CHAPTER - I

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Writing the self, Autobiography, and writing the other, biography, are identified as two forms describing illustrious lives. Between them writing the other is older and it is found in historical and literary discourses. Homer and Vyasa in their epics give biographical sketches of heroic and virtuous men. Ovid in his METAMORPHOSIS describes great warriors who fought in the Trojan war. In English literature there are poets like Chaucer, Dryden, Pope who have given amusing, satirical but true accounts of men of their times. On the other hand Autobiography as a form is a later development but is more literal and more authentic than biographies. The Indian autobiography is not even a century old and the Indian Muslim autobiographies are not even 50 years old. In view of its short history not much perfection can be expected of them and the primary objective of this thesis is not an aesthetic appraisal but their significance as documentary evidence for arriving at the correct picture of a nation’s history.

Carlyle says that if you want “To interest your readers.... there is nothing like unveilig yourself.”01. This remark indicates the widespread interest of readers in an autobiography. Today, "responding to the popularity of biography and autobiography, many magazines and newspapers regularly feature short sketches of people in the news. Full length biographies and autobiographies continue to be written and widely read."02. It may therefore be inferred that “Biography next to fiction is the kind of reading most people now like best”03.
But, in spite of this popularity, the autobiography has not received the critical attention which it really deserves. As Abbs put it, "While the autobiographies have been long written and read by vast audiences, their study is still badly neglected..... until about 1960, there had been in Britain virtually no significant appraisal of the actual nature of autobiography."04 In India surprisingly though a number of autobiographies have come out in English, "no attempt has been made so far to of examine these Indo-Anglian autobiographies."05 Among the Indian English autobiographies that have received some sort of critical attention are the autos of Chadhuri, Gandhi, Nehru, Kamala Das and Nayantara Sahgal.

Autobiography as a literary genre has begun to receive a great deal of critical attention only in the recent past. Its importance as a valuable means of self-examination, self-creation and self-regeneration is being recognised now. Autobiography, indeed, provides a tremendous scope for self-evolution. It furnishes us with models and mirrors that can help us to accept, celebrate, and transform our lives as individuals and as participants in the cyclical drama of historical evolution. The term "auto-biography" was first used, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, by Robert Southey 1809. Semantically, "Auto" means `self`, `bios` means `life` and `graphe` means the `act of writing.` It is literally a person's recording of his own life through introspection and analysis. By reflecting and interpreting, the writer tries to create a meaningful pattern out of his varied past experience. Broadly speaking, `autobiography` presupposes that an individual possesses a unique identity; the development of his self is projected as
occurring in time; the narrative is in chronological order and is a factual, retrospective account of the writer's life.

Autobiography comes into being when the individual becomes conscious of his 'self'-the subjective, thinking and feeling entity distinguished from everything objective / external. This 'self', the 'I' as it becomes consciously aware of its own existence, 'shapes and determines the nature of autobiography and in so doing half – discovers, half – creates self. The word 'self' can be subjected to various levels of interpretation and the nature of the autobiographical writing depends to a great extent on how one defines it. Autobiography is an 'unfolding of the Master spirit and its growth'. It is an unfinished work. In Autobiographies the focus is primarily on the self rather than on the outward events. The exterior self holds but the second place in attention. It is reckoned as a significant literary form of all times.

Autobiographies can be confessional, apologetic, exploratory or egocentric. An autobiography, the self written story of a person's life usually is better organised account of one's life than is a diary or journal. Autobiographies also often reveal a person's innermost thoughts.

In the broadest sense, any self-written account of one's self and times may be thought of as autobiographical, but autobiography as a literary genre, stands apart from certain related forms, notably the personal essay, the diary, the travel journal and autobiographical novel. "It must, obviously, be composed by the subject himself, not ghost written by professional biography". It must attempt to survey in a retrospective mood, a considerable portion of life, if not an entire life.
and it must take the form of an ordered narrative with deliberate selection and shaping of material to form an artistic whole. As Naik puts it “An autobiography in its simplest definition is the story of one’s life written by one self”. The desire for self expression has been universal and so it is found since the beginning of the human race. The popular saying that every artist writes his own autobiography appropriately suggests the autobiographical element in all literature for, self-revelation has been the chief motive among all artists. It is this autobiographical element that often forms the centre of interest to the reader. As Naik says: “Autobiography is a work entirely devoted for the purpose of revealing the inner self or the personality of the individual writer.”

In other words, in an autobiography the author writes the story of his own life and achievements. It obviously must suffer from one congenital defect, it can never be completed, for it must always come to an end before the death of the writer.

Dr. Johnson preferred ‘auto’ to ‘bio’. The writer of his own life has at least the first qualification of historian, the knowledge of the truth; and though it may be plausibly objected that his temptations to disguise it are equal to his opportunities of knowing it. In the words of Longfellow, an autobiography is a product of first hand experience, biography, of second hand knowledge. But Stevenson, a subjective writer, who did not live to tell his own story, said, “There is no truer sort of writing than what is to be found in autobiographies and certainly none more entertaining”.

In his essay, “Autobiography and Historical Consciousness,” Karl J Weintraub argues that autobiographies as a genre developed to its full potential
only when Western man acquired a thoroughly historical understanding of existence. When viewed as a process of "unfolding" and "self-improvement", life is narrated only in relation to the outside world. In other words, the writer interprets the evolution of the 'self' in its interaction with the world. The subject of autobiographical writing then becomes, as Mutlu Konuk Blasing points out, "the self becoming conscious of itself in and as history".

Self-examination enables the writer to seek an essence beyond temporal existence and thereby transcend historical circumstances. The act of writing one's life involves a detachment, a "standing apart" or "standing behind" the flux of narrated experiences. In his role as an observer, by taking the stand of the "observing self", the autobiographer steps out of history. The autobiographical mode being temporal enables him to narrate his personal history. But the narrative itself turns out to be an attempt to transcend personal history-rootedness in the temporal to gain a sense of timelessness. By talking about his life, by recollecting and ordering his experiences, the autobiographer simultaneously asserts the presence of the "SELF" that takes note of the life – process but is itself beyond the temporal. Indeed to see the system whole, one would have to be outside the system.

Autobiographical writings can take various forms like diaries, letters and journals. While the diary is an intimate record of an individual's personal history and "affirms the inner reality of the writer (Beauchamp 40), the "letter" concerns itself with a larger social context as it involves relationship between two individuals. The day-to-day entries in a diary try to "catch the calms and tempests
of a life, to see the stories it tells as they develop or disappear, to see the patterns and images it evokes and sometimes repeats. Like the diary, the journal too is a record of events performed, happening or recurring everyday. The writer is concerned with the thought process and the mind's immediate reaction to the outside world. In scope it extends beyond the personal confines of the diary to relate the self to a larger context. One might say that the canvas of the journal is larger than the diary as it tries to liberate the narrated self form personal confines in order to relate itself to the world—at-large. This makes the journal form impersonal while the diary is not.

The journal is closer to lived experiences as mental states are recorded as they occur. Thus while the autobiographer tries to interpret life in totality, the journal writer presents the fragments that go to makeup the whole. George Gusdorf in his essay “Conditions and limits of Autobiography” points out in this connection:

“The author of a private journal, noting his impressions and mental states from day to day, fixes the portrait of his daily reality without any concern for continuity. Autobiography, on the otherhand, requires a man to take a distance with regard to himself in order to reconstitute himself in the focus of his special unity and identity across time”11

The journal is thus episodic and fragmented in structure as no attempt is made, as in Autobiography, to select and organise events and experiences in terms of unified vision or fixed perspective. “The journal concentrates largely on the interior life of the writer, often excluding events outside the reveries or meditations of the author's memory and imagination. In some instances, ‘all the
related forms of diary, journal, memoir and autobiography may be welded together to achieve a particularly thorough review of one's life or portion of it.¹²

While the autobiographer reviews life, the journal writer presents life. The writer of a journal being closer to the events and experiences with regard to duration, can present them with greater accuracy.

`Bio' and `auto' though closely related, are basically different. A `bio' is the life – story of a person written by another person, while an auto is written by the author himself. As Naik has pointed out "Autobiography is not just one of the aspects of bio, as is generally supposed. On the contrary it is an independent and different form of art"¹³. Bio can be seen as a branch of history since it depends on a selective ordering and interpretation of material, written and oral, established through research and personal recollection. Goetz says. ...... "It can also be seen a branch of imaginative literature in that it seeks to convey a sense of individuality and significance of the subject through creative sympathetic insight."¹⁴.

Like other literary forms, autobiography has its history. "It is a creation of European civilization, and really begins with Augustine. There are numerous autobiographical statements in classical Greek and Roman literatures."¹⁵. There remains no doubt that autobiography is essentially European but has migrated to other cultures. Indians too adopted the form and writers like Chaudhuri, Gandhi, Nehru, Sahgal and Kamala Das etc., for instance, wrote autobiographies.

Augustine's Confessions is a work of decisive significance. It arose from the Christian concern for the soul. The book is truly autobiographical since it could
have been written only by the man engaged. "Many of the events are such that only he would know them, certainly the feelings involved are purely private." His primary purpose was to write a testimony to God, and his book has remained a manual of devotion. The reader does not merely take in historical facts, but participates in an integrated succession of experiences. In this, first example autobiography appears as an art.

Another remarkable autobiography written in the Middle Ages is Abelard's "History of my Calamities." He wrote the account of his misfortunes and how he had borne them in order to strengthen a friend in distress, and this accounts perhaps for the precision.

Suso's Life of the Servant is one of the best medieval religious autobiographies. It is written as devotional work, but it remains consciously instructional and never becomes confessional in the subjective sense. The simplicity of Suso's faith and the single-mindedness of his instructional purpose, which made his work so important a book of devotion, limits its value as an autobiography. We do not come across many autobiographic works in the Middle Ages.

Petrach's Letters to Posterity (1351) opens with words which, reflecting something of Seneca and Cicero, express a new direction of interest and self-confidence. Posterity, he begins, "perchance will want to know what manner of man I was, and how my writings fared." There is no searching of soul here, no confession. He calmly delineates his character, his concern for spiritual matters, his gratefulness for friendship, his need to be free of worldly concerns, his
Christian – Stoic philosophy. "Petrarch's short account is not a true autobiography. He was too intent on displaying himself as a type in an ideal form, too concerned with generalities."

It was not till the sixteenth century that Petrarch's attitude was fulfilled in autobiography. Till then, autobiographies other than religious remain rather bare in statement and limited to a particular theme. In the same century Celline writes his autobiography of major quality. He is supremely confident of his greatness as an artist, and in part his purpose is to tell us the story of his works.

"All men of whatsoever quality they be, who have done anything of excellence, or which may properly resemble excellence, ought, if they are persons of truth and honesty, to describe their life with their own hand...". Celline, a typical product of the Renaissance, speaks with exceptional clairvoyance and the generations succeeding him have not disregarded his appeal. His imaginativeness as well as his inveterate vanity often obstruct 'truth', but it is the frankest of accounts, for if he deludes us, he deludes himself as much. The life of this gifted and impulsive man in sixteenth-century Italy and France is fascinatingly eventful, full of accident, and his account had necessarily to be different from Augustine's distillation of a few events heavy with significances. Nor is he general and analytic like Petrarch. Yet he is not broadly discursive like a chronicler. He writes a continuous and dramatic narrative, the incidents of which are held together and linked by the feelings, imaginings, mental responses of a consistent and marked personality. It comes near to the novel, one might say,
the Spanish Picaresque novel. How vividly do we see him and his friends in the anecdote which tells of his return to Florence after the plague:

"I arrived at Florence, expecting to find my good old father. When I knocked at the door, a scraggy hunchbacked old woman looked out of the window and began screaming insults at me, telling me to go away and saying that the sight of me made her sick. "Good God", I shouted back, "you twisted old cripple, is there no one else in the house besides you?"

"No, damn you, there is n't."

..... Hearing all the uproar a neighbor came out, and she told me that my father and every one in the house had died of the plague. As I had partly guessed this already I was less upset than I would have been"19.

The seventeenth century is not a great age of autobiographies. It is a great age of memoirists and diarists – Cardinal de Retz, Saint Evremond, Evelyn, Pepys – but not of autobiographers. By far the most interesting are the religious autobiographies but they cannot be compared in quality with Teresa's Life 20. These religious autobiographies, themselves part of a long tradition, brought in their train countless others in the eighteenth century, particularly of Protestant pietists. Germany has a whole series of them, from A H Francke to Hamann, and some remain case histories of remarkable interest. But all these authors, brooding on sin and salvation, fail to see clearly either the outer world or themselves as persons. These pietistic autobiographies, in their attention to the slightest shades of religious feeling illustrate a trend to give a new importance to the details of
personal life, and there is evidence of the same trend in the secular autobiography.

We may recognise the later part of eighteenth century and the early nineteenth as an "age" of great autobiography, because a large number of great autobiographies were written. One thinks primarily of Rousseau, Goethe and Wordsworth, amongst the many significant autobiographers. "All these were men inwardly turned, deeply concerned with their sensibility and imagination."21

Rousseau added a new dimension to the genre of autobiography. His 'Confessions' becomes not only an account of things done or known, an exposition of a personality, but a search for the true self, and a means to come to terms with it. Several motives can be detected behind Rousseau's 'Confessions'. First and foremost is his own opening proclamation of the complex uniqueness of his personality.

"I desire to set before my fellows the likeness of a man in all the truth of nature and that man myself. Myself alone: I know the feelings of my heart, and I know men. I am not made like any of those I have seen; I venture to believe that I am not made like any of those who are in existence. If I am not better, at least I am different."22

But Rousseau immediately slips over to a statement of a further motive, that of self-justification:
"I have told the good and the bad with equal frankness. I have shown myself as I was, mean and contemptible, good, high-minded and sublime, according as I was one or the other"23.

The book is then an apologia in the most general sense. Several times Rousseau insists that it is not an apology in the narrower sense, but a self-defence against the charges of his contemporaries. At the beginning of Book VII, when his trials come thick upon him, and he has to speak of "misfortunes, treachery and perfidy," he writers: "I have no fear that the reader, forgetting that I am writing my Confessions will ever imagine that I am writing my Apoligia"24. The Confessions are among other things, a self-defence and counter-accusation25. His Confessions take the place of the confessional. His work is therefore linked with the religious autobiography, with Augustine but with the significant difference that Rousseau speaks not of sins against God, but primarily of sins against his own self. It is this general insight into the nature of the personality, and not simply the accompanying brilliant psychological observations, that make this work the opening of a new era in autobiography.

Narrower in psychological and social range than the Confessions, The Prelude is like the earlier work in that Wordsworth's life and values return to their starting point in nature and innocence26. Like Rousseau and undoubtedly following Rousseau – Wordsworth asserts the supremacy of private experience. He asserts:

"I made no vows, but vows
were then made for me"27.
Concern for this deeper self has here freed itself from vanity, or any suspicion of vanity, because Wordworth feels it is nothing of his doing, it is there unasked and undeserved, and he is only its trustee. We participate in as well as observe the moments of vision – as in the passage at the end of Book XII, when in the boy, parted from his guide and in terror, the scene condenses in such a vision.

"Then, reascending the bare common, saw
A naked pool that lay beneath the hills,
The beacon on the summit, and more near,
A girl, who bore a pitcher on her head,
And seemed with difficult steps to force her way
Against the blowing wind"28.

This awed veneration for something within that invests an experience with significance goes beyond Rousseau’s tenderness for himself; it is indeed plain and severe than indulgent. Wordsworth discovers that something within him selectively and mysteriously creates values out of his experience and thus builds out of his life a myth, the telling of which is the purpose of his autobiography. “Wordsworth is the first autobiographer to realise that each man constructs out of his world a unique framework of meaningful events, and that the deepest purpose of autobiography is the account of a life as a projection of the real self on the world”30. Wordsworth’s account of his “education” – in boyhood, at Cambridge, in France and London – is more coherent than Rousseau’s. He speaks of the development of maturity, not a return to childhood. The Prelude is a landmark as a history of a soul’s growth, and as an exposition of the shaping of life by the soul.
Goethe's 'Poetry and Truth is far broader – more factual than the autobiographies of Rousseau and Wordsworth. And here is no question of a return, in circular or spiral form, but of an irregular moving expansion, the ultimate end of which cannot be defined.

If the possibility of autobiography were to rest on a fairly clear conception of the self, on knowing the self, Goethe's sporadic efforts to continue Poetry and Truth must have been frustrated by this never-ending development in himself, and by his own scepticism concerning the possibility of knowing oneself:

"I must confess that I have always been suspicious of that great and so fine-sounding task, 'Know Thyself', as something of a stratagem of a secret conspiracy of priests who wanted to confuse men by making unrealizable demands of them, and to seduce them from activity directed towards the outside world to an inward and false contemplativeness."²⁹

Goethe is not of course denying the work of man's attempts to know himself, it is the purely contemplative, introspective method of which he is sceptical. Being is for him becoming; one is never oneself, one becomes oneself. Through the impact of the outer world, through activity, what was hidden or non-existent comes into being, and then only to enter on further change, in which the writer of the autobiography as well as its hero is involved. Thus his book ends not with a state of rest, but to become something startlingly different from the younger man. The book is also, as a consequence, more descriptive and narrative than analytic – in fact may critics have complained of the lack of
psychological curiosity in it. For him the uniqueness of life is the outcome of the interplay between innate character and circumstances. In Poerty and Truth there is no quarrel with circumstances; nor is there room for remorse or self-accusation. The story of a man is therefore that of the inter-action of self and event in the changing world, of which the changing self is a part.

Autobiography in contemporary times has become an instrument for understanding life. Autobiography has become a conscious genre, in the sense that it serves a purpose all its own, of self-discovery and reconciliation with self. Modern Autobiography is borne up by a belief in man, in his inherent significance, and while it knows his limitations and faltering. In the nineteenth century, the Autobiography was both exploratory and self-confident. The inner self of the earlier religious autobiographies owed the justification of its worth to a common religious belief. The "self" is the object of devoted attention in the present. The most striking discovery is that a man is not a state of being but process of development, and that he can be known only in the story of his life. Another equally significant discovery is that of the complexity of the human psyche. One can claim that the modern novel's insight into the emotions, its recognition of the asymmetry of the human personality, owes much to the self-reporting of the Autobiography. Since the classical age of Autobiography, there have been developments in manner and technique, but relatively little enrichment in the conception of its central purpose and its scope. "Twentieth century is the age when mankind became aware of its own fragility..... The one thing which remained constant in a shifting world was the human personality"30.
There are two trends in modern Autobiography; the feeling of time lost and the consciousness that one's life is representative.

Here "time-lost" does not mean lost childhood or youth, which is so central a theme with Rousseau. Countless autobiographies set out to describe circumstances that are altogether vanished under the impact of the industrialization in the Western society. Along with this, awareness of the impact of historical change has come the realisation that the individual development is also a part of a general social process, that he is a focal point of historical forces. This in no sense reduces the uniqueness of the individual character and fate.

Many modern autobiographies have a purely sociological interest; many of them of course are very trivial. They are written from an inner necessity. The weight of experience is a burden that cannot be borne until it is composed in the autobiography. It is not a burden of guilt, as with Rousseau, but a burden of memories and experiences. Autobiography has become a significant and ubiquitous element of modern culture. All manners of people feel impelled to write their life - story.

Autobiography is of recent origin in India. The reason is obvious. The Indian, till he came into contact with the West, was too deeply engrossed in the other world to think of this one, look around him and record his reactions to what he saw, felt, or heard. Hardly anything is known of the life and history of the writers of the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Vedic hymns beyond their names. Gautama Buddha is the first great Indian of the past to emerge as a
distinct figure, but even his figure is not vivid. Little is known of the great Kalidasa. Even the edicts of Asoka reveal the great Emperor only incidentally.

The great travellers of India by land and by sea who crossed the Himalayas and the ocean and visited China, Persia, Asia Minor, Java, Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula, Siam and Indo-China, have not left a record of their travels like Megasthenes, Hiuen-Tsang or Fa-Hian. There are no diaries or memories left by the great preachers who carried Buddhism to Tibet, China and Japan or Hindu tenets to Java and Cambodia.

It is only with the Moguls that self-description starts in India. The Memoirs of Babar and of his great grandson Jahangir are the first self portrayals in India. However, Babar was a Mogol and Jahangir was only half Indian. They had inherited a tradition of poetry and self portrayal common among Muslim rulers, who indulged in this activity for various reasons.

The writing of memoirs, diaries, or autobiographies in the modern sense in India is a result of English Education. To be specific, Indian autobiography may be stated to owe its genesis to a spate of memoirs, reminiscences, and autobiographies which followed the first world war, though Tagore's autobiography was published in Bangali in 1911 itself. Mahatma Gandhi's autobiography, The Story of My Experiments with Truth, was published in 1927, but as a record of spiritual quest, it found no imitators. Sir Surendernath Banerje's autobiography, A Nation in the Making, published in 1925, attracted no notice because of his moderate political outlook. Indian English autobiography may be said to begin with Jawaharlal Nehru's autobiography published in 1936.
The first autobiographical writing in English by an Indian was that of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who, shortly before leaving for France in 1832 wrote a short sketch of his career at the request of an English friend. In 1834, Kasiprasad Ghose wrote a letter to an Englishman wherein he gave a brief account of his life.

The first full Indian English autobiography was written by Lutfullah in 1854 published in 1857 as Autobiography. Lal Bihari wrote his full length autobiography between 1873 & 1876 and called it Recollections. Maharishi Devendranath Tagore's Bengali autobiography, when translated into English in 1909, influenced Indian English autobiography considerably.

In The Reminiscences of a Retired Hindu Official (1905), A. Balkrishna Mudaliyar speaks more of Hindu Philosophy than of his own life and times. Lala Lajpat Rai, in The story of My Deportation (1908), and Shyam Sunder Chakraverty in Through Solitude and Sorrows (1910) dwelt chiefly on their political activities. Banga Chandra Roy's The Story of my Life (1913) is valuable not only as a personal record but also as a social and religious document. The publication of the English version of Tagore's autobiography in 1917 as Reminiscences is a landmark in the history of the Indian English autobiography, because it speaks about his creative career.

In My Conversion (1919) and Fifty years Pilgrimage of a Convert (1921), A.S. Appasamy Pillai tells the story of his life in which his conversion to the Christian faith is the central event. In Autobiography of an Indian Princess (1921) Sumity Devee shows her self as a dutiful daughter, a devoted wife, and a loving
mother. Maulana Mohamed Ali's My Life: A Fragment (1921 – 22) shows how a study of the holy Quran brought a change in his altitude to life and made him intensely religious.

Barinda kumar Ghose's The Tale of My Exile (1922) is a narrative of his harrowing prison experience. Kunal C. Sen's Through War, Rebellion and Riot (1922) is an account of his career as a soldier and as a Government official.

Dhan Gopal Mukerji’s Caste and Out caste (1923) was written under the influence of the Hindu revivalist movement and explains Hindu customs and rituals to a Western audience. Swami Ramdas, in In Quest of God (1923) and In the Vision of God (1935) records his intense yearning for the realisation of God and the course of his spiritual journey. Syed Wajid Ali’s Aligarh Memoirs and a Persian Boquet (1924) recalls his school and college days. Surendranath Banerjee’s A Nation in the Making appeared in 1925 and Mahatma Gandhi’s The story of my Experiments with Truth appeared in book form in 1927. Puram Sigh’s On Paths of Life is noted for its nostalgia for his childhood days.

Bipin Chandra Pal’s Memories of My Life and Times, Purohit Swami’s An Indian Monk and P.C. Ray’s Life and Experiences of a Bengali Chemist appeared in 1932—a politician, a man of God and a scientist respectively being the authors. In Revived Memories (1933) K. Subbarao writes of his struggles as a journalist. In How to Climb the Service Ladder (1933) Bhola Singh writes as an officer of the Indian Railways. India Calling (1934) in the life story of Cornelia Sorabji, the first woman lawyer of India.
Nehru’s *Autobiography* (1935), a landmark in the history of Indian English autobiography, is an authentic statement of his political creed. *In Looking Back* (1936), D.K. Karve writes how he had to make heroic efforts for his own education and later for the education of women. *My search for Truth* (1937) is a short sketch of the philosophical development of S. Radhakrishnan. Subhas Chandra Bose’s *An Indian Pilgrim* (1937) was written in ten days. *In Andamans: The Indian Bastille* (1939) is a hair raising description of the life B.K. Sinha and his associates in the Lahore conspiracy case were forced to live. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit’s *So I Became a Minister* (1939) is a collection of essays, addresses and radio talks, some of them are autobiographical.


Mulk Raj Anand’s *Apology for Heroism: A Brief Autobiography of Ideas*, Hem Chandra Mitra’s *My Reminiscences*, Chimanlal H. Setalvad’s *Recollections and Reflections* and Paramahamsa Yogananda’s *Autobiography of a Yogi* were published in 1946. Anand traces his development; Mitra writes of his life at the Bar; Setalvad covers various fields of public activity; and, Yogananda pays
homage to his guru. Nagendranath Gupta's Reflection and Reminiscences (1947) is remarkable for an enticing picture of his early days and for portraits of eminent persons. Gulab Singh's Thorns and Thistles: Autobiography of a Revolutionary (1948) is an account of his revolutionary activities and imprisonment. The first volume of Harindranath Chattopadhya's Life and Myself (1948) delineates the growth of his poetic sensibility. No subsequent volume was published.

Ajoy C. Dutt's Reminiscences was published in 1949. Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha wrote his Recollections and Reminiscences of a Long Life in installments in The Hindustan Review from July 1946 to 1949. At the Cross-Roads (1950) is the life history of Nripendra Chandra Banerji, the freedom fighter. All through the Gandhian Era (1950) is a simple narration of A.S. Iyengar's career as a journalist. Haider Imam's It so Happened (1950) is a book of travels and reminiscences. A City of Two Gateways (1950) by Savitri Devi Nanda is the life story of a highly sensitive girl from the Punjab.

Har Bilas Sarda's Recollections and Reminiscences (1951) tells about his travels and the people he met. Memoirs of My Working Life (1951) by M. Viswesvaraya is limited to the engineer's professional life. My Self and Rural Life (1951) by M. Chenna Subbarao highlights different aspects of rural life. Santha RamaRau's Gifts of Passage (1951) is a collection of autobiographical pieces written from time to time. Nirad C. Chaudhuri's Autobiography of an Unknown Indian (1951) is an unusual book about an unusual man. Hazari's An

Reminiscences and Experiments in Advocacy (1952) traces the life and career of K.N. Katju. It was practically republished in 1961 as The Days I Remember. Maharani: The Story of an Indian Princess (1955) by Brinda is the story of a sensitive, intelligent and rebellious princess. M.N. Roy's is Memoirs (1954) covers the ten most momentous years of this extraordinary revolutionary and is remarkable for its gallery of eminent Communists.

Nayantara Sahgal's Prison and Chocolate Cake (1954) tells the story of the childhood of this niece of Nehru's. Her From Fear Set Free (1961) tells the story of her love and marriage frankly. Both books provide an intimate picture of the Nehru family. Mirza Ismail's My Public Life (1954) draws heavily on his experience as Chief Minister of Mysore, Jaipur, and Hyderabad in succession. Man of Everest (1955) is the story of the life of Tenzing as narrated to James Willman.

Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, Sudhindranth Datta, Ved Mehta and Ram Gopal published their autobiographies in 1957. The Maulana's India Wins Freedom was written in English by Humayun Kabir and the Maulana went through it carefully. Datta's The World of Twilight is only seventy four pages long because he passed away before he could write more. Mehta's Face to Face tells how a visually disabled person could compete with sighted persons on equal terms by sheer courage and determination. Ram Gopal's Rhythms in the Heaven: An Autobiography portrays the life of a dancer.


Jogesh Chandra Chatterji’s In Search of Freedom (1967) narrates his activities as a revolutionary. In Different Saddles (1967) traces M.R.A. Baig’s career as an army officer and a diplomat. Three Decades of Indian Army Life (1967) by Sukhwant Singh is an ordinary military officer’s life story. The Untold Story (1967) by B.M. Kaul is an attempt to defend himself against the charges that his promotion was politically motivated and that he was responsible for the defeat of the Indian army during the India-China war of 1962.

In My Music, My Life (1968), Ravi Shakar, the famous sitarist, writes of his early years and his decision to devote his life to music. Sita Rathnamal’s Beyond the Jungle : A Tale of South India (1968) is the story of a tribal girl from the Nilgris. Dom Morae’s My Sons Father: An Autobiography (1968) is a frank narrative. So is Sasthi Brata’s My God Died Young (1968).

Of the numerous Indian English autobiographies, several are by Indian Muslims. The autobiographical urge of Indian Muslims merits special study. Despite the great achievement of India in integrating disparate communities into one body politic, the fact remains that Indian Muslims are a distinct section of
Indian society, with their distinct social and religious mores and ways of thinking. This has somehow led to some mistaken notions about Muslims. It is when Muslim autobiographies are studied that it will be seen that most Muslims were and are Indians first and Muslims next. So autobiographies by Indian Muslims constitute a distinct body of self-impression, particularly because of the fact that they reveal the enlightened Muslim attitude to questions like Hindu - Muslim unity, the stature of Jinnah and the creation of Pakistan. Hence this study.

The five Indian English Muslim autobiographies studied here have been selected on the principle of near contemporaneity of the writers. M.R.A. Baig, K.M. Hamied, M.C.Chagla, K.L. Gauba and K.A. Abbas, being more or less contemporaries, with perhaps Abbas a late-comer, offer separate view points on topics like the partition, Hindu-Muslim unity and Jinnah, but all of them offer only an Indian view point. At the same time, being Muslims, they are able to offer an insight into the fact that most Muslim minds were basically Indian minds. Most of them agree that separate electorates was a British trick, that Jinnah was located beyond his due by Hindu leaders and that patriotic Indian Muslims were not given a fair say in deciding the future of Muslims after Independence.

Maulna Mohamed Ali's My Life: A Fragment was not included because, as the sub-title states, it is only a fragment. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's India Wins Freedom: An Autobiographical Narrative was not included because its scope is rather limited. My own Boswell (1980) by M. Hidayatullah was considered and excluded because it reads more like a diary than like an autobiography and is extremely egotistical, even for a Memoirs, Persons, Passions and Politics (1980)
by Mohammed Yunus was also considered, but was rejected because it is more of a memoir than an autobiography.

Special mention must be made of *Wings of Fire: An Autobiography* (1999) By A. P.J. Abdul Kalam with the Arun Tiweri, which, though by Muslim, is not a Muslim autobiography at all, but an Indian autobiography. Moreover, it is an autobiography with a difference: the subject of this autobiography is not the scientists Kalam but the growth of Indian Science.

This thesis begins by tracing the development of English autobiography upto the end of the nineteenth century. Then it looks at the birth and growth of Indian English autobiography till the publication of one of the five autobiographies studied in detail. A brief survey of Indian English autobiography has been made.

After this introductory chapter five Indian English Muslim autobiographies are analysed in depth, each in one chapter. The text of each autobiography has been subjected to close scrutiny and the author's ideas on various issues have been distilled.

The final chapter of the thesis sums up the foregoing chapters, draws conclusions and offers suggestions for further research. A list of works cited in the thesis is appended to the thesis.