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**Acceptance & Indianization of Autobiography - A Literary Journey of
Decolonization**

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Abstract

The purpose of this investigation is to investigate the complex process of autobiography's acceptance and Indianization as a literary genre, and to trace its trajectory as an essential component of the larger journey of decolonization. An examination of how the use of autobiography as a method of self-representation may become a potent tool for regaining narrative authority and cultural identity is the focus of this research, which takes place against the background of a post-colonial India. With the purpose of shedding light on the way authors manage the intricacies of self-expression, this analysis intends to contribute to a one-of-a-kind literary tapestry that represents the changing socio-cultural environment of post-independence India. This will be accomplished by analyzing significant autobiographical works within an Indian context. In this study, an interdisciplinary approach is used to



investigate the combination of indigenous storytelling traditions and the autobiographical genre. The purpose of this investigation is to provide insight on the dynamic interaction that exists between personal narratives and the larger narrative of a nation that is decolonizing itself.

Keywords: Autobiography, Postcolonial life-writing, Hybridity, Decentering, Decolonisation, India

Introduction

The celebration of the grand story of the sovereign self in autobiographies, a traditional genre in Western culture, has been met with increasing scrutiny in recent years. Because life-writing discourse cannot support the idea of a 'sovereign' self, autobiography faces a formidable obstacle in its attempt to include several life narratives. There is a relationship between the current philosophical discussion between the transcendental and the empirical and the shift from autobiography to life writing. This is so because the empirical aspect of existence that is captured in life writing is the focus of the issue of the ontology of the 'autos' or the self in autobiographies. 'Autos' means 'self,' 'bios' means 'life,' and 'graphy' means 'writing' in Greek. In the case of 'self-life-writing,' the statement suggests that 'autobiography' has achieved its pinnacle when the words 'life-writing' and 'autobiography' occupy the same semantic space. Autobiography is defined by French thinker Philippe Lejeune as "the retrospective narrative in prose that someone makes of his own existence when he puts the principal accent upon his life, especially upon the story of his own personality" (1989, p.4). The definition of 'life' given by Lejeune is that it refers to the *how* or being of a self at a certain point in time when the self is reflecting on itself. But autobiography as a concept is not equipped to address this subject matter well. In a similar spirit, Augustine, Rousseau, and Beckett are discussed by James Olney in his book *Memory and Narrative*. He states that he doesn't like the word 'autobiography' and looks for a terminology that is more inclusive:



Although I have in the past written frequently about autobiography as a literary genre, I have never been very comfortable doing it, primarily because I believe that if one is to speak relevantly of a genre one has first of all to define it, and I have never met a definition of autobiography that I could really like (xv).

Being 'autobiographical' does not always imply that a work is a 'autobiography' in the strict sense, and vice versa. By distinguishing between the word "autobiography" and the adjective 'autobiographical,' Olney raises more concerns about the term. He also talks on the gradual shift in autobiography during the preceding sixteen centuries, which is often referred to as 'evolution or devolution.' In particular, the emphasis has moved from autos—which cover both the process of writing oneself and the act of documenting one's life—to bios, which trace the course of a lifetime. Conversely, one may identify a change that transpired inside during the composition of the autobiographies. This change would be the move from writing about the cars' ontology to writing about or centered on the self, which would stand for the real-world experiences. Olney advocates for periautobiography, also known as life-writing, which is characterized as 'writing around or about the self,' in contrast to the narrow term autobiography, which does not permit other readings. Olney claims that a phrase such as this conveys a sense of 'indefinition or the lack of generic rigor,' which is entirely consistent with the ambiguity inherent in writing about a very malleable concept known as 'self.'

Autobiography: The Definitional Unease

At the discourse level, autobiography is both the start and the end of a vicious cycle: any effort to define it will lead to the genre's deconstruction, and any analysis of its structure will lead to its deconstruction. According to Stephen A. Shapiro's dissertation on autobiographies and the fact-fiction dilemma, Heisenberg's indeterminacy principle captures the genre to a certain extent. This is because, just as memoirs are susceptible to the 'distorting' concept of art, novels also depend on the author's personal experiences in some way. "There is no possibility of separating a phenomenon from the devices used to measure it" (109). Georg Misch follows the same argument and emphasizes the genre's adaptability, describing the autobiographer as a 'heterobiographer.' Jean Starobinski makes a comment on the variety of



methods employed in autobiographies when she thinks about “it is essential to avoid speaking of an autobiographical- “style” or even an autobiographical “form” because there is no generic style or form” (285-94). Theorist Georges Gusdorf claims that autobiography is a heroic kind of writing, while emphasizing the non-finalizability of autobiography as one of its key assumptions. Felicity Nussbaum coined the term ‘self-biography,’ whereas H. Porter Abbott suggested ‘autography,’ Domna C. Stanton suggested ‘autogynography,’ and Jacques Derrida suggested ‘otobiographie,’ among others. To address the many self-referential texts that have been generated within the field, several new terminologies have been devised. Autobiography is characterized by a considerable number of terminological variations, uneven style, and an undefined framework that make the self’s tale unclear. Or, to put it another way, the decentering of the fundamental notion of the Western masculinist Enlightenment self is a major definitional discomfort that is now present in autobiography. Linda Anderson suggests that “in so far as autobiography has been seen as promoting a view of the subject as universal, it has also underpinned the centrality of masculine – and we may add, Western and middle class – modes of subjectivity” (3). The authors and philosophers of the postcolonial school of thinking want to free autobiography from the dominant paternalistic and ethnocentric ways of writing about one’s life. A number of authors, including Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, have argued that the word ‘autobiography’ “inadequate to describe the extensive historical range and the diverse genres and practices of life narratives and life narrators in the West and elsewhere around the globe” (4). An autobiographical turning point is when the genre turns on itself. This period has come about because of the decentering of subjects or the criticism of the sovereign self, which is intricately related to the poststructuralist era’s authorship crisis.

Autobiography as Life-writing: The Postcolonial Experiment

Throughout the Western world’s history, there have been constant changes that have brought attention to the journey that autobiography has made as a genre. Autobiography has changed significantly throughout time, both in breadth and duration. It has changed from being a genre that was rigid to one that is inclusive, from being a genre that originated in the West to a subject that is widely written about in the post-colonial era, from a field that was primarily



dominated by men to one that is now dominated by women. However, another approach may emphasize a change that takes place throughout the writing of the self. Writing about the self, which represents the factual features of life, is what separates writing about the ontology of the ego from writing about other topics. The main characteristic of postcolonial autobiography as a literary style is resistance. An attempt is made to highlight the postcolonial ambiguity surrounding identities and the liminality of locations via the formulation of the so-called resistances to autobiography. The autobiographer has turned their personal story into a tactical work of literature in case a cohesive autobiographical narrative is either hard to come by or unachievable. While speaking with Jacqueline Rose about his autobiography, *Out of Place*, Edward Said shared his thoughts on the anti-autobiography movement in an impassioned and articulate interview. “It is not really an autobiography. I’ve resisted the use of that word. I call it a memoir, because first of all I’m not really a public figure [...]. But I feel that I had something to understand about a peculiar past” (Huddart, 45). Said's assertion is reflective of his own identity politics, his fragmented background, and the historical reality to which he belongs. Misunderstandings arise between different subject positions in Said's work due to the disjointed life shown in *Out of Place* via the complexities of the pronominal changes that contain the Palestinian sense of alienation. Said connects the complicated historical legacy from Palestine to the individual self-inventions in *After the Last Sky*, where he elaborates on his increasing dissatisfaction with the political forces of the past and present. Similar to this one, the novels *Stigmata* by Helene Cixous and *Job the Dog* both display a kind of retreat from autobiographical closure: “It is an autobiographical narrative which does not mean very much, because autobiographical narrative is at the same time a creation” (Cixous, 183). This point of view highlights the many difficulties of producing an autobiography while also casting doubt on the book's ability to serve as an accurate account of the author's life events. Keep in mind that the anti-autobiography movement is really an anti-autobiographical identity restoration movement. By challenging autobiographies and analyzing them in a postcolonial context, one may subvert the white, western male agent's dominating position and include the voices of the oppressed.



Unconventional autobiographical tactics, argue Julia Watson and Sidonie Smith, may elevate the voice of the underprivileged and provide a platform for creative endeavors and political activity. As the postcolonial subject is simultaneously centered and decentred, its subjectivity becomes rather murky. Frantz Fanon notes in *Black Skin, White Masks* that colonial subjects' mental breakdowns may be countered by self-reconstitution through literature. This complex postcolonial subjectivity is what Fanon is addressing in his writings. Owing to the onslaught of discriminatory treatment, the subject is divided into 'a triple person.' Despite his attempts to retrieve the pieces and bring them together with the whole, Fanon, on the other hand, argues that there is no one sum that can adequately capture the experience of African Americans. "Negro experience is not a whole, for there is not merely *one* Negro, there are Negroes" (Fanon, 136). The paradoxical representation of subjectivity that characterizes postcolonial life writing distinguishes it from the Western style of life writing. Additionally, Bart Moore Gilbert points out that "whether figured as 'weaving' (Morgan), 'chequering' (Equiano) or 'striping' (Fanon), the postcolonial identity rarely seeks to utterly disavow the effects of colonialism on its constitution" (15). The life-writings that come from the postcolonial sphere are complicated and full of contradictions. This is an important point to make clear. These literary works are distinguished by a crisis that affects the person as well as society, and the stories are the outcome of group effort. These narratives may include a variety of elements into a singular but multifaceted self, such as society, location, milieu, and the specified temporality.

In *Selves in Question: Interviews on South African Auto/biographies*, even once the author has developed a distinct narrative identity, autobiography an account of the self is, according to J. M. Coetzee, fundamentally an autobiography an account of the other. Although an autobiography is written by one person under their own name, it contains the stories of many others, making it a collaborative and mediated work. One cannot hope to achieve the singularity of a documented life apart from the tales written by earlier lifetimes. In the process of writing postcolonial autobiography, a dialogical and community creation emerges by accident. 'Mediated testimonies,' the collaborative autobiographies, allow participants to better understand themselves via dialogue while also fostering a feeling of common identity.



A collective identity in South Africa is formed from the individual identities that are captured in a great deal of autobiographies published during the apartheid era, as well as after the fight and reconciliation. Moreover, autobiographies become a communal story that both complicates the discourse around life writing and deepens our knowledge of the self and identity.

Decentredness is a unique feature of postcolonial life-writing. As it begins to disintegrate, the colonized body begins to yearn for its whole, original form. The process of creating an identity for women is always much more difficult than it is for men in postcolonial life stories. This is since women nearly never get the opportunity to tell their own stories since they must contend with the combined forces of patriarchy and colonialism. In *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade*, (1985) by Assia Djebar, the history of colonial Algeria is intricately articulated. In this work, Djebar discusses the topic of women writing memoirs while wearing a veil or anonymity clothing. According to Djebar, even highly educated and affluent women must follow ‘two absolute rules,’ which are to never discuss oneself and to make sure that any self-narrative that occurs, if it occurs at all, is done anonymously. Via her portrayal of Algerian women as a collective and their connection to modern Algeria, Djebar establishes her identity via obscurity. Although the rule violates the Western conception of autobiography as the story of an independent person, Djebar persists in forging her own identity. The narrative of Djebar serves as a classic illustration of how women who live in the shadows are positioned, and how political, religious, and patriarchal norms in Algeria push women's participation in the anti-colonial struggle to the periphery. Djebar’s idea of *fantasia* remains “directly linked to the project of cultural decolonisation” (Gilbert, 100).

Therefore, a person's life narrative turns into a fight for survival, with the success of either side depending on the community's current outpouring of grief and its ability to recall its collective memories of happier times. An excellent example of postcolonial life writing is *My Place* by Sally Morgan. It is narrated by an indigenous Australian who, after having their identity shattered by colonialism, is now attempting to put the pieces back together. To include many perspectives within the family, Morgan de-centers her autobiographical self in her autobiography, which eventually turns the autobiography into a community autobiography.



Meatless Days: A Memoir (1989) has Suleri's elaborate self-portraiture interwoven with her detailed accounts of family history, indigenous culture, and Pakistan's overall history. In other words, autobiography is often performed by a collective, with writers of postcolonial life histories positioning themselves as communal spokesmen. Instead of tracking the individual's or group's progress over time, Suleri's autobiography tells the story of both at the same time. “‘evenly distributed’ between Suleri herself, family members and the seemingly inexorable degeneration of the new nation” (Gilbert, 103). Subverting the conventions of conventional Western autobiography, postcolonial life writings indigenize the narrative and cultivate subjectivity in relation to collectivity. The autobiography *The Interesting Narrative* by Olaudah Equiano is an example of the colonialism-related process of self-destruction. It presents itself as a disjunctive subjectivist African life story, but the protagonist's mixed ethnic background prevents him from assimilating with the prevailing British because of the ongoing hostility he encounters from the English tradition. Centrifugal tendencies are a reflection of the narratively depicted fracture and dislocation of the colonial ego.

Postcolonial life writing constantly questions the basic act of writing itself, even if it follows the Western autobiographical narrative structure. It is not considered to be a self-authenticated account, but rather one that is accompanied by many other voices that colonialism suppressed. This raises questions about the overall objectivity of autobiographies. Frow (26) cites Derrida as saying that the term ‘genre’ is encased in certain normative and prescriptive laws; hence, the ‘law of purity, a law against miscegenation’ is the genre's law. Derrida argues that “as soon as genre announces itself, one must respect a norm, one must not cross a line of demarcation, one must not risk impurity, anomaly or monstrosity” (Derrida, 203-204). He maintains that genre-restricted works still do not include textual markers such as the title and signature, even if such works would self-identify as poetry, plays, or books. There is no such thing as a piece of writing that completely follows the ‘norms and interdiction’ of a certain genre, according to Derrida. This is his main point of contention. From this vantage point, autobiography is seen as the ideal embodiment of Derrida's "law of genre". The ‘law of genre’ is based on the “law of impurity or a principle of contamination” (Derrida, 225), as Derrida further contends:



Every text participates in one or several genres, there is no genre less text; there is always a genre and genres, yet such participation never amounts to belonging. And not because of an abundant overflowing or a free, anarchic and unclassifiable productivity, but because of the *trait* of participation itself, because of the effect of the code and the generic mark (230).

Derridean terminology describes autobiography as a genre that either highlights the intertextuality of the genre by its participation in several genres or its co-optation by other genres. The way a genre interacts with other discourses acts as a mediator in the process of that genre transcending its boundaries and absorbing another. The discourse of the other the self or the genre as an abstract body of knowledge that accommodates the other depends on both the Derridean movement from auto to oto and the genre transition from one to the other. The other transition's discourse sets both transitions apart. It is essential that the porous borders of genres be considered while determining the line between work and life. The boundaries between memory and history, autobiography and fiction, ethnography and history, and other related categories are all blurred in autobiographical works. By extending beyond the bounds of general categories and accommodating many viewpoints inside its framework, autobiography establishes its identity as an intertext. In the framework of her article 'Autobiography as Intertext,' Ann Jefferson investigates the overall complexity seen in both fiction and autobiography:

To presuppose that there are generic distinctions between novels and autobiographies, even while the fiction is being revealed as autobiographical and the autobiographies as fictional, since in this sphere (if not in all others) generic differences need to be respected as an effect of reading, even if they cannot be defined as intrinsic qualities of the texts in question. (109).

To put it simply, life writing is discursive writing, and this is particularly true when considering the genre's postcolonial practice. From the standpoint of postcolonial studies, autobiography is defined by a generalized hybridity since the subject traverses historical contexts via interactions with colonial forces. According to Gayatri C. Spivak's examination of



Assia Djebar's *Fantasia* (10), postcolonial authors see their stories as 'withheld autobiography.' She says this in relation to the personal material's unsettling presence. *The Autobiography of My Mother* (1996) Caribbean writer Jamaica Kincaid describes herself as an autobiographer. The book's cover, however, classifies it as fiction. Leigh Gilmore, a writer, describes Kincaid as a 'hybrid-autobiographer' in reference to her series of fictions that defy the conventions of both the fictional text and the conventional autobiographical first-person narrative. V. S. Naipaul is known for his works that blur the borders between travel stories, autobiography, and fiction. These boundaries start to represent fractured subjectivities and overlapping identities. Finding the Center is "not an autobiography, [but] a story of a life or deeds done," as Naipaul underlines, yet he calls it a 'personal narrative' (Naipaul, 9). Naipaul titles the prologue to Finding the Center, his introduction to the book. The Caribbean subjects are unable to be identified as autobiographical subjects because of this cultural gap. They are reluctant to write about themselves consequently. In the book *Caribbean Autobiography: Cultural Identity and Self-Representation* (2002) was released. Claude McKay, Derek Walcott, George Lamming, V. S. Naipaul, Jean Rhys, Jamaica Kincaid, and Kamau Brathwaite are among the famous Anglo-Caribbean authors studied by Sandra Pouchet Paquet, who examines how these works construct a distinct Caribbean identity despite the challenges and paradoxes of diversity. Autobiographical discourse necessitates inter-generic negotiation since autobiographies vary in their forms, functions, and narrative styles. Among other kinds of autobiographies, they include stories of childhood, travelogues, tales of enslavement, autobiographical fiction, and narrative poetry. By structurally and physically allowing for the other, autobiography as a genre defies the idea of a singular or coherent 'sovereign' self. This is further supported by the inter-generic interaction that becomes a hallmark of decolonization-era memoirs. It follows that modern life-writing differs from Gusdorf's argument that non-Western civilizations' autobiography would necessarily adopt from Western forms.



Life-writing: The Indian Experience

It is crucial to remember that, although playing a significant role in the decolonization process, the obsession with life writing is not exclusive to the political interpretation of the change. The genre of life writing has been explored in many ways in the Indian subcontinent. A multitude of viewpoints and objectives have been used to characterize life, whether they are political, religious, festive, or daily. Recent years have seen a rise in the popularity of life-writing as a genre, which, according to Gusdorf's perspective, is not limited to the lives of 'great' men or, more especially, to the 'white male subject.' This is because there are other ways to think about self-writing than the traditional one. A diverse representation of the self in various contexts and locations has been used to build life histories from the 18th century that emphasize the continuous juggling act of individual, collective, and national identities in Indian culture. The proliferation of life writing in Indian culture may be attributed to a variety of self-representations. An original idea of life-writing reflective of society at large has emerged from the many life-writings that cross disciplinary boundaries. Author Dipesh Chakrabarty makes the following observation in response to the pervasive 'public' presence in private lives in nineteenth-century Indian literature, diaries, letters, and memoirs: "they seldom yield pictures of an endlessly interiorized subject. Our autobiographies are remarkably "public" (with construction of public life that are not necessarily modern) when written by men and tell the story of the extended family when written by women" (Chakrabarty, 35).

Both the concept of autobiography as a story that goes beyond a single life and the act of self-making in colonial nations, which might hinder subject-hood, are relevant to Chakrabarty's assertion. To elucidate his point, Chakrabarty examines N. C. Chaudhuri's *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*. The book focuses mostly on Chaudhuri's public life, with just one chapter devoted to his personal life. One excellent example of the archetypal form of the self-narrative is the 1973 book *My Village, My Life: Portrait of an Indian Village* by Prafulla Mohanti. The author uses a small Orissan hamlet to illustrate how customs, way of life, and local tales are always changing. Similarly, the autobiographies of the decolonizing period, like those of Gandhi and Nehru, are always dealing with the larger historical and national forces; the reference to both is a common feature of postcolonial writing. Because the story of an author's



life is dispersed across their corpus of work, autobiographies tend to be vague and ongoing. Some ways in which the non-finalizability of life's story is addressed in *My Days*, R. K. Narayan's autobiography: "How can an autobiography have a final chapter? At best it can only be a penultimate one; nor can it be given a rounded-off conclusion, as is possible in a work of fiction" (185).

Life writing in India flourished during colonialism, but other social conditions, such as patriarchy and the caste system, may have played an equally significant role in the creation of these works by women and Dalits who had to navigate the complicated intersections of their identities as women, Dalits, and marginalized people. Throughout her almost century-long career, she chronicles the experiences of Bengali women via life-writing, which she uses to explore the connection between the individual and an often-ignored public sphere. *Amar Jiban* (*My Life*), written by upper class rural Bengali housewife Rashsundari Devi (1809–1899), is regarded as one of the first autobiographies to appear in India. Throughout the novel, the emblem of the caged bird emerges often, serving as a continual reminder that women determine the home realm. Unlike other women in her historical era, Rashsundari is a writer in the public sphere. In an orthodox Hindu home, she is also a conformist homemaker. Rashsundari is concurrently in each of these jobs. Published in 1913, Binodini Dasi's autobiography, *Amar Katha* (*The Story of My Life*), was written. It tells the story of her life as a prostitute who rose from a lowly background to become a courtesan. She went on to become an actress in nineteenth-century Bengali theater, performing in popular plays. She is liberated from the inhibitions connected with the upper class, but since she does not conform to the preconceived norms of femininity, she is shunned by society at large. However, autobiographies written by women in the years that followed, like *Memoirs of an Indian Woman* (1989) by Sudha Majumadar, *I Follow After* (1934–1937) by Laxmibai Tilak, *In Search of Freedom* by Manikuntala Sen, and *Jiboner Jhara Pata* (*Life's Fallen Leaves*) by Sarala Devi Chaudhurani, challenge patriarchy and go against the social mores and gender politics of the day. These memoirs serve to enhance the overarching story of the burgeoning national consciousness. But in a culture that was so rigid, it was really hard for women to express their own tales. In her autobiographical work, Mahadevi Verma successfully conceals



her personal identity and draws a distinction between her writerly and real selves via the use of a number of literary devices. The ‘female self’ depicted in these memoirs is in a perpetual state of ‘becoming’ as she navigates ‘modernity.’ A unique Indian (Hindu) viewpoint is encapsulated in the life stories of these women. A blend of Indian and non-Indian origin is also present, along with a movement against patriarchy. Kamala Das published her autobiography, *My Story*, in (1973). Very open and honest, it details her journey to sexual enlightenment and confronts the patriarchal norms of traditional Indian culture. Writings on modern women's lives highlight the incongruity between idealized portrayals of female subjectivity and identity and the realities of women's everyday existence. Accounts of the lives of disadvantaged people published in Indian vernaculars and translated into English provide evidence of the growth of life-writing, a phenomenon that is relatively new. Stories like *A Life Less Ordinary*, written by Baby Halder, recount the inspiring journey of an aspiring writer who overcomes adversity to become a published author. The act of writing itself is important in this context because it encompasses the history of the class and has the capacity to strengthen the otherwise excluded and lowly self. As Urvashi Butalia in her foreword to *Life Less Ordinary* observes, “... Baby’s story is not unique. It is the story of thousands of women caught in similar situations across the world...” (Halder, viii), Her relentless pursuit of knowledge and her strong inclination to read and write set her narrative apart from others. A Revathi's *The Truth About Me: A Hijra Story* and Nalini Jameela's *The Autobiography of a Sex Worker* both seek to publicize the agency of sex workers and third genders. These pieces depict the discrimination against transgender and sex workers as well as how society views them as the repugnant Other. Through her autobiography, Jameela defies the conventional notion of femininity by sharing the little-known experiences of a laboring woman living on the outside of society. Through emphasizing the tension between her private life as a mother and woman and her role as a sex worker in ‘public life,’ it questions and so disproves the stereotype of sex workers. In her book *The Truth About Me*, A Revathi explores the uncomfortable realities of being born into a male body and desiring to live a woman's life. She also discusses the immense shame she feels in society after listening to her inner voice and choosing to become a member of the transgender community. A Revathi's book is a fictional creation. While having distinct personal experiences, they nevertheless allude to a shared narrative since their outcomes reflect



the group they belong to. *I, Phoolan Devi: The Autobiography of India's Bandit Queen*, reproduces her tale from an oral presentation with the help of Marie-Therese Cuny and Paul Rambai. It shows how she goes from being an underdog to being a queen. The individual's life story becomes a group effort after translation and interpretation. This is one interpretation of the personal life story that differs. The epilogue of Phoolan's autobiography conveys her determination to share her story, despite the fact that it has been distorted and misused by the media, especially by journalists and filmmakers.

Phoolan faces an individual as well as a societal issue since her personal experience has come to represent the injustice and suffering that women in her community have endured. Both syntagmatic and paradigmatic forms are used in the life-writings to tell the story of lives. This indicates that in addition to describing specific parts of a person's existence, the life-writings also convey parallel tales about the lives and periods of other people as well as about society and tradition in general. Syntagmatic ideas are often absorbed by paradigmatic ideas.

Conclusion

Her relentless pursuit of knowledge and her strong inclination to read and write set her narrative apart from others. A Revathi's *The Truth About Me: A Hijra Story* and Nalini Jameela's *The Autobiography of a Sex Worker* both seek to publicize the agency of sex workers and third genders. These works illustrate the stigmatization and prejudice that transgender and sex workers face in our culture. By detailing the hidden life of a working woman on the margins of society in her autobiography, Jameela challenges the traditional idea of femininity. By highlighting the conflict between her 'private life' as a mother and woman and her "public life" as a sex worker, it challenges and rejects the stereotype of sex workers. A Revathi delves into the unsettling truths of being born into a male body while yearning to live a woman's life in her book *The Truth About Me*. After following her heart and becoming a transgender person, she talks about the overwhelming guilt she feels in society. The books written by Revathi are works of fiction. Although they are unique individual stories, they hint at a collective story since the results mirror the community to which they belong. The autobiography of India's bandit queen, *I, Phoolan Devi*, reproduces



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