

# Canvassing Experiences to Words: An Autobiography, A Journey Within

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**Abstract**—*Life is a beautiful journey to observe, inspire and absorb from surrounding experiences, either from our own experiences or learned from legends. Literature is a rhythm of words and thoughts, it brings life the characters and plot the emotional and spiritual endeavours of the author and the characters. It is something written with soul that lasts through the ages because it speaks to the reader on a subconscious level. We can learn many things from studying the great works of literature.*

*An autobiography is a form of literature, where an account of a person's life is presented by himself/ herself. Autobiography is a self-portraiture, it is a medium by which a writer meets with his / her self and introduces it to the readers. The autobiographical novel is a genre in which authors take elements from their actual lives but present them in fictionalized form. We all know from a reader's perspective or as a literature perspective an autobiography could be a great historical document to witness the past or contemporary times from the perspective of another individual who is depicting their life events.*

*Now the question arises why an individual write about his life and what effect of the writing of an autobiography remains on the author or the protagonist. Aim of the present work is to explore, how an autobiography effects the author on a spiritual level in literal form. What sort of cognitive thinking an author undergoes while observing his/her past experiences of life, could author get new perspective from own past experiences while writing an autobiography. Impact of the same work on a reader can be of varied form, from inspiration to satisfaction of historical curiosity.*

**Keywords:** *Memories, Experience, Life, Journey, Literature, Learning, Autobiography.*

## Introduction-

“Literature is one of the forms of human consciousness. Autobiography as a literary form, is a study of the way that one's own experience is transferred into literature, creative process and the ways of men and the forms of human consciousness.”

Literature is the expression of life, presented as an artistic work which help in understanding the lives of many other people. It is a reflection of human nature and its culture. The literature

sows the seeds of future through the literary initiatives. Life is blessing with unique experiences of various ups and downs under different circumstances, time, place, situations to enjoy, cherish and most important to learn lessons to improvise each and every step towards this beautiful journey of the world. Pen down or share the feelings, thoughts, experience through the most important art of literature is one of the very famous literary genres is known as autobiography. Autobiography is a privileged genre where the reflexivity of human storytelling is fore grounded. It is not only a good place to observe how art follows life and life art, but also a vehicle to reflect on the discovery and construction process of anthropology itself. Autobiographies constitute a unique and very important genre of literature as it created out of what writers' experience in the course of life. Autobiography or self-expression is a collection of dispersed events and incidents authentically based on memory and present before the reader in a comprehensive and artistic sketch. Beauty of this amazing art of literature or of the genre of autobiography is very interesting, expressive, historical, as it is a medium by which a writer meets with his/her self and introduces it to the readers as well.

“When life narrators write to chronicle an event, to explore a certain time period, or to enshrine a community, they are making “history” in a sense. But they are performing several rhetorical acts” justifying their own perceptions, upholding their reputations, disputing the accounts of others, settling scores, conveying cultural information, and inventing securable futures, among others”. Stories from the self are personal narration without world background which reflects values, lifelong learning, identity development, rules and sense of common logic. Stories are always very fascinating to everyone since childhood to the old age, it is a natural component of life, all individuals -at some point of time, engage in the art of telling stories as it is very helpful to express an opinion, thoughts, life experiences and situations and utilize as a lesson or teachable moments for others. “Explore a set of concepts helpful for understanding the sources and dynamic processes of autobiographical subjectivity memory – narrated memory is an interpretation

of a past that can never be fully recovered, experience, identity, space, embodiment, agency. To theorize memory, experience, identity, space embodiment and agency is to begin to understand the complexities of autobiographical subjectivity and its performative nature."Somewhere it is to be acknowledge that autobiographies are closely associated with exploring and understanding the subjectivity of time factor.

### Writing about Self Journey

A seasoned writer knows how to sketch a character, situation, experiences of life in words. When he is pouring his imagination, he knows what he wants and how to express them in words, but the challenge while writing an autobiography is that he himself is central character. And autobiography in a true sense means depicting the real-life situations honestly. Whereas person changes with every stage of life, what we think and interpret of life at eighteen may not appeal at other stages of life. Writing an autobiography involves sketching events that constitutes life. Memory of an event from past always gets affected by present state of mind. A memory or a snapshot of memory in mind take an entirely different shape when we try to get a meaning out of it. Because narrative of an event always demands interpretation of the situation. Autobiography as genre should always be read and studied keeping in mind these factors. Narration of historical chronological event by the author have an inherent limitation, it demands narrating the event along with perspective of a third person "who was also a party to that situation" Furthermore, this paper will also analyse and quote some situations or events from the autobiographies referenced that may have affected authors state of mind, how it may be affected by his/her own perceptions of situation and people at the time of narrating the said event.

Khushwant Singh was one of the well-known Indian contemporary lawyer, writer, columnist and journalist. He had a sensitive understanding of the challenges of contemporary Indian society. His intimate knowledge of rural and urban Indian life is an outcome of his minute observation of life. He experienced partition of India, and recalled those experiences in his writings. His earliest and most successful novel *Train to Pakistan*, depicts his perception and experiences from the backdrop as India Pakistan riot in the year of 1947. Here truth meets fiction with huge impact upon the society as the author narrates the trauma and tragedy of partition through his characters. It was a life changing event for him, it might have affected him deeply. The theme of the novel was human interactions, emotions and their inner moral dilemma at the time of crisis. The characters depicted might have included the individuals who he may have interacted at any point in life. The villages depicted quite resembles to his narration of events and characters from his childhood with his Nani (grandmother), as depicted in his novel *Train to Pakistan*. Being a young man, these events must have touched a strong

emotional cord and same can be seen in the actions of young men depicted in the novel. But as life progresses in many other works of his, like *Not a Nice Man to Know*, and *Truth Love and Little Malice* the stories from the same era does not have the same type of emotions as was depicted in the novel but contains more of a grown man thought like politics and prejudices. The experiences from a front end has been changed to aftermath conversations and political surroundings. It's not that, the emotional impact of those events has been changed but they are experienced with a different perspective. Writing the first novel must have been a healing process for him as he pours his emotions and experiences into words it acts like a redeemer and helps to move on to other aspects of life. That's why its said writing about own life events acts as a therapy and release an emotional burden out of your head. An author changes, as experiences from his mind takes the shape of words. His personal experiences and the historical events that shaped the country play a major role in his work. Study of his autobiography is a useful tool to explore growth as an individual as well as a great contemporary Indian novelist writing in English. His vast and profound knowledge and understanding of Indian history, political system and literacy heritage is reflected in his press work which includes a history of his own community.

"I want to go on living even after my death! And that's why I'm so grateful to God for having given me this gift, which I can use to develop myself and to express all that's inside me! When I write I can shake off all my cares?" April 05<sup>th</sup> 1944, *Diary of Anne Frank*.

These words are written by Anne Frank in *Diary of a Girl* (an autobiography) a situation where any person no matter how strong he is, can lose his will. The phrase denominates the potential and power of words when written about self. Annelies Marie "Anne Frank" (June 12, 1929 to march 1945) Jewish teenager was a world-famous German-born diarist and world war II holocaust victim. Fleeing Nazi persecution of Jews, her family moved to Amsterdam and later went into hiding for two years. It will help to analyze propaganda from Nazi Germany to understand prominent attitudes and beliefs from the time period. This text provides an overview of the holocaust and how it affected certain groups of people and also helps to understand how world war I led to the world war II. When Anne started writing her diary, she was a usual thirteen-year-old girl writing about routine things, her parents, friends, young love. She was afraid of gunshots, bombing happening all around routinely. As she matures in to writing she quits writing about these things which made her afraid, but goes into more deep thinking, which also gets reflected in her later entries. Her early entries talk about her hopes and future she will have from outside this situation, as she writes more about what is happening all around. She accepts her situation and shows a more realistic account of situation, her opinions were based on actual events instead of fancy thinking, like her entry

about the attack on Hitler by German general. She was expressing her thoughts on the events happening in semi rational manner, which is unbecoming of a teenager she was. All this clear thinking that she gained must be having some impact because of her penmanship. Events happening around her tends to make a person think opposite and hinders their growth, as all scholarly activities came to a standstill in these times. Writing about self gives a person opportunity to explore his/her inner self and help them become their individual potential. Growth as a writer which Anne had experienced comes from honest outlook about events happening around and presenting a true account of the same without prejudice.

**Conclusion: -**

This study is to examine the impact of literature as a genre of autobiography on self and social perceptions and to explore relationship between reading and writing learning expressions and its practices on real life. Learning about oneself and others through literature. Education mainly personal characterizations of oneself and others, learning about oneself and others as literary readers, descriptions and evaluations of people's behaviours and lessons for life. Reading autobiography enhance the abilities to imagine other people's situations and to make influence about their thoughts considered a life experience that can be self-modifying that may have impact on readers self-development.

**Objective Thinking:-**Autobiography as genre is prone to authors bias about the self and his own sketch of another person's personality. But when one put a situation or life events in words, one had to be objective as some point. The thought process evaluates the situation on a rational basis and that helps the author to build an objective thought of the world or individual. Several characters in the work mentioned changed forms and emerged from one track form to a more rational being in the eyes of the protagonist. i.e. Juggut Singh in Khushwant Singh's Train to Pakistan, or Margot Frank in Diary of a Young Girl.

**Self-Therapy: -**Writing about an event that can have a life changing effect on one's personality and thoughts can be a difficult process. But this process can be a healing effect, the author comes to the term of the event and may go past the psychological effects of the events. This work analyze that the protagonist is to be part of an historical event that had altered the course of history and effected deep the individuals involved. Either during the event or after the event. In the case of Anne Frank, it is during the event for others it after the happening, that they present a true and accepted version of the self as well as the other character involved in the event.

**Enhance Creativity: -** An autobiography is a fictionalized version of the actual even. Depicting a real-life event in its entirety in an effective form requires use of effective language a scene building. There can be some events which author wants to tell the reader but not in the form it actually happed but by way of the moral of the event, he may create a situation depicting the event by the use of his imagination and creativity. This art gives author a chance to be creative and give expanse to his thoughts.

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