the man’s autobiography also attests material attainment while the woman’s concludes with soul’s satisfaction. She admits:

> When I look back on that time I can see how I was progressively crushing my natural independence of nature and putting myself wholly under another’s will, a thing I had never done in my life. it was the intense reverential love that I felt for Bapu which made me discipline myself in the way, but it increased the tension which was already there. (Slade:88)

The multidimensionality of women’s socially conditioned roles has established a pattern of diffusion and diversity when they write autobiography. Women’s autobiography often lacks the chronology and progressive narration of their lives. Unlike men’s, women’s narration of life tends to be disconnected and fragmented. Their depiction of life reads more like narration of isolated incidents rather than connecting chapters. Anecdotes, flashbacks, stream of
consciousness, portraits of people, and letters from an integral part of *The Spirit's Pilgrimage*.

In *My Experiments with Truth* Gandhi maintains coherence and chronological order in the narration of the events of his life. The autobiography is divided into five parts which are subdivided into chapters. The uniformity is evident in his concentration on one period of his life, one theme, or one aspect of his personality at a time. Throughout we find harmony and orderliness in Gandhi’s autobiography. This is in accordance with the male tradition of autobiography writing.

In women’s autobiography-writing, the progression of narrative is spiral in stead of linear. The narration, in *The Spirit’s Pilgrimage*, is spiral instead of linear. The narration, in *The Spirit’s Pilgrimage*, is spiral in the sense, that instead of following a straight chronological order of events in the life of the autobiographer it develops in circles. From Madeline Slade’s reading of Gandhi’s biography to the death of her mentor, the narration moves around Gandhi. Attesting the female tradition of autobiography, Madeline Slade’s autobiography presents the ‘other’, mostly Gandhi, in the centre while she remains on the periphery.

### 6.4 THE PUT ON CONFIDENCE IN WOMEN’S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Men in their autobiography project their self-image with confidence; a thing very much absent in women’s autobiography. The self-image projected in women’s autobiographical writings reveal self-consciousness, and the motive is to convince the reader of her self-worth, to authenticate her self-image.

Since women tend to write in straight forward and objective manner about their lives, the idealization is not typical of the female mode. Men tend to idealize their lives to make it seem heroic and often desist from revealing crisis in their childhood, and are more likely to relate adult crisis, usually
turning points in their professional lives. Men mainly talk about their triumphs and failures that ultimately become stepping stones to their success. On the other hand women's autobiographical writings suffer from the haunting fear of failure. Ellen Glasgow in her *The Woman Within* states (1994):

…I wrote always in secret, but I wrote ceaselessly in dim corners, under beds or in the blessed summer days, under the deep shrubbery and beneath low – hanging boughs
(Glasgow : 41).

Women's lack of confidence owes a great deal to the way in which men rate them. The predominant of most critics consider women's lives as 'insignificant'. The difference in attitude is manifest in the manner in which female autobiographies won acceptance by merely changing the gender of the name of its author. This is pretty evident in the case of two women authors. When Elizabeth Cady Stanton becomes Alexander Stanton, Eighty Years and More becomes the extraordinary career of the America's leading social reformers. And when, Kate Millet is transformed into Michael Millet, Flying(1974) becomes the confessions of a contemporary revolutionary thinker and artist. As men, the experiences of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Kate Millet would be described in heroic or exceptional terms: guilt, alienation, initiation, manhood, transformation, identity crisis and symbolic journeys. And as women, their experiences are viewed in more conventional terms: heartbreak, anger, loneliness, motherhood, humility and confusion. Dr. Ranjana Harish in her article *In the Cultural Hall of Mirrors* (1996) writes:

When such a person who doesn't possess the proverbial isolate self which could reside at the center of the text, holds the pen to write her autobiography, the product is going to be different both in form and content (29).
Though, Jelinek observes:

The self of the oldest child is rarely threatened or influenced by younger siblings except perhaps to reinforce the oldest child’s confidence, which explains this omission by practically all autobiographers with younger sisters and brothers (Jelinek: 11)

The above mentioned traits are evident in these four women's autobiographies. In some respect or the other, they all face the same difficulties as their fellow gender mates. They are not the exceptions so far as the form and content of the autobiography is concerned. They do not follow the liner pattern of narration, they all are more conscious than confident, they all are emotional and justify their actions accordingly.

Like other women autobiographers, Bhutto also tried to project her self-image with the motive to convince the reader of her self-worth. At times she had to go out of the way to prove her strength when she was in London. There was a time when she had lost her She was not comfortable facing the crowd. She was having a constant fear of attacks. Two years of imprisonment had shaken her confidence completely. She confesses:

I put on a veneer of self-confidence and hid my anxieties from every-one. I had to my years in detention and my family is treatment by the military regime had elevated me in the eyes of many Pakistanis to Super human status. The publicity surrounding my release and my arrival in England had catapulted me into being a public figure there as well. It would hardly have been seemly or inspiring for someone who had challenged. Martial Law to suddenly succumb to an anxiety attack on Hyde Park corner. Breathe deeply, I told myself whenever I was
forced to go out. Move steadily. Don’t panic. (Bhutto-253)

Even when she had gone to Lahore, she was experiencing weak moments. Though she had come to challenge the murderer of her father, she was quite nervous. There was a huge crowd at the airport and she found it extremely difficult to get out.

I gripped the notes for my speech as I looked at the rickety stair leading to the platform which had been built on the top of the truck for me to ride on. I sometimes had nightmares of a stairway I didn’t want to climb, but had to. Suddenly that very stair was in front of me and hundreds of expectant eyes were waiting to watch me climb it. What could I do? We had agreed in London on this mode of transport to take me to the minar-i-Pakistan, the measurement my father had built in Lahore to commemorate the declaration which would lead to Pakistan’s birth. I couldn’t change the plan now. There were a million people waiting outside the gates. I put my foot on the first step and took a deep breath. ‘Bismillah,’ I said to myself. In the name of God, I begin. (Bhutto-322)

It has been observed that the first child is always more confident than the other kids in the family. And thus Mead did not lack confidence at any level. Throughout her autobiography, she remains very confident. She lived her life on her own terms and conditions. Mead was the oldest child in the family. She was known as the ‘original punk’ (Mead, 1975: 19) and the wanted child. Mead was stronger and dynamic than her other siblings. The following lines, written by Mead, in her Blackberry Winter (1975) testify the claim:
But I, as the eldest – the original punk, the child who was always told, “There’s no one like Margaret” – had the clearest sense of what she was. When my youngest sister Pricilla was twenty-two, she prepared an autobiographical account for one of my social science projects. In it she wrote, “Dick was dadda’s favorite, Elizabeth was grandma’s favorite. Margaret was everybody’s favorite. I was mother’s favorite, but mother didn’t count for much in our house.” (Mead, 1975: 28).

Madeline Slade, on the other hand, projects the self-image of consciousness in *The Spirit’s Pilgrimage*. Adopting the ideology of self-subordination she becomes Gandhi’s disciple and crushes her natural independence. Though, writing in a genre which values self-assertion and self display. In *The Spirit’s Pilgrimage* Ms. Slade focuses on Gandhi and presents herself as his disciple. Owing to her intense reverence for Bapu, she consciously crushes her will and surrenders to him:

> When I look back on that time I can see how I was progressively crushing my natural independence of nature and putting myself wholly under another’s will, a thing I had never done in my life. It was the intense reverential love that I felt for Bapu which made me discipline myself in this way, but it increased the tension which was already there. (Slade: 88)

Ms. Slade being daughter of an Admiral of the British Royal Navy., had enjoyed a luxurious life. Her famly had an aristocratic touch. With such an exalted background, she had frequent social contacts with the high and the mighty in the British officialdom and the Indian princes. She did not enjoy the games of tennis and dinner parties and regretted that they were so perpetual. More particularly, she was averse to dance and ball parties. Her sister tried to teach her dance but without success. She was conscious and even indignant
when she had to dance with the young men whom she knew hardly and cared for little:

I had never learned to dance, and never wanted to, but I was persuaded to try, and Rhona used patiently to go round and round with me in our bedroom. The effort was not very successful as can be well be imagined, and when I found myself at real parties with young men coming and asking me for dances, I felt awkward and indignant. Why should I be dragged around the ballroom by young men I hardly knew and for whom I cared nothing? I thought it was a repulsive form of entertainment, especially in that hot perspiry climate. But the men did not seem to think so, and were always pestering me to dance. I avoided those parties as much as I could, but it was not possible, as Commander in Chief’s daughter, to escape altogether. (Slade, Madeline: 33)

Madeline Slade came to India and became a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi gave her a new name – Miraben. She then took on completely a new identity. She was adapting to a very different way of life that she had ever known – the climate, the food, the clothes, the culture etc. she had to learn Hindi and the spinning of charkha. As a part of the ashram routine, she even swept the latrines.

Besides this Madeline Slade is conscious also of her womanhood in a male dominated society. She develops a kind of dual consciousness, a dual self – a self adhering to the cultural prescription of womanhood and also an inner self which may be quite different. Having devoted her life to Gandhi and his cause, she had resolved not to marry. However, she felt attracted to Prithvi Singh, a former Punjabi revolutionary, who had been converted to Gandhian ideals. She talked to Bapu and unexpectedly got his permission. In
fact, Bapu undertook to speak to the man and she felt extraordinarily happy. She expresses her rapture at this development:

After all the pent-up suffering I had been through I could not catch any balance in this completely new orientation, and my emotions ran riot. Fate was tossing me around like a cork in a rough sea. Prithvi Singh wisely resisted all proposals whether from Bapu or others. he suggested my going to see his best friend and co-prisoner of the Andaman days, Pandit Jagt Ram Bhardwaj, who had recently been released after twenty-one years in jail and was living with his wife in his Punjab home in Hariana near Hoshiarpur in a completely broken state health. Bapu agreed and I went. (Slade, Madeline: 217)

This marriage, however, did not take place.

6.5 EMOTIONAL

For, Bhutto her father was her hero. She could not imagine her life without his guidance. In her sub-conscious mind she wanted to keep him alive. She could feel his presence even after his death. Her mind was over-possessed by his thoughts and memories. She accepts.

For days at sihala, after my father's death, I couldn't eat or drink. I would take sips of water, but then I have to spit it out. I couldn't swallow at all. Nor could I sleep. Every time I closed my eyes I had the same dream. I was standing in front of the district jail. The gates were open. I saw a figure walking towards me. Papa ! I rushed to him. You've come out! You've come out! I thought they had killed you! But you're alive! (Bhutto : 13-14)
She was already shattered after her father's death. Though she never showed it, but she was broken from within. Her brother Shah Nawaz's death left her completely shocked. She could not understand how to react. She was a protective sister and therefore she kind of held herself responsible for not being able to protect her brother. She had motherly feelings for her brother and she saw his dead body with such affection, she describes:

Shah Nawaz was lying on the carpet in the living room beside the coffee table. He was still wearing the white trousers he had worn the night before. His hand was outstretched, a beautiful brown hand. He looked like a sleeping Adonis. ‘Gogi!’ I shouted, trying to wake him up. But then I saw his nose. It was white as chalk, standing out in sharp contrast to his tan. ‘Give him oxygen!’ I screamed at the ambulance crew who were taking his pulse. Massage his heart!’ ‘He’s dead,’ one of the crew said quietly. ‘No! Try! Try!’ I shouted. ‘Pinkie, he’s cold,’ Mir said, ‘He’s been dead for hours.’ I looked around the room. The coffee table was askew. A saucer of brownish liquid sat on a side table. The cushion was half off the couch and the vase of flowers had fallen. My eyes lifted to his desk. The leather file folder was gone. I looked out on the terrace. His papers were there. The folder was open. Something was terribly wrong. His body was cold. God knows how long Shah had lain there, dying. But no one had been alerted. And someone had taken the time to go through his papers. (Bhutto: 291)

When Bhutto was in central jail, it was but natural for her to feel homesick. She was missing every single thing that belonged to her family and home. Because she was alone there for quite some time, she was getting emotional at every small incident. She recalls:
Karachi Central Jail, August 15, 1981.

Flaking cement. Iron bars. And silence. Utter silence. I am back in total isolation, the cells around me in the locked ward all emptied. I strain for the sound of a human voice. There is only silence.

In the mornings I hear the jangling of keys and clicking of locks which signals the arrival of my food. Without saying a word, the grey-uniformed prison matron who sleeps in the courtyard at the far end of the cells brings me the tiffin boxes of food which the authorities allow to be sent from 70 Clifton. My throat tightens the first few times I open them to find carefully prepared creamed chicken with mushrooms, kebabs and chicken sheeks. Though I have little appetite, and can only take a few mouthfuls, I keep thinking of the care my mother has taken to have the food made in our kitchen at home.

(Bhutto: 202)

Mead is little emotional when it comes to having a 'Baby'. Like all the other women, she was anxious about how the baby would look. She was tensed to think about her other family members, as she did not want her kid to look like them. She was anxious about everything related to the 'baby'. She writes:

During these months I had all the familiar apprehensions about what the baby would be like. There was some deafness in my family, and there had been a child who suffered from Mongolism and a child with some sever from a cerebral palsy. There also were members of my family whom I did not find attractive or endearing and I knew that my child might take after them. distinguished forebears were no guarantee of normality.(Mead:274)
Mead very honestly accepts the fact that she was overprotective about the baby. She, being an anthropologist knew that such possessiveness won’t be good for either of them. The baby would also suffer because of her nature. She at the same time did not intend to be like that. She admits:

There was another problem too, of which I was quite aware. I had been a "baby carriage peeker", as Dr. David Levy described the child with an absorbing interest in babies, and he identified this as one of the traits that pre-disposed one to become an overprotective mother. When I told him, in a telephone conversation, that I was expecting a baby, he asked, in that marvelous therapeutic voice which he could project even over the telephone, "Are you going to be an overprotective mother"? (Mead:275)

During her pregnancy, Mead was worried about the child’s looks, and afterwards she was anxious about the name. She wanted to name her daughter Katherine after her lost sister, with the different spelling. She wanted it to be Catherine so that it could match her initials with her Grand-mother. She was very careful in all these matters.

After a time I found that I really did not feel at home with the name Mary. I wanted to name our child Katherine after my lost little sister, whom I had named. I proposed that we spell the name Catherine, to match her Bateson grandmother’s initials, C.B. I had written about this to Gregory, and he had agreed. We had also discussed circumcision, which Gregory disapproved of, but the question was left unresolved. When the cable was sent, ‘Mary Catherine Bateson, born on December 8th, Gregory started to cable in a return message, “Don’t
circumcise," and then remembering he had a daughter, cable instead, "Don't christen." (Mead:281)

Mead got very emotional when her daughter lost her first child, because she knew the pain of losing a child. She herself had many miscarriages, so she could identify herself with her daughter. She also noticed that her daughter too was an overprotective mother. She writes:

When Catherine and Barkev lost their first baby in the Phillipines-Martin, who was born too soon to be christined and registered as a citizen-I knew that they both wanted a child very much. I knew also that bereavement had catapulted Catherine into the same position in which I had been placed by a long series of disappointed hopes; just as I had been, she was potentially an overprotective mother. (Mead:298)

The country's biggest loss, Bapu's death, was the biggest shock for Slade. She had not imagined her life without the constant guidance of Bapu. She had got used to his presence that she could not believe the news in the first place. Bapu had taught her the detachment from all the worldly relations, and yet it was difficult to digest the fact that Bapu was no longer present with her. She recalls:

The food was ready, so I sat down to my evening meal. Shortly, afterwards I went onto the back varanda. A jeep was racing down the rough road, and when it came to a stop at the gate, the Delhi officer and some members of the Pashulok staff flung themselves out and rushed toward me. I caught the sound of stifled sobs, and, before I could think, one of the party, throwing himself for support against the wall, convulsively cried; "Bapu, has been assassinated! Shot dead on the Prayer Ground! She
almost slipped into trance, as her mind had almost stopped working. Her mind was over possessed by the thoughts of Bapu. Her inner self had become numb. Though, Bapu had taught her to be detached, she always felt attached to him. Even after seeking place in heaven. She knew that Bapu's spirit will remain with her: I stood silent and still. A vast emotion held me as in a trance. The only thought that came to me was "Bapu, Bapu so it has come!" i looked up into the heavens and, through the boughs of the trees, the stars were shining in peaceful splendor far, far away. They told me Bapu's spirit released and at peace, and as I gazed on them it as if Bapu was there-yes there with me too. It all became one. And surely Bapu's spirit was with me ,for I did not weep when I came back to earth. I remembered asking only one question: "Was it instantaneous?" (Slade:292)

Slade, as a final resort, went for the meditation, to control her emotional upheaval. She was comparing Bapu with Jesus Christ. She felt that Bapu was also crucified for a nobel cause. Slade felt almost lost ,she as constantly thinking about Bapu's sacrifice. She went into the house, and sat for the meditation for hours. Her body was trembling but her soul was calm and clear. She was continuously thinking about the crucification of Bapu. Though that was only the end of flesh, she was sub-consciously trying to compare Bapu with Jesus Christ. She says:

My mind went back to the crucifix in the Vatican at Rome. Yes-Bapu knew that was the gateway to the thing he was seeking. In knoldege, humility and love he had to be ready to give all.(Slade:293)
6.6 CONFUSED

Though, she planned her return from her exile to lead the next campaign, she was aware of the fact that it was she was standing at the most difficult crossroads of her life. And she decided to leave it to the God. Her fate as in the hands of her people. The following lines suggest that she was lacking confidence in herself, and therefore, she leaves the fate to God.

So I plan my return from exile to lead yet another campaign. I pray that the democratic world will demand that general Musharraf provides the standards of fair and free elections; allow all political personalities and parties to freely contest them; allow international observers to monitor the balloting and counting; and above all, abide by the outcome. I know it sounds idealistic, and to some unrealistic, but after all these years, I still maintain my faith that time, justice and the forces of history are on the side of democracy.

Some people might not understand what drives me forward into this uncharted and potentially dangerous crossroads of my life. Too many people have sacrificed too much, too many have died, and too many people see me as their remaining hope for liberty, for me to stop fighting now. I recall the words of Dr. Martin Luther King: ‘Our lives begin to end the day we remain silent on things that matter, ‘With my faith in God, I put my fate in the hands of my people. (Bhutto: 431)

She also recalls:

So as I prepare to return to an uncertain future in Pakistan in 2007, I fully understand the stakes not only for myself, and my country, but the entire world. I realize I can be arrested. I realize that like the assassination of Benign Aquino in Manila in August
1983, I can be gunned down on the airport tarmac when I land. After all, al-Qaeda has tried to kill me several times, why would we think they wouldn't try again as I return from exile to fight for the democratic elections they so detest? But I do what I have to do, and am determined to return to fulfill my pledge to the people of Pakistan to stand by them in their democratic aspirations. I take the risk for all the children of Pakistan.......raising awareness

(Bhutto: 430)

Slade, had an emotional turmoil, when she was confused about her feelings for Pruthvi Singh. She, at one point, wanted to marry him, and at the same time, she did not want to leave Bapu. Slade had a soft corner for Pruthvi Singh and she was attracted to him. Though she had dedicated her life to the freedom fight with Mahatma Gandhi, she could not overcome her womanly emotions. She writes:

In the beginning he spent the most of his time at Sevagram and I saw a good deal of him. I felt at home with him, and rejoiced in his frank and fearless manner. I began to feel, Here at last is someone with whom I could perhaps work outside independently, as Bapu always wanted me to. This feeling grew so pressing that I spoke to Bapu about it. Bapu looked at me with unexpected seriousness and said, “if u feel like that it means to my mind that you should marry”, and added, as if thinking aloud, “perhaps marriage has been the unspoken word in your life”. I was taken aback and felt speechless. Bapu saw my astonishment and said, “your former resolve not to marry, to my mind should not stand in this way. As far as I am concerned, you are absolved from it. My mind and emotions were in a whirl. Was this the way
out of my frustration? Bapu was probably right. Could I be of use at last if I made a plunge? Bapu was in his usual unhesitating way, said, "I shall speak to him." And I accepted the situation without further ado. (slade:217)

She further adds:

After all the pent-up suffering I had been through I could not catch any balance in this completely new orientation, and my emotions ran riot. Fate was tossing me around like a little cork in a sea. (slade:217)

According to Mary Mason, women tend to depict their lives as led by other's values and based on other's assumptions of their own. This 'other' may be represented as husband, children, even-God, but in all cases the female self depicted is profoundly influenced by the 'other' and this primary relationship structures their autobiography. Madeline Slade had brought Romain Ralland's biography of Mahatma Gandhi in Paris one morning and finished it by that evening. She knew it was time for her to go to Mahatma Gandhi. For one year Ms. Slade trained herself to be a fit disciple of Mahatma Gandhi. She learned spinning, and sitting and sleeping on the floor. She gave up non-vegetarian food and alcohol. She took a course in Urdu grammar. She read the Bhagvadgita and some of the Rigveda. She subscribed to Gandhi's magazine *Young India* and books on India. To learn manual labour, she worked with the peasant in their fields in Switzerland. In spite of her this complete devotion to Gandhi, the woman in her feels that she could have done more:

As I contemplated the past realized clearly how I had never been able to give Bapu full satisfaction, for there had always been something suppressed that caused the tension which Bapu noticed and against which he had warned me time and again. I realized
too that ceaseless activity of the past ten years, though an outlet, had yet left me with an unfulfilled feeling. I felt overwhelmed with a blinding melancholy, and for several months did not write another word. (Slade: 315)

6.7 SILENT ON INTENSE FEELINGS

Yet another not so well expressed aspect in most of the autobiographies is admission of intense feeling of hate, love and fear. Also, many autobiographers, inadvertently or otherwise, shy away from narrating the sexual encounters or avoid giving a details of painful experiences. These are the matters on which autobiographers usually prefer to keep quite.

The admission of intense feelings of hate, love, and fear, the disclosure of explicit sexual encounters or the detailing of painful psychological experiences are matters on which autobiographers are generally silent…(Jelinek13)

Jane Howard in her Margaret Mead: A life (1984) poses a similar question.

Blackberry winter struct me as an engaging book but an evasive one, which asked nearly as many questions as it answered, and did not say enough about how its author managed to shift gears as often as she did, personally and professionally without destroying her transmission. Could these changes really have been so painless? Could she really have switched husbands and careers with that much grace? (Howard: 12).
Mead herself is no expectation. She too, endeavors to erase all the not-so-pleasant memories from her mind and avoids mentioning such things in her autobiography.

This tendency to camouflage is indicative of the lack of confidence. Echoes Vijayalakshmi Pandit in the scope of happiness. She admits that for many years her daughters have been urging her to write her autobiography. She hesitated partly because of laziness but mainly because she lacked confidence in her ability to do so. Unlike Ellen Glasgow and Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Mead’s autobiography emanates self-confidence in sharing her experiences.

In this book I have tried to describe the kinds of experiences that have made me what I am, myself, and to sort out the kind of experiences that might become part of a way of bringing up children and of seeing the world that includes the past and the future as the aspects of the present – the present of any generation. (Mead, 1975: 3-4)

Her autobiography is the outcome of her experiences as an anthropologist and as a woman. She has tried to make her own life experiences a kind of examples for the coming generations. She was very sure that her experiences will be useful in bringing up children. The fame she sought and won was on her own terms. She was one of the most accomplished and most energetically public woman of her time.

Phoolan had very intense feelings, be it love or hatred. She remembered how Vikram had arranged their marriage. She got very emotional with Vikram’s gesture as no other male had ever treated her with respect and dignity. She was very young at the time of her first marriage, moreover it turned out to be a disaster. So her second marriage was a kind of pleasant surprise for her. She says:
They had brought garlands of red and white flowers for the ceremony, and plenty of food, and we headed off down the river and back into the jungle. Vickram wanted music and all the things that made a real marriage, but I protested. 'I can’t marry you. I was already married when I was little.' ‘Don’t ever say that! You aren’t married. Don’t ever mention your first marriage. I am your first husband!’ He hung a garland of marigolds around my neck, and then I hung one around his neck. He made the mark of teeka on my forehead. The vermilion dot meant I was married. In the shade of a large banyan tree, with only my new family of outlaws as witnesses, Phoolan Devi had married a dacoit! (Phoolan: 266)

Only at the tender age of eighteen, she had faced a great amount of torture and hardships. She was literally humiliated by several men at different times, which had left her weak, both physically and mentally. Her hands were broken by the police and she was not able to hold the gun properly. Moreover Vikram’s death had made her kind of handicap. She recalls:

There was no more gang. Vickram was dead and I was alone. Physically, I was in tatters. I was eighteen years old and I bore the scars of tortures inflicted on me by men who were not men but beasts and dogs. My wrists had been broken in a police lock-up and they had never healed properly. I could hardly hold my shotgun steady enough to aim. I had to hold it with both hands, and I had only one shell left . . . But for the sipahis, I had become Phoolan Devi the Untouchable, the Queen of Dacoits! (Phoolan: 384-385)
Phoolan had suffered a great deal throughout her life. She had faced gender discrimination to its limits. Her hunger for revenge was so high that she did not want to forgive the people who had victimised her. For the first time in her life she had some relief when Vikram was with her but his brutal murder washed all her hopes away.

Even after death, in my future lives, I wouldn’t forget. My hunger for vengeance was so strong it woke me in the night. I used to try to sleep by thinking of Vickram’s face, hearing again the sweet words he said to me before the end, but I couldn’t. Images of my humiliation kept coming back, I could no longer see his face, and I would scream in horror. My body was one enormous wound, I was already dead, and I couldn’t halt as I walked and walked, trying to make headway, trying to get home. (Phoolan: 387)

Phoolan ultimately took her revenge on the Thakurs. They were the people who had raped her for several days at the Behami village. She had never forgotten that scar as her pride was crushed by these men. She had decided to treat them with equal or even worse brutality. She kicked them, between their legs. She wanted to destroy their penis as, according to her that was representing their power. She accepts:

I gave vent to my anger that afternoon on the men that had shielded them. They were the same ones who had left me naked and defenseless; they had watched me being tortured without lifting a finger. I was boiling with rage. I needed to make them suffer what I had been made to suffer. I beat them between their legs with my rifle butt. I wanted to destroy the serpent that represented their power over me. . . I crushed, burned and impaled! And then I laughed to see them leap like castrated horses and fall at my
feet and cry like women, begging and pleading for mercy, as I had. (Phoolan: 396)

Phoolan, after taking her revenge, was not in a position to take the pressure from the police. She wanted to surrender, but her teammates were not ready. Phoolan was forcing them to surrender which shows that she had become weak. May be taking revenge was her only aim after Vikram's death. She was somewhat aimless, and confused, and exhausted all at the same time. She did not want to fight anymore. And thus, she decided to surrender. She recalls:

I was going insane. ‘I’ve had enough!’ I said to Man Singh. ‘I’m going to shoot myself!’ ‘Remember what you said: if we have to die let’s take some of them with us at least.’ Forgetting we were cornered like rats, I fell asleep from exhaustion. I was sound asleep, and in my sleep I heard a little girl’s voice . . . *Take off your shoes and go around behind the mosque*. There’s a house there, in ruins. Hide in there! I woke with a start. The house where we were hiding was near a mosque. I had seen it during the day, but the street that led to it was filled with heaps of rubble from the explosions. We would have to crawl over the debris of the bombarded houses to reach it. I woke the others. ‘Baladin, Man Singh, let’s go! Leave your boots here.’ ‘What’s happened to you? The police are everywhere. Listen, you can hear them talking on the terraces.’ ‘We’re moving,’ I said. ‘We’re going to hide over there behind the mosque.’ We had barely stood up to leave the room when we had to drop on our bellies to the ground in the yard. (Phoolan: 429)
Puttilal was the one who had stolen childhood from Phoolan. He had assaulted her like anything. She was just 11 when he tried to use his husbandly powers over her. She was totally under the shock with his awful behaviour. She had never forgotten how he had forced her to have sex with him. When she was not able to do so, he had tried to cut her vagina with a knife. She was a little child who had faced this nightmare. When she became a queen of dacoits, the first thing she wanted to do was to make Puttilal suffer the way he had made her so. She writes how with the help of Vikram and his men, she was able to take her revenge:

The men had tied his hands behind his back, as he had once done to me. The little whore remembered everything he had done now: what he had tried to do with his knife, how he had molested me and raped me, how he had put his serpent in my hand, in my mouth. And how he had struck me when I screamed with fear, how he had crushed me with his fat body when I tried to get away. . . I did it to him now. For the first time, I beat someone the way they had beaten me. I had the power. All the men were behind me, cheering me on. I beat him harder and harder, driven half mad to be able finally to quench my thirst for vengeance! The crop made from a neem branch wasn’t as vicious as a lathi, but it tore his clothes and seared his skin, leaving long red weals. I flailed at the serpent that had made me so afraid. I whipped it until it died. ‘Are you going to do that again?’ I shrieked at him. I crushed his serpent. I stabbed him in the crotch with the stick the way he had tried to stab me and I jumped on his serpent and crushed it!

(Phoolan: 279)

Phoolan, all her life, had faced anumber of unfortunate incidents, that she had almost lost all the womanly tenderness. The male dominated society
as only responsible for her plight. She had very strong feeling of halted for all the men except a couple of her close ones. She was the victim of patriarchal set-up, where women were treated only as a thing of pleasure. She had become so much bitter, she says:

As we left Maheshpur, I swore to myself I would do the same thing to all the bastards like him. I would crush them! Otherwise there was no justice for girls like me. The only thing to do with men like that was to crush their serpents, so that they could never use them again! That would be my justice! (Phoolan: 282)

The self-image, thus, projected by Madeline Slade in *The Spirit’s Pilgrimage* is of consciousness unlike the self-image of confidence and determination in Gandhi’s *My Experiments with Truth*. She is conscious of her role as a woman in the male dominated society and constantly tries to project an acceptable self. The ashram life was really tough for her as she had never lived a communal life before. She overcame the aversion for it because of her devotion to Bapu. She disciplined herself so completely that she actually believed that she liked the simple ashram life. All the time she was conscious of Bapu watching her closely. Whatever Ms. Slade did, she was anxious to please Bapu. She feels dissatisfied and disappointed for not having been able to satisfy Bapu completely: As she asks:

What am I, where am I? To what has my life led?” As I contemplated the past I realized clearly how I had always been something suppressed that caused tension which Bapu noticed and against which he had warned me time and again. I realized too that the ceaseless activity of the past ten years, though an outlet, had yet left me with an unfulfilled feeling. I felt overwhelmed with a blinding melancholy, and for several months did not write another word.

(Slade: 315)
As reflected in *My Experiments with Truth*, the guiding aspiration of Gandhi’s life was Moksha – the deliverance from the cycle of rebirths. Moksha, he knows, is possible only through self-realization and communion with God. His method is to worship Truth and serve humanity. This clarity is found lacking in Madeline Slade’s *The Spirit’s Pilgrimage*. She depends completely on Gandhi for guidance and after his death, waits for God’s guidance:

> All these years since Bapu’s departure I had been intensely active outwardly, but deep down inside it had been a period of suspension, a kind of hibernation. Now the inner being had begun to stir. ‘Whatever it is,’ I said to myself, ‘God’s guidance will come.

(Blade: 314)

Coming to Madeline Slade’s language and style, like Vijayalakshmi Pandit, she shows a preference for modal structures such as ‘might have been’ ‘could have been’ indicating uncertainly. Besides this, like the other female autobiographers, Ms. Slade makes an extensive use of the adjectives such as; ‘lovely’, ‘charming’, ‘sweet’, ‘cute’ etc.

Thus the investigator observes that the autobiographies by the above mentioned autobiographers are somewhat, discontinued, irregular, emotional and confused. For example, Bhutto starts writing from her father’s death, whereas Mead starts from the age of sixteen. Phoolan does not refrain from displaying her intense feelings of hatred towards men around her. She openly talks about revenge in her autobiography. And Slade seems little confused and unsure of what she wanted and how she could get it. They all except Mead, at some point or the other suffer from the lack of confidence. Though they do not let anybody know it.