CHAPTER II

A STUDY OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY: THE QUEST FOR THE SELF

2.1. Introduction and Preliminaries

Autobiography, as a prose form of literature, has indeed become a popular genre amongst the common and critical readers for various reasons. The basic purpose of reading any prose form of literature is to view life and aspects of life in the story form. The stories elevate the reader’s attention towards life and aspects of living. Autobiography satisfies the legitimate curiosity of the reader. The fascination of peeping into the lives of other people is legitimately satisfied by literature in general. The private life, along with the person’s emotions, conflicts, attitudes and opinions, passions and prejudices, love and wealth issues are normally kept as a secret but the same is openly discussed in an autobiography. The curiosity grows wider and deeper when the subject of an autobiography is from a distinguished and notable background. The personal events, motifs, drives and intentions hidden behind the lives of the autobiographers become a point of intense interest. Autobiographies offer unparalleled insights into the modes of consciousness of other men and women. In recent times autobiographies have become one of the most popular genres like fiction and imagination of the readers have been undermined by reality, facts and truth. Thus the personal stories have become more interesting, complex and subtle and the reader prefers to read them more than fiction. George May defines that autobiography is neither a genre, nor a form, nor a style, nor even a language but a literary attitude.” (May, 1979:320) Another very close meaning of the genre is found in Jerome Buckley speaks about autobiography as

“The ideal autobiography describes a voyage of self-discovery, a life journey confused by frequent misdirections and even crises of identity but reaching at last a sense of perspective and integration. It traces through the alert awakened memory and continuity from early childhood to maturity or even to old age….and as a work of literature it achieves a satisfying wholeness.” (Buckley, 1984: 921-922)
Paul de Man in an article on autobiography says, “Any book with a readable title page, the author declares himself the subject of his own writings.” (Man, 1955: 921-922) Autobiographies are identical in nature as most of the writings are specially titled by the writers mentioning its nature quite clearly. The title clarifies the writers’ intention on the onset and the reader gets the conformation that what he is going to read is not a fictional imaginative writing but a true story that has taken place in someone’s life. The story of autobiography not only involves the subject but the entire community, people, events and historical occasions around that subject. It does not remain the story of a singular subject but it touches all the aspects of society and sometimes touches all humanity in its course.

2.1.1. Historical Perspective: Birth and Growth of the Autobiography
Autobiographies are historically methodical yet they are the representation of the self as they intermediate with the world around them. An autobiography is also a consideration of the fact that the ‘self’ interplays with the philosophical assumptions with the outer world. It reconstructs the movements of life or a part of life, in the actual circumstances in which it was lived. Its center of interest lies in the self, not in the outside world. It differs from biography which is the historical account of the subject whereas autobiography is a self-portrayal which attributes the articulation of one’s own personality at a particular juncture of time which is also a choice of the self. It is the developments through a self-woven story rather than pin pointing the date and time. The historical assumption fails in autobiography because individual life is shaped by the events and incidents of the history yet the understanding of those events remains open for interpretation. Autobiographies record the past like a popular misconception that we cannot change our past. But everyone is constantly changing his own past, recalling it, and revisiting it.

2.1.2. Autobiography: A Literary Genre
The word ‘autobiography’ is derived from the Greek word auto-self, bio-life; graph-grapheme and hence to write an autobiography means a ‘written account of the person’s life by that person’. Autobiography is a self-story narrated by the self. The word ‘autobiography’ was not originated though the form of an autobiography had its evidences since the ancient times. William Taylor in 1797 in a disparaging manner in
the English Periodical, *The Monthly Review* referred to the word ‘autobiography’ as ‘hybrid’ and condemned it as ‘pedantic’. The credit of coining the conceptual new word goes to Robert Southey who was a prolific writer and commentator of his time. Southey introduced and popularized a number of words into the English language. The term *autobiography*, for example, was used by Robert Southey in 1809 in the Quarterly Review, he predicted an “epidemical rage for autobiography”, which indeed has continued to the present day. Robert Southey, (1774 –1843) was a romantic poet and poet laureate for three decades 1813 to 1843. Although his recognition has long been overshadowed by his contemporaries and friends S.T. Coleridge and William Wordsworth, Southey's contribution will be remembered for offering a new word for a genre which has been flourishing till the present date. The historical perspective of autobiography dates back to ancient times and its greatest exemplifier Augustine (A.D. 354–430) who used and made it famous. The title *Confessions* he gave to his autobiographical work remained as an example and mode of autobiography. It is the only form of literature where the writer speaks about himself or herself more directly. It is a Western mode of expression that belongs to the post-classical world of Europe where the stress is laid on the spiritual identity of the self. *Confession* (1782) is the name of an autobiographical work, consisting of 13 books, by St. Augustine of Hippo written in Latin between 397 and 400 AD. The work is significant in laying down the tradition of confessional cult of writing. Augustine confesses his sinful youth and his conversion to Christianity which is explicitly seen as the first model of Western autobiography and an influential work for Christian writers throughout the following millennium. Though it was not a complete autobiography, as it was written in his earlyforties and he lived long afterwards. It provides the complete record of his development of thought, theological work and his spiritual meditations and insights. This writing of an autobiography is the most complete record of any single person from the fourth and fifth centuries. In his words, “I wish to act in truth, making my confession both in my heart before you and in this book before the many who will read it.” In *Book X Chapter 1*, Augustine appears to defend his position by admitting his imperfections not only to his critics but to God, in a form of reconciliation. Augustus who was known as Scholastic Philosopher and pioneer of autobiography in
Medieval Europe wrote his autobiography clearly influenced by the traditions. His accounts of life up to the age of fifty four provide readers knowledge of his experiences with women, life, religion and the social milieu of contemporary times. His autobiography is studied today as a historical document to understand Western Europe and its culture, history, intellectual life of Paris, monastic life and his famous love story with a girl named Heloise. The seventeenth century includes noteworthy English autobiography of John Bunyan’s *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666)

Augustine’s autobiography *Confessions* (1782) is reminder of echoing the muses from Greek epic in ancient times in Greek Mythology. St Augustine’s unique and path breaking autobiography is recorded as a unique work of literature in the development of the genre. His autobiography opens its narrative with his address to God which evokes the radical idea of Greek tradition but sidelines the tragic hero’s monologue with God. His confessions become more human than divine when he asserts that his sins neither unheeded nor destined his life. He offers himself to the Gods to write and confesses the sins and evaluates them objectively. Jean Jacques Rousseau’s autobiography *The Confessions* (1782) inspired by St Augustine’s autobiography was a distinct and notable work as an autobiography. Unlike Augustine, Rousseau’s autobiography was focused more on his personal feelings and worldly experiences in contrast to religious experiences and godly meditations.

“I have entered upon a performance which is without example, whose accomplishment will have no imitator. I mean to present my fellow-mortals with a man in all the integrity of nature; and this man shall be myself.” (Rousseau, 1782:12)

*The Confessions* is also notable for details about humiliations and shameful incidents. His example was followed by many writers such as Thomas De Quincy, William Wordsworth and Goethe in romantic period. The autobiography of Rousseau was a milestone in many aspects yet it has been noticed that there are many ‘inaccuracies’ found by Rousseau scholars. James Onley puts it in this way,

“Jacques Derrida referred to Rousseau as an autobiographer in *On Grammatology* with impossibility of an unified autobiographical “I” and
problematized this understanding with the introduction of new space in which the autobiography operates, Derrida points – once the life and work become difficult to separate and the status of empirical facts as they apply to the author’s life or his corpus, his work is thrown into question, then the autobiographical account also has to be ‘redistributed’ or ‘restructured’.” (Onley, 1980: 3)

His *Confessions* was published posthumously between 1782 and 1789. As an autobiographer Rousseau’s representation of his self is not just of his religious self but the epic analysis about himself insisting that nothing is too shameful and it is an integral part of his ‘developed being’.

The Autobiography of Benevento Cellini (1563 translated by John Addington Symonds) was also a remarkable work in the Renaissance period. The accounts of his love affairs and passionate moments are elaborated in a very swift and lucid style. His supernatural witchcraft, encountering devils and his being poisoned twice all accounts lead or mislead sometimes running into extravagances which are impossible to acclaim.

In the Eighteenth century autobiography *Memoirs of My Life and Writings* (1796) is an autobiography of historian Edward Gibbon whose works were compiled by his friend Lord Sheffield. His editing and work has been appreciated by some and condemned by a few for over aggression. Gibbon’s work is considered as one the first autobiographies in the modern sense of the term and English literary cannon. *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (1793) is the traditional name for the incomplete work of the experiences of Benjamin Franklin from 1771 to 1790 which Franklin called as ‘memoire’ and his autobiography is considered as one of the most influential examples of this genre. Franklin's is one of the greatest autobiographies in literature, and towers over other autobiographies as Franklin towered over other men. *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (1793) also became the first full-length recorded book in the history.

It is necessary to distinguish autobiography from other literary forms which have close resemblance with autobiographical contents. There are other forms of literature which are likely to be confused with the similarity of autobiography. Writers often refer to their life experiences indiscriminatingly as autobiographical memoir or diary writing. But comparing them with autobiography certainly reflects traits distinctly as self-
portrayal and mode of individual presentation. Diary writing and writing journals or letters do not rise up to the level of art and it becomes tedious account of personal affairs. Autobiography is close to some forms of literature which may have lots of similarities. Apologia which means in Latin as ‘a defense of his life’ was a typical professing to be self-defending and justifying rather than self-documentation. Henry Newman in his autobiography Apologia Pro Vita Sua (1864) wrote with reference to this tradition. In that book he defended his religious opinions from Roman Catholics and Charles Kingsley. The work went on to become very popular in his times and earned him enormous fame and authority as “an exponent of Catholicism. The defending and self-praising actions of a Jewish rebel and devotee Flavius Josephus published his autobiography Josephi Vita. (Life)

2.1.3 Autobiography and Memoir

Memoir is a French word that connotes ‘memoir’ or memory. Memoir is similar to autobiography. Memoir is a literary genre historical subcategory of autobiography as both are written in first person narration. An autobiography focuses on entire life. It has clear beginning that has been progressed chronically to the end. The factual and specific dates and events make it a historical document as far as the personal story of the narrator is concerned. On the other hand memoir tells a story from a life. It is focused on some of the touchstone events that turned or molded the narrator’s life. The events which are important for him forms the basic subject of the memoir. It is less formal. It can open with any event and jump on any event without any formality. It is free from place, chronology and formality. Therefore it is more personal and emotional than autobiography. In Palimpsest (1995), the memoir of Gore Vidal says that a memoir is how one remembers one's own life, while an autobiography is history, requiring research, dates, facts double-checked. The distinct feature of an autobiography is its first person narrative. The speaker is the protagonist and he is the story teller of his own tale. As a literary piece of prose, there is hardly a writer who does not have the stamp of his personal experiences over his work of art and writings. The autobiographer while writing an autobiography proclaims in the title itself and makes the reader aware about the piece of writing is as autobiographical. The author’s
declaration ‘an Autobiography of so and so’ is a common practice given in the titles. This is the clear specification that makes autobiography as a distinct form of literature. Autobiographies are generally written by eminent people, achievers in life or people of high esteem and popularity. But there are occasions where ordinary people share the extraordinary plights of their lives. Autobiographers are the people who have extraordinary drives and sense of uncommon achievements. These self possessed people have different outlook and experiences and that’s why they stand different from their ranks and positions of the class. It makes them different from their counterparts and that is why they cannot be called as the representatives of their class.

2.1.4. Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Autobiographies
Prominent autobiographies published in Eighteenth century in English literature are of Edwards Gibbon and Benjamin Franklin. They followed the Romantic trend of expression which gave importance to individualism and the role of the self-mingled naturalist was evident. The echo of Jean Jacques Rousseau’s Confessions was reflected clearly in them. The protagonist’s emotions and giving it a fashionable form was very typically romantic. The Life of Henry Brulard (1890) and Memories of an Egoist (1892) are the notable autobiographies of Stendhal in this period. William Hazlitt’s Liber Amoris published in 1823 portrays painful experiences and agonies of his love affair. Eighteenth century saw a sudden rise of education, cheap printing and popularity. That resulted into encashing cheap autobiographies in the public. It became a trend and expectation that those in the public eye must write about themselves. Anthony Trollope (writer), Henry Brooks Adams (politician), John Stuart Mill (philosopher), Cardinal Newman (churchman), P. T. Barnum (entrepreneur) wrote their autobiographies in a romantic manner with the aspects of childhood, upbringing and emotional incidents of life.

2.1.5. Twentieth and Twenty First Century Autobiographies
The twentieth century was marked with scandalous and fame greedy autobiographies by so called libertines who indulged in titillation. The pseudonymous of famous personalities, athletes, super models are leveraged to encash the cheap popularity. Film stars and politicians made hot and fast money and autobiographies became a good mode of income. The manipulated truth, the personal secrets, the exposing
sexual matters became a trend in autobiographies and the genre started losing its fidelity. Ghost writers also became so called autobiographers as a common practice and published sensational materials with false stories and melodramatic manner to sensationalize celebrities’ life. Naomi Campbell a supermodel admitted that she had not read her own autobiography and James Frey had been publically humiliated for writing false stories in his autobiography, *A Million Little Pieces.* (2003)


Autobiographical literature is characteristic particularly in the Western civilization and upper class of society. As a result of the rise of bourgeoisie as dominant class and the concepts of personal and individual spirit gave boost to personal writings. The genre explicitly by and large is masculine and middleclass in its nature. The Western impact is seen in the content and treatment of the genre. The business tycoons like Ratan Tata, Bill Gates, Nasli Wadia, Warren Buffe, Shantanurao Kirloskar are some of example of this class. The film actors, advertising people, sports stars, politicians, entertainers, government officials, army personnel and other successful people have written their autobiographies recently. This shows that autobiography seems to be a general genre available to all sections of society.
2.1.6. The Role of Memory in Autobiography

While attempting an autobiography, psychological and cognitive faculty comes into play such as memory. Psychological memory is the process in which information is programmed, deposited, and retrieved. Encoding allows information from the outside world to reach the five senses in the forms of chemical and physical stimuli. The conscious and subconscious past which is recollected in the present memory is rooted through and shaped by present consciousness. The ‘past’ was unconscious about the future which is now a ‘present’ and is ready for the presentation of the self in the present form and conditions. The memory is unified one and gets along with the time needs to be separated and divided into incidents and events or turning points. Memory needs to be selected for the purpose of the writings.

The memory stored in the retrievable form and its reproduction and expression after a gap of time is an area of questioning in the autobiographical discourse. Autobiographical memory in the literary expression is the aspect of memory that is concerned with the recollection of personally experienced past events and experiences. The memory needs to be cultivated creatively for its expressions. The memory and the selection of the incident all depend upon the writer and his purpose. The story which has already formed a certain direction is supplemented with memory for expressions. The creative force needs to more prominently in writing an autobiography than memory and its implications.

Autobiography is not just the use and utilization of memory but it is an aesthetic and an artistic representation and reproduction of the same. The writer after fulfilling his aim in life or reaching at vertical point in his life collects the memorable incidents and intertwines those with the main theme of his writing. The question of truth or scientific truth is a problematized area in the autobiographical discourse. There is no doubt, then, that autobiography as a work of literature can contain true statements and false ones. But it is not illogical to ask, what do they want to prove? Literature is not astronomy or geography or history or any branch of knowledge, particular or general which is based on truth. Though ‘truth’ in other literary form is less important than its aesthetic value but in autobiography truth is the most important factor. In an autobiography the story is believed to be true and the autobiographer has the
responsibility to speak aesthetically but nothing except the truth. Truth is the foundation of the autobiography. Both the reader and the writer are in an agreement that they are sharing nothing less than hundred percent truth.

2.1.7. Truth in Autobiography

Autobiography is expected to sure the truth and nothing else. The reader naturally expects factual things in autobiography because the writing is expressed to share the “truth” of the narrator and his life. The title ‘autobiography’ over a particular book makes the correspondence with the reader about truthfulness of the story and real characters. A fiction can take artistic liberty and make use of imagination in deliberating the truth. In fiction greater the imagination lesser truth it expels. The autobiographical truth or the truth expressed in the autobiography becomes a developing content in a complex process of self-discovery, self-portrayal and self-creation. The argument can be traced further that autobiographical truth is not permanent but a moulding content in a process of self-evolution and self-discovery. The self is at the center of all autobiographies and necessarily fictive but it needs to be grounded in reality. The autobiographical force or expression is simply a unique form of spontaneous realization. From the developmental point of view, the autobiographical expression is a mode of self-invention and discovery always practiced first in life and eventually, and occasionally, in writing an autobiography. Autobiography as a genre is referred with time and personal history because it is a self-history and self-created story. The purpose of the writing is to present the truth from subjective experiences which are surrounded by the history. This practice of self-discovery is undertaken by persons of words and self-indulgent among the literary persons. The truth presented in the form of expression cannot be one’s personal truth but it may be the cultural truth or truth of that time. Self-evaluation with microscopic insight is expected from the writer.

Augustine’s autobiography Confessions (1782) is counted as a path making in the genre of autobiography which begins with his appeal to Almighty. It resembles the calling of the muses from the Greek epics. Augustine is credited for his truthfulness as he does not excuse himself from the past sins but explains them plainly and to the best of his memory, apparently does not falsify them.

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Autobiography as a genre has been the dominant and most popular form in literature of the twenty first century. It has become so critical to attend to the questions created by the autobiographical expression. It has now become the most important concern of theorists across the entire critical world. The subjective perspective in the historical narrative may overlap the personal and historical self. The autobiographical history, which is the memory-narrative, must, as a narrative, have some sort of moral end in its plot. The memory narrative in the modern times may be religiously poignant in its moral stance but it is no less moralistic. Autobiographies like fiction tend to be more profound in creation of interest and curiosity and may include further events for its principal purpose. In a given autobiographical moment, a narrative presents a subject into a position within a moral order, and simultaneously arranges historical events as a movement towards a moral endpoint. The individualization of history is possible in the memory narrative but its claim of truth cannot be denied with this pretext. The empathizing with the feelings of someone can be considered as a subjective truth similarly as we sympathize with an old Lear. The artistic truth is more tactical. The cultural aspects of the historical time and place become irrelevant in another historical time and place. The truth can be proportionally variable in these dimensions. Still it seems impractical to judge autobiography on the basis of its story and its historical accuracy.

Autobiographical writings are not expected to mimic reality but to enhance its aesthetic value by playing upon the reality. Even the real incidents look more fascinating and exciting when the narrator adds his flair of comments and scripts. The challenge in front of the narrator is to create a subjective truth, a personal version of the reality with a subjective eye and emerge a creator of Truth. The form autobiography requires the truthful accounting of point of view, truth of belief and truth of outlooks. The emphasis is on the autobiographer’s creation of the past which is reactivated in the present through the structure of coherence.

The end point of an autobiography in usual practice is only possible after a lifetime of experiences. But the end is not known which has the most hypothetical uncertainty. The end of living is not an absolute end to autobiography. The readers hear, see, understand and think differently before and after he crosses the threshold of the
subconscious, that moment in history when we harvest all our experiences into a single point of time, the autobiography. Past is the ‘true experienced feelings,’ and the present is ‘sincerity of feeling’ which is subjective, personal, emotional truth which may not have the bearing of historical truth but the reader of an autobiography is more concerned with greater effect than ‘unfeeling the history’. An enquiry into the historical birth and growth of this genre is closely linked with the cultural history of the West. There is something distinctive in the form of autobiography and a convention which makes it different from other genres. The writer knows his role and responsibility what he is writing. But there are confusions and uncertainty about its distinctive features from other genre of literature. The more the genre autobiography gets written about, the less agreement there seems to be on what it should properly include and what should be avoided. But reconstruction of the life is an impossible task because a single and ordinary day experience has limitless in its radiation backward and forward. One needs to hurry to qualify the above assertions by saying that autobiography is a shaping of the past.

2.1.8 Standpoint in Autobiography

The realization of the standpoint is paramount in ‘autobiography’. The coherence that the writer takes a standpoint from where he looks back into his own history or past is the most crucial. The stand point may be the actual social position of the story, his realization of the success or achievement in life which becomes a focal point and compels him to unite the whole story into a unified whole. The decisive moments in life and the test of the character is elaborated in the autobiography. The narrator likes to clarify the purpose of writing an autobiography in the story itself.

Sunil Gawaskar, the little Master of Indian cricket wrote his autobiography at the age of 28 though by that time he was a celebrity in people’s eyes. The famous hotel chain owner Vitthal Kamat wrote an autobiography to motivate the rural Maharastrian youths and guided them to be strong in all the difficulties of life. Roy Pascal also admits that autobiographies of younger men are rarely satisfying. The maturity and experiences of life make autobiographies more interesting and entertaining. Sachin Tendulkar wrote his his autobiography after his retirement from world of cricket. He must have felt it a right time to achieve his standpoint and to share his cricketing
experiences with his countrymen and the cricketing world. The autobiography of Marathi writer Avinash Dharmadhikari, *Vijaypath* (Road of Victory. 1998) narrates his experiences of studying and achieving the IAS rank by succeeding in UPSC examination. In the preface of that book he states, “A guide and map for IAS aspirants.” Autobiography means therefore discriminating and organizing the essentially selected incidents, facts, turning points of life. The vital point is the standpoint. This is the reason, why the best autobiographies are by men and women of outstanding achievements in life. The struggle and the hardships are the most poignant points in the autobiographies. As a saying goes, “darker the belly, sweeter the juice.” More interesting and breathtaking incidents in autobiography make it stand out differently. If the subject in the autobiography is higher in social status the story becomes more interesting. As the proverb says, ‘Greater the subject higher the interest’ is true with this genre. The established people, their unfolding and growth, their philosophical stance and shaping up of life, the mould of life sometime becomes more interesting than the fiction because the autobiographical incidents are stamped as “truth”. The journey from ‘rags to riches’ and the extraordinary flights of the character is always an amazing factor. The raw material of human existence remains same; the moulds by which it is given significance and recognizable shape are forever being recreated by the writer of empirical narrative or drama. The new empirical narrative depends upon an originality of vision, a creation of new types of actuality and not upon a flight of imagination away from the actual. The experiences appear symbolic and subtle. It is the description and inscription of the character and its inwardness which is consistent that we find in Mahatma Gandhi, Benjamin Franklin or Nelson Mandela’s autobiographies. Their outward echoing consistencies are also invaluable as reader. The extraordinary personalities create extraordinary lives and stories. The autobiographer has his intentions hidden in the writing itself which is very evident from reader’s point of view. The intentions may advance and oscillate and change according to situations. The autobiography speaks for itself and the writer may get dissolved into the story itself.

Intentions of writing biography may be an area of problematization because it’s going into the author’s mind and locating its meaning. It puts author as omniscient in
deciding the meaning of the text which is severely opposed by the post-modern critics. The concept of author’s presence behind the text and becoming the sole controller of the meaning and guarantor of ‘the intentional meaning of the truth of the text’ raises a critical enquiry and reader’s space in the text. In the objective principle of authorship and its invariable intentions, it becomes a crucial link between the author, the narrator and the protagonist. The final and ultimate internal truth in an autobiography, depends on the seriousness of the author, the seriousness of his personality and his intention in writing. The protagonist in the autobiography is unmasked writer unlike in fictional writer and who is the subject in the autobiography. The writer may be a far truthful narrator and the presenter of the truth in fictional writings. Reading the autobiography is reading the personal history because the subject’s knowledge is prevalent. The moment and the point of view needs to be revoked for a better understanding of the autobiographical expressions; so the objectives and goals of the author for writing autobiography is worth at all. This is a counter argument in verifying the proof and validity in the context of authorship and the claim of authors’ omniscient view about his predominating intentions. The choice of the subject is significant in the form of autobiography. The selection of incidents and experiences also is a matter of subjective choice. That’s why autobiography means discrimination and selection in the face of the endless complexities of life, selection of the facts, distribution of emphasis, choice of expression. Thus autobiographical work is the most personal and reliable work of literature.

2.2. Classification of Autobiography

On the basis of intentions of writing an autobiography that forms the interplay of an autobiography; it can be classified if not tagged into different arguable patterns. Some of the examples are as follows:

2.2.1. An Ordinary Man’s Autobiography

Naturally autobiographies are said to be written by eminent persons, public personalities and the achievers in their respectable field. But then the common people who do not have special identity or recognizable social position or status have written autobiographies of their small experiences. These experiences have importance from the writer’s point of view. The Dalit and the black autobiographies have the bearing of
this prototype. The main functional approach in these prototype claims to be the real view for a story in literature which aims to focus on the individuality. The personal Ego in a society where he is alienated and isolated becomes pointed and the story of revolt takes place. The personal voice represents the bigger social and cultural arena. Thus the experiential reflections in autobiographical narratives were written in prose by contemporary Dalit authors in their mother tongue, Marathi in the seventh and eighth decades of the last century. The most genuine autobiographical masterpiece of N.S. Suryavanchi, *Things I Never Imagined* (1975) and the sensational book by Daya Pawar’s *Baluta* (Marathi 1978) are notable dalit autobiographies. The wave of Dalit autobiographies followed this trend and it gave voice to many voiceless and deprived sections of the society. Autobiography as a genre proved very revolutionary and it changed the paradigms of literary cannons. The inherent quality of these autobiographies had great variety in subjects, quality of production and elaboration and the social and literary revolt. They tried to acquaint the reader with some of them such as Shantabai Kamble, the first Dalit woman autobiographer, 1986 wrote her autobiography as an unknown and undistinguished persona, *Mazya Janmachi Chittarkatha* (Marathi, 1986) Though these autobiographies are written by common people they display the uncommon experiences of life.

### 2.2.2. A Memoir of a Limited Period.

The subject of an autobiography which focuses on particular ‘time’ spent with particular reference becomes the theme of the autobiography. The limited frame is determined by a particular period in writer’s life, such as childhood, adolescent, travelling days, a period spent in some organization and movement. Willie Morris’ *New York Days* (1997) is restricted to the period when he was editor of Harper’s. He stated all the details of the places he was associated with and the characters, the incidents become integral part of the narration. The reader gets acquainted with the place in the story.

Lokmanya Tilak and Gopal Ganesh Agarkar were sent to Dongri prison for 101 days in one of the case of reporting court proceedings in the newspaper. The experience of those days are portrayed in Agarkar’s a book *Dongri Karagruhaitil 101 Diwas* (101 days in Dongri prison 1880). The days are not elaborated as dairy writing but it is
distinctly an autobiographical experience in those days. *Vincharniche Diwas* (1978) by Gauri Deshpande is a good illustration of this type where the authoress spends some time which she autobiographically elaborates. The rural place Vinchurni in Maharashtra and the time of her stay are inseparable in the autobiographical writings of Gauri Deshpande.

### 2.2.3. The Coming of Age Memoir

This particular form of writing is restricted to childhood and sensitive growing phase in life, has become a distinct autobiographical subject in a very unique way. The narrator explains his inner as well as outer growth and his journey of coming to an age in terms of his present situation or status.

Tobias Wolff in his autobiographical book *This Boy's Life* (1989) speaks about his teenage days and the witty yet philosophical meditations in those years. His childhood memories, his traveling with his mother and the illustrations of his own time are portrayed in the text. The outward journey is mingled with his inner transformation and realizing the hard realities of life. This transformation connects personal experience with the universal. *Growing Up* (1982) is hilarious and funny autobiography of Russell Baker who imagines useless sorrows and happiness which resemble an astonishing similarity with real life. Though narrated with the humour, it narrates the truth of life and the slowly coming to an age with maturity and knowledge. Maya Angelou is an African American writer and poet, narrates her emotional first part of the collection of seven books in *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1980). Her story covers a crucial period of coming of an age as a black girl in white society. The agonies, pains and frustrations forged her character. She grew more introverts and turned towards literature. The joy of literature taught her how to face racial trauma. The book is motivational work for black women who struggle to establish their identity. The story covered the span from a small age of Maya to her maturity. She with her brother came to stay with their grandparents where she was thrust with motherhood at the age of sixteen. The coming of an age with the sense of dignity, self dependency and pride was the transformational and motivational odyssey of her life.
2.2.4. Memories of Place as an Autobiography

This particular type of autobiographical narrative is the formation of regional settings and the narration that revolves around a particular place. The place becomes the central character in the narration. All the incidents and events happen around the place and thus the autobiography is compounded with the place. The frame of an autobiography is limited by a particular setting which is its regional location. The place emerges here not as setting but very distinctly as a character.

Annie Dillard wrote a similar autobiography named *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* (1974). The book is a non-fictional autobiographical narrative with the first person mode moves around her home place and various meditations on nature and life. The title of the autobiography refers to Tinker Creek which is outside Roanoke in Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains.

A beautiful place separated into four pieces symbolizing each one of the seasons. The incidents take place over the period of one year. The book archives the narrator's thoughts on loneliness, religion and writing, as well as scientific observations on the flora and fauna she encounters in her life. The setting emerges as a character in the book which is the most interesting part of it.

*Out of Africa* (1985) is a memoir by the Baroness Karen Von Blixen Finecke. It narrates events of the seventeen years when Blixen makes home in Kenya then called British East Africa. The book is lyrical and an emotional meditation on Blixen's life on her coffee plantation as well as a tribute to some of the people who touched her Western life there in the most amazing way. This is also a vivid and very personal portrayal of African colonial life in the last decades of the colonial British Kingdom.

In *A Walker in the City* (1907) Alfred Kazin recalls his life experiences in childhood with such tangible specificity that read the acknowledgment of that good and deep odor of fish, of salami, of herrings and half-sour pickles that emanated from the neighborhood handcarts. His story has a setting in the working-class of Jewish community of New York City in the decade previous the Great Depression and in this classic memoir of the first-generation experience reverberate universality.

*How I Got Cultured: A Nevada* (1963) is a memoir by Phyllis Barber, spent most of her early childhood in Boulder City, Nevada, minutes from the Hoover Dam and close enough
to a nuclear atomic test site that an occasional burgeon cloud could be snooped in the distance. Worried because of such vaguely checked an apocalyptic power, Barber found solace and peace in neither the patriotic attitudes of Boulder City's inhabitants nor the mechanical answers of Mormonism which substituted his pain of narration.

2.2. 5. Portrait of Relationship in Autobiography with an Individual or a Group

A memoir can also be confined as the author’s unique relationship with an individual or a group with whom he comes into contact. In *My Mother's House* (1899) and *Sido* (1902), Colette narrates fictional variations on the themes of childhood, family, and, above all, her mother. Brilliantly alive in its texture, fond of new cities, music, art-theaters, and literature, Sido, the main character devotes herself to her village, Saint-Savior, to her beautiful garden, with its dwellers and its animals, particularly to her children and her youngest, which she refers as Minet-Chéri. *My Mother's House* and *Sido* focus on the compelling figure of a powerful, fostering woman in the late-nineteenth-century rustic France, assigning the impact she had on her society and on her own daughter who grew up to be acknowledged as a great writer.

*Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre* (1965) is an autobiography by Simon de Beauvoir and translated by Patrick O'Brian is based on the relationship with the life of writer and philosopher Sartre. Simone de Beauvoir's narration depicts the last ten years of Sartre's life. He was remarkably the most prominent and astonishing writer and it is deeply upsetting to read in numerous instances in the book. She portrays the deeply and intimately detailed relationships, meticulous and dense at some places but it offers the reader an even more thorough inner view of the devoted part of de Beauvoir and the very human and mortal side of the great philosopher Jean Paul Sartre as a writer and philosopher.

*A Moveable Feast* (1964) is an autobiographical memoir by American Nobel Laureate author Ernest Hemingway. It is about his years experience as an deportee and outsider writer in Paris in the 1920s. The book illustrates Hemingway's apprenticeship as a young writer when he was married to his first wife, Hadley. Other important people featured in the memoire include Ford Madox, Aleister Crowley, John Dos Passos, poet Ezra Pound and F. Scott Fitzgerald, Hilaire Belloc, Pascin, ,Wyndham Lewis, novelist James Joyce, Gertrude Stein and Hermann von Wedderkop. All autobiographers are of
high rank and status. The special mention of Marathi autobiographies Ahe Manohar Tarihi (1980) written by Sunita Deshpande speaks her relationship with her husband and famous Marathi writer P.L.Deshpande.

2.2.6. The Biographical Novel as an Autobiography

Biography as a literary genre goes very close to autobiography as far as its features are concerned. Novel as a popular genre of literature provides a fictional and an usually imaginary account of a protagonist’s life. A character or a protagonist in the novel is the writer’s creation and imagination. But a biographical novel concentrates on the portrayal of a person’s experiences of his life which are so realistic that the reader can easily understand. The change in the names and places also are identical and can be easily recognized.

There cannot be a better example to cite than that of Oliver Goldsmith's legendary autobiographical novel The Vicar of Wakefield (1766) and it is clearly believed that the novel is a biography of Vicar he portrayed as an author. The characters, the incidents and sequence of events are not fictional but real and hence autobiographical. Joseph Addison's The Spectator, The Agony and the Ecstasy (1961) by Irving Stone and The Chicago Years (2012) by Stefan Allsebrook are the distinguished examples of autobiographical novels. The difference between novel and autobiography has been always very thin and daisy.

2.2.7 The Portraits as an Autobiography.

This autobiographical writing closely identifies with a thematic memoir which largely deals with a relationship with the author but mainly draws the person hidden in that author. Aamcha Baap Aani Amhi (Our Father and Us. 2009) written by Dr. Narendra Jadhav portrays his father’s extraordinariness in shaping his life. This autobiography is a story of a poor untouchable who teaches his son how to fight with the system and overcome the hurdles of life. The portrait of the dalit father is the destruction of stereotype of father in Indian society. Madame: An Intimate Biography of Helena Rubinstein by Patrick O'Higgins is an affectionate, intimate and emotional biographical portrait by Madame Helena Rubinstein's personal subordinate who internments ‘Madame's’ boundless energy and hardiness such as her buying carloads of African statue or kicking an inattentive employee in the ankle to make him listen to
her, keeping her opponents and participants at bay, and supplying homely advice, particularly on aesthetics. Rubinstein's propensity for crisis, strife, and farce make this impertinent but demonstrative biography the purest diversion and just a fun read. 

*The Duck of Deception* (1922) by Geoffrey's autobiography portrays Duke Wolff as a flawless fighter pilot transformed into an aviation engineer. Duke Wolff was unsuccessful in his service and thrown out of a job. Despite this, he went on to achieve success in standing against his own image. He loved his wife more than ever and also supported his son to be self-independent. In *The Duke of Deception*, (1988) Geoffrey Wolff unknots the paradox of this diabolic figure, a bad man who eventually was also a very ideal father, an ardent liar who fabricated and compromised with everything except love.  

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*Wheeler-Dealer: The Rip-Roaring Adventures of my Uncle Gordon, a Quadriplegic in Hollywood* (1977) is a different autobiography of a journalist, Chip Jacobs who put his career on stake to review the life of a man he had once hated: his quadriplegic Uncle Gordon. When an idiot in a school gymnasium, left fourteen-year-old Gordon Zahler, his uncle with a spinal cord damage that permanently paralyzed him from the neck down, his marriage was destroyed and the family reduced to welfare. The writer comes to understand the huge costs to all involved with disability and while recognizing the victory of Gordon's perhaps selfish but ultimately dazzling, thirst for life.

### 2.2.8. Autobiography Based on a Particular Theme.

Autobiography as a literary form provides a number of possibility of themes for the writers. The themes are the elaboration of a particular social, cultural or educational issue that the autobiographer deals with.

*Split at the Root* (1924) by Catana Tully is an exemplary thematic autobiography. It is distinct because it deals with the theme of 'cross cultural adaptation'. Her autobiography explores the theme of two cultures that her life is divided into. It is also an example of the most different kind of autobiographical writing to jerk off, for it uses the “slide” technique that interweaves plentiful story lines into unique one. Tully’s exploration for the secret of “private adoption of her” constructs the main plot of a detective story upon which two other stories are juxtaposed. In this melodramatic and beautifully written autobiography, the author narrates the questions
of racism, espousal and self-identity. The narrator tries hard to find out her black parents and the reasons of her separation from them and her adaptation by white parents. It tests her love for her white parents, her husband and their son leads to her to accept them and rejects the charismatic man believed to be her biological father. She hunts in the forests of Guatemala to find her biological family. The end shocks the reader as she learns the bitter truth about her mother. Her repentance committed long time ago against her mother shows her form of love.

2.2.9. Occupational Memoirs as Autobiography

The occupation of a narrator becomes an inevitable part of his being and has many others whose line of work is unusual. The autobiographer’s approach is fresh flair of writing the experiences relate to special occupation. Every occupation has produced very famous heroes and leaders. It becomes a fascinating experience to peep into the person’s and his/her real business. Melvin Konner’s Becoming a Doctor (1990) is a hilarious account of the story. This memoir book is a realization of a doctor Melvin Konner. It is writing about everything that is related with medical profession and he despised in medicine and medical education. The touching experiences about everything he said and every story he told simply strengthened the old typecasts of big hospitals and their management, residents, and medical students and medical fraternity. Oliver Sack’s The Man Who Mistook his Wife for a Hat (1950) as the title suggests is a hilarious story of a surgeon and psychiatric. The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat is a bestselling and most popular account of clinical tales inspired by neuropsychiatric, neurological, and abnormal human experiences. The writer narrates stories of patients lost in the secretive and seemingly unavoidable world of neurological disorders and abnormalities. The case studies of the patients are narrated in a lucid, vivid and engaging manner, ranging from patients who are no longer able to recognize people or common objects. The patients whose limbs have become an external object and those afflicted yet gifted with uncanny artistic, creative, or mathematical talents. Joy Sterling’s Vineyards (1956) is a book about the kind of autobiography of a wine businessman. A Cultivated Life takes wine lovers of all hoops on captivating tour of a beautiful Sonoma County vineyard, which traced the evolution of Iron Hose Vineyard’s 91 vintage from grape to glass. It is really an
exciting, revealing and absorbing account of wine production and efforts which lie behind the glossy and glamorous world of wine. Baryshnikov’s work is another explicit example of the same pattern. Being one of the greatest dancers of the twentieth century, perhaps of all time, Mikhail Baryshnikov’s book has seized briefly but magnificently. In this book, Baryshnikov speaks about the reason why he is dancing and not just following the choreography. He generates the impression on the reader that he is feeling every movement of his life and he is rejoicing himself to the fullest amount through every implementation of such movement. Baryshnikov believed that dancing talent is the result of discipline, dedication and hard work, that a dancer is a self-created and not born. Gelsey Kirkland’s Dancing on My Grave (1992) an typical autobiographical example of this type as it tells a story of a dancer. The miraculous story of ups and downs in the life of America’s most popular dancer Gelsey Kirkland thrills the reader and also motivates that life may turn in any direction at any moment. The real hero never succumbs to the odds of life but always fights and triumphs. Her descent into drug addictions and totally giving up her life and then her fight to rise again from the low to high is worth reading. The occupation of dancing and all the associated things with the profession, the registers, the secrets and the entire world of dancing is portrayed brilliantly. Thus it becomes an occupational autobiography.

2.2.10. Philosophical, Religious, and Spiritual Memoir

Philosophical, religious and spiritual autobiographies are written by by some unique personalities and their experiences that are always beyond the feelings of a common man. Such autobiographies are difficult to judge and read like other autobiographies because the experiences shared in these books are too transcendental and personalized that for a reader it may seem like a fairy tale or a superfluous story but these can be read and understood as autobiographies of some super achievers. The autobiographical truth becomes very personal experience which cannot be verified on the scales of the scientific temperament. The transcended experiences of the subject are too unique to be imagined. The spiritual awakening and self realization cannot be understood from outside. The spiritual experiences are the most complicated yet curious issues in this type. The autobiography is influential in terms of rich and mysterious experiences. The powerful and poignant questioning about the existence and meaning of life and
mysterious journey of life is described with simplicity and in a serious tone. One of the examples of this type is *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (1922) written by Robert Pirsig. The text questions the fundamental issues about the life in general. The meaning of living is revealed in a motorcycle ride with his own son through different parts of the world. The journey goes through the meditations, mysterious discussions and spiritual experiences. The motorcycle journey of young son and father goes through many internal transformations. The story evolves all the emotions like fear, love, growth and progress in life and becomes a profoundly personal and philosophical odyssey. *Autobiography of a Yogi* (1935) written by spiritual yogi, Swami Paramhansa Yogananda, who was blessed with some gifted abilities, narrates his spiritual growth from childhood to achieve perfect sainthood. The text is unbelievable and unrealistic for an atheist because the experiences that Yogi Yogananda shares are far unimaginable in the modern era of science. Yogananda talks about his Guru Lahiri Maharaj and the miracles and his distinct ability to foresee the future. He proclaims that man can master his soul with some meditations and religious devotions. The different world of religion and faith is seen in the autobiography which is beyond imagination of a common reader. The truth in the autobiography is beyond any examination as it comes from the personal experiences. Yogananda was the most popular Yogi from India who received blessings from his religious and spiritual Guru Lahiri Maharaj, travelled many parts of India and the world and finally built his spiritual Ashram in California, USA. He had millions of followers and they admit the stupendous positive change in their life because of the blessings of Swami Yogananda. Swamiji influenced many people which include Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Radhakrishnan and many eminent American personalities. The autobiography is unique for the same reason. Many religious personalities from various religions have written similar kind of autobiographies which can be categorized under this type. Their transcendental experiences and deep meditations are upheld and worshipped by their followers all over the world.
2.2.11. Historical Autobiography

History is made by the people who dare to create. In the same manner, autobiographical memoirs are written by the historically influential people to attract the attention of the readers. This mode of writing is as old as history itself. The thematic resemblances found in these autobiographies are factual accuracy, chronologically arranged events, political decisions and the journey of a political personality.

Historical autobiographies are always read by readers with the curiosity. Political news, political turmoil and letters between political personalities also become an integral part of the story. History when it becomes personal in the form of story also becomes a historical document. History can be reread from a single person’s perspective in a historical autobiography. *The Education of Henry Adams (1943)* is the autobiography of Henry Adams that has won Pulitzer Prize. The text is an elaborate record of Adam’s educational experience and it also talks about the social, cultural, technological turns around in the history of that time. He admits that the traditional education he got from Harvard University was useless in the practical use and reiterated that self education is greater than any institutional education. *The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois (1974)* by W.E.B. Du Bois is an outstanding example of historical autobiography of this type. This autobiography became a lighthouse for those who are interested in civil rights and other related movements. Dubois was the pioneer of civil rights in America and his autobiography is as important as Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr’s autobiography in the history of civil rights movements. He started the movement and awakened people about their own rights. He had no history or culture to mention from the past and his movements were unique and novel for the people of his time. His courage was commendable and Black Movement which later on produced Martin Luther King Jr as an iconic leader of Blacks Civil movement was led by him single handedly. He portrayed the history of Black people’s suffering. He dared to write in the period when black person may be killed only for looking at a white man. The political history of Black movement is incomplete without the reference to this text. Ida B. Well’s *Crusade for Justice (1975)*
is an exemplary autobiography of this type. Ida B. Wells (1862-1931) was one of the leading fighters and opponents against black oppression and their constitutional rights. The enlightening autobiography is a torch for any path finder. This autobiography of a black woman tells her personal life as a family head. She had played different like mother, teacher, journalist and social worker. Her fight in the black movement is documented very significantly in the history of civil right movement.

Margaret Thatcher’s, the ex-prime minister of United Kingdom, autobiography The Downing Street Years (1995) records the contemporary history of Great Britain. The first section of the autobiography speaks about the totally new entry and career as Lady Prime Minister of Great Britain. Margaret Thatcher was the towering personality of British and world political arena. The secrets and the controversial decisions of her political life have been narrated in a simple and easy manner. Her long association with the most powerful position as a Prime Minister for eleven years speaks everything about Falklands War, the great minor’s strike, the Westland Controversy and election victory hat-trick. The story from the Prime minister’s voice seems very fascinating and engaging. The polical rivalry and Britain’s political history can be read and understood from a close angle. Her decisions and speculations about men and women she came across, her parliamentarian affairs and her clashes with the colleagues are narrated with astonishment. The details of the inside story of Ten Downing Street’s gates were opened for the common mass was narrated beautifully. The book establishes a fine legacy of the iron lady of Britain.

2.2.12. Autobiographies of Psychological Illness

This genre emerged out of the feeling of ‘final triumph,’ after the terrific experiences of psychological abnormalities one faces as a patient. Norman Cousins shared his experiences and victory in his autobiography, entitled Anatomy of an Illness (1977) which was the kind of different memoir from any usual autobiography. The experiments of the doctors to boost the body and mind capacities of the clients with humor and frankness were elaborated very interestingly. After detecting the psychological disorder Norman found a strange bond with his doctor and beat the difficulties of life. The patient – doctor relationship is portrayed in a very interesting manner. The doctor's genius was in helping his patient to use his own powers:
amusement, courage, and stubbornness. The patient's flair was in mobilizing his body's own natural resources, proving what an effective healing tool the mind can be. This remarkable story of the triumph of the human spirit is truly inspirational reading.

*First You Cry* (1984) is an autobiography by Betty Rollin, a news reporter who was enjoying her family, social and professional life and suddenly a turning point came in her life when she found a tumor in her breast. The expressions mixed with black humor, the charm and the emotional warmth is found in this motivational autobiography for those who are suffering from the similar diseases in life. The memoir shows the transformation of an ordinary woman into a stubborn lady who takes up the challenges posed in front of her. The commentary of her pain, suffering and the fight that she undertook is worth reading. Caroline Knapp's *Drinking: A Love Story* (1995) is the notable autobiography of alcoholic turned into the fighter against alcohol later in life. About half a million women suffer from alcohol every year and the plague of alcohol takes away all the pleasures of life. Caroline started dinking liquor from her teen age to forget and distance herself from the difficulties of life. In this stunning and overwhelming autobiography the writer takes us into the world of alcoholic people and their way of thinking and reacting to the world. She not only discusses the problems related to addiction but also suggests ways to come out of it and that makes the autobiography different and demanding.

*I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* (1997) is a unique autobiography which is based on the common problem of schizophrenia. The black hole of this psychological disorder in which the sixteen year old Deborah found herself and she got isolated from the social circle is shown brilliantly. Her parents reluctantly and unhappily allowed her to be in a mental hospital where she felt haunted with her inner torments. Three years she fought with this torment in her life and against her alienation from the outside world. She finally was able to get back her sanity with the help of a brilliant psychiatrist who helped her to recover from the depths of depressions. This autobiography shows the victory of humanity against all the odds of life. *I'm Dancing as Fast as I Can* (1979) by Barbara Gordon is an autobiography which tells about her drastic turnaround story of her life. She was on the top of happiness with good professional career, warm friend circle, winner of Emmy award, perfect lover and a
beautiful lavish bungalow at Manhattan when suddenly her life became a nightmare of paralytic attack. She took a firm decision to fight with life when she was unable to walk out of her house in the society. She refused to survive on pills and medicines and she literally collapsed with mental health. Barbara did not give it up and she stood firmly against her disease and conquered the unhealthiness in the end. Readers get spell bound in reading the autobiography which portrays her victory at the end of the text.

William Styron’s *Darkness Visible* (1992) is a stunning autobiography of depression and suicidal attempt. The American writer who had won Prix Duca award in Paris but due to crippling suicidal depression he went down in his life and lost all hopes. As a writer and as a human being he fought with the horrors of depressions and finally won the biggest battle of his life. He connected the emergence of depression with the abrupt stoppage of alcohol and the careless doctor’s prescription. The story begins at the peak of success and then moving down to the suicidal attempt and ends with his fine victory in life. Elizabeth Wurtzel wrote an autobiography named *Prozac Nation: A Memoir* (1994) which portrays her struggle with sudden depression and her losing the way of life. The book’s title of this is kept after a medicine which is used to cure depressions. The book alike the other books in this type convincingly put forth the struggle of a young college going girl and writer after the stroke of depression. *Lucky* (2002) is the autobiography by Alice Sebold who was brutally raped and tortured near her house. This led her to the attacks of depression. But she rose from her own ashes and fought with herself to get back her confidence. Her friends and family members tried to comfort and relax her by promising the arrest of her rapist but finally she herself fought the battle with the law and saw the rapist behind bars. The autobiography portrays her struggle through her depression and her triumph of a rare quality.

2.2.13. The Autobiography of an Individual against the Social Norms

Going against the norms and rules set by the society and violet them with boldness and aggressively is one of the trends of autobiographers. Since the inception of the genre there was this tendency. In recent times, Mark Matousek’s *A True Story of Sex, Death Enlightenment* (1945) is the culmination of this autobiographical portrayal.
which recalls the corrupt portion in his life as a male prostitute and the shocking stories of those experiences turning into confessional mode in the end. The spiritual tone in the confession echoed Augustine’s autobiographical mode. This became a trend in modern times but the real anti social autobiography is credited to Thomas De Quincy’s *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1828) a masterpiece of anti social or immoral tone of autobiography. ‘Confessions’ is a remarkable and significant autobiography shows the pleasures and pains of devoting to the ‘church of opium’. The youthful thirst and mad passions under the spell of opium are very entertaining and distressing. Thomas De Quincy was a regular opium eater and his descriptions are of strange experiences related to the nightmares and the wanderings on the London streets in the mood of despair and paranoia under the effect of opium. This autobiography set a mile stone for the intrigue of art and opium. It set a bad trend for opium eating to stimulate artistic sub consciousness and talk about being anti social image as an artist. The romantic trend of disillusionment and alienation of a heartbreak lover is seen in the autobiographies written in this period. *You’ll Never Eat Lunch in This Town Again* (1983) written by Michael Phillips, was once very famous in Hollywood. She won an Academy Award for Best Picture in 1973 and overnight became on the top of the world. Phillips got it all and fast. She was twenty-nine when Oscar Award for *The Sting* (1973) was placed in her smaller hands. Phillips was Addicted to success and drugs together. By the time *Close Encounters* (1978) came, she was a full-fledged drug addict. Her drug addiction literally finished her career. Her book has been taken to end all the Hollywood gossips with her revelations. Some of the book’s best incidents reveal the undercurrents of the meetings where they rehearse their craft.

Pete Hamill’s *The Drinking Life* (1977) is an account of an alcoholic drinker’s confessions and revelations of violating all the social and cultural norms of society. 20 years after overcoming his drug habits, Pete Hamill takes a moment to look back. As a child during the downheartedness mixed with the Second World War, he eventually learnt that alcohol was a necessary part of a life of a man, it was only later he discovered his own potential to save lives of those who were affected by alcoholism.
2.2.14. The Personal Essay as Autobiography

Cultivated magazines such as Harper’s. The New Yorker (1890) and the interesting episodes in the New York Times Magazine (1895) popularized the particular form of writing which goes closer to autobiographical writings. One of the creations of that wave was the autobiographical writing The Art of the personal Essay (1899) by Phillip Lopate, the writer who translated smaller subjects around him and put them into the most interestingly written personal essays. Free from public triviality, it elaborates into a reflection which discovers how individual minds express and how they move by free association through thoughts and feelings to small, often subtle, realizations. As a form, it encourages deviations, incongruities, mental meditations and outward formlessness. Very different from autobiographical narrative, the personal essay does not have the theatrical style of a story. The themes and ideas of a personal essay, its style, its narrations, focus on watching the essayist who drops the past in emotional defenses in order to make morality strong. A significant aspect of writing the personified essay is to select a very slight setting, small or sometime trivial subject which one enlarges by exploring in a wide and high background. The personal essays are written with a microscopic view. Extraordinary illustrations are the collections of personal essays by Bernard Cooper’s Maps to Anywhere (1902). The essays in Maps to Anywhere, the plot ground is common and delicately extraordinary. Writing on family subjects, social stigmas to the origin of the barbershop pole, Bernard Cooper drills into the twinkling landscape of the southern California countryside comparing it with observing the collision of the dream with the realities of everyday life. Sally Tisdale’s Lot’s Wife: Salt and the Human Condition (1990), Diane Ackerman in his collections, A Natural History of the Senses (1994) Barbara Kingsolver’s High Tide in Tucson (2000) are famous illustrations of this genre.

The personal essays are short enough to be intensive and imbibed with limited time. The personal essay is generally published in a great quantity of journals which have been popular in all ages.
2.2.15. The Travelogue as an Autobiography

The autobiography of a traveler or the theme of journey becomes the integral part of the Travelogues as Autobiographies. The travelogues are the interesting part of narration. The travelling experiences and the commentary of the narrators make the narration more interesting and entertaining. Margery Kemp's *Margery Kempe of Lynn* (1964) depicts the story of adventures and excitements of Holy lands, English Shrines, Santiago and return to Lynn for five times. She enjoyed the excitement, dangers and adventures of her tour which is so interesting and also offers knowledge for those who want to travel on the same route.

In recent times Paul Theroux' *The Great Railway Bazaar* (1980) is an extraordinary travelogue which has autobiographical aspects. Paul Theroux's different, vagabond, and strangely entertaining and enlightening railway journey has become a popular travelogue. It is a modern classic of travelogues which became very popular. Theroux recounting his early adventures of a grand continental tour which cover Asia's renowned trains the Mandalay Express, the Khyber Pass Local, the Frontier Mail, the Orient Express, the Golden Arrow to Kuala Lumpur, the Trans-Siberian Express are the highlights of a journey that takes him from London's Victoria Station to Tokyo Central from then in Japan to the Trans-Siberian. Full with Theroux's typical humor and keen observations, this captivating odyssey is an essential reading for all. *The Old Patagonian Express* (1986) is another in the series. The journey from London to Asia and finally Japan to Trans-Siberian, the book was firstly published in 1975. His portrayal of the people he met in the journey variously vain, smelly, odd, crazy, foolish and whimsical was so vivid that it resembles the quality of Dickens. *The Iron Rooster* (1988) is again a popular personal self-account of Paul Theroux's characteristic typical taste of travel experiences. The starting chapters are hysterical as Theroux starts a tour as usual but this time he spends most of his efforts in trying to avoid the fellow travelers whom he dislikes. The passengers become doubtful about in turn when they found him busy in writing. The moments of dark humor are so vividly written and the dirtiness of the food system also entertains the reader. The 1988 edition still provides an elaborative and interesting picture of a country of China which was shifting from Communism to Capitalism. This travelogue contains many
interesting insights like as the population of China still stays in caves. Government program are not there to relocate these poor cavemen, but humorously there is a government program to relocate them in better caves. The logical solution was to improve their homes. Peter Mayle’s travelogue *A Year in Provence* (1920) narrates that journey or place is not that important but the experiences, the characters which he met in the journey are more significant. The emotional narrator covers the travelling memories and the personalities that he met during the journey. Through humorous and witty narration the traveler narrates the travelogue.

### 2.2.16. Political Autobiography

Political personalities and their personal writings are the most popular from old ages. The professional autobiographies are interesting and focused on the particular vocation, but political persons are always eminent figures of society. The political “calling.” is the impulse of writing autobiography. Many politicians have written political autobiographies, *The story of my Experiments with Truth* (1927) by Mahatma Gandhi, *Main Camph* (1932) by Adolf Hitler, *Long Walk to Freedom* (1995) by Nelson Mandela, Benjamin Franklin, Bill Clinton, Barrack Obama Sonia Gandhi, L.K.Adwani are some famous illustrations.

Political personalities always have attracted tremendous popularity and curiosity in all political atmospheres. Mahatma Gandhi’s political autobiography has become his personal autobiographical memoirs where he dealt with his own experiments of truth and rather than political coverage. The most famous autobiography of this type *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (1790) is a perfect illustration of political autobiographies. The publicity that this book received was really huge and wide. The mode of the narration was very motivational and this autobiography was a landmark in the genre. Nelson Mandela’s autobiography *Long Walk to Freedom* (1995) is the most talked book as an autobiography. The book represents the political journey of Nelson Mandela from his childhood to President. From a small boy of tribal black community how Nelson Mandela grew and developed into a mighty leader is elaborated in the text. The book not only speaks about his struggle and revolt but also narrates the history of South Africa and its culture. Lalkrishna Advani, the leader of BJP and former Home Minister of India has written an autobiography named *My Country My

2.3. Conclusion

Autobiographies are considered as personal literature of the subject expressed to be shared with all. Autobiographies are truthful account as the subjects himself or herself writes about their life. There are various modes of writing autobiographies but prose is the general form of writing an autobiography. The autobiographies selected for the present research study are three Political Autobiographies of three Men of Eminent Politicians and Humanists.

Humanism which is elaborately and extensively discussed in the next chapter is the focal point in this research and the three autobiographies of these stalwarts have deliberately been selected in order to acknowledge their ‘tryst with the humanism.’ These three have been synonymously referred together over the period of time and justifiably need to be studied together to find out the common grounds of their personalities. Being the greatest human beings of the twentieth century, the three eminent crusaders of peace cannot be labeled with any other adjective than “humanist.” Their philosophy accounting together encompasses the map of Humanism in the twentieth century and their impact is to be felt in many more centuries to come.