

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter summarizes the findings and the conclusion of the study. The five women writers with sharp linguistic, cultural and geographical environment represented the problems and painful stories of Indian women from 19th century until date. However, they have not shared the contemporary time of the history, the problems of patriarchal society, treatment women, broken marriages and the identity crises for the women remained similar.

It is difficult to conclude a study of a contemporary and in many ways a controversial subject like feminist sensibility among women's autobiographies. It is always difficult to arrive at definite views or judgments. There are number of issues related with the study like this. There is also a danger of omitting or misinterpreting or misrepresenting textual and referential material. Keeping in mind all aspects it is certain that no study is complete and perfect. There are pertinent questions related and raised by these women writers through their works. The issues like status of women in colonized situations, how does autobiography as a genre help them in expressing their sensibility? How do they mend and bend the form of autobiography to suit their purpose? Do their lives become texts for others or messages? What kind of self-identity do these writers construct and what are the voices that speak in the process of its definition? What is the consciousness that motivates them and guides them? In addition, the most important question of what are the conflicts that prevail in their lives between them and the society.

The women writers have through their autobiographies tackled these questions. What is significant is that no- two works are identical; no-two women report the same life, the same viewpoint or the same answers to these and other questions. Each of them has a significantly individual and valid viewpoint as well as world-view. The autobiographies studied are a mix fictionalized autobiographies and indirectly reported autobiographical reminiscences. The content, too, varies considerably between works revealing and connecting reconstruction of parts of individual lives.

10.1. Analytical studies of Women writers

In this concluding chapter of this study, it is necessary to show a comparative study of these women autobiographers with their racial, religious and linguistic background. It will be worthwhile to note what are the critical appreciations and all the basic situations. The five women writers under the study have very different linguistic background as three of the five women writers belong to Maharasrtrian cultural background. Laxmibai Tilak belongs to pre-Independence movement of 19th century. Urmila Pawar with Kokan region of Maharastra background and Shobha De with cosmopolitan background representing the affluent class of writer in the Indian English literature.

Kamala Das and Amrita Pritam are known writers in the country for their contribution in the field of poetry. They have been awarded Gyanpith, the highest literary award of the country for their contribution in literature. They are contemporary writers representing north and south states of the country.

In case of Amrita Pritam, her father was very discipline and dominant person and expected similar 'obedience' from his child. She lost her mother at an early age. She has brought up until 16th year of her life, at Gujranwala (present Pakistan) undivided India. He expected her to be an 'obedient' self- effecting daughter. A few modern critics observed the feministic guard of patriarchal domination in this father daughter relationship. Some even interpret that her disciplinarian father, who never bothered to understand her, terrorized her. It is true that father in those days did not grant any privacy of feeling or freedom of expression to their daughter. She has started writing at the age of 16th and got married at the age of sixteen only. In the prologue to 'The Revenue Stamp' Amrita writes,

that the complete texture of her memoir is expressed by her personal feelings .She reveals her feminine agony openly in this book.

Kamala Das shared the similar age of publication of her book of ‘Collected Poems’ and got married to an elderly relative of hers. She has also spent her childhood days at Nalpat; Malbar and her initial family name was Madhavi Kutty.

Kamala Das and Shobha De express similar feelings in their memoirs about their fathers that they created an environment of restriction under guise of self- discipline persons. As regarding, the narratives by the women writers Estelle, C Has her own views,

“Women’s self- image is projected by the very means used to distance or detach themselves. In their lifestories, a variety of forms of understatement in place of growing narratives, women tend to write in a straight forward and objectivemanner about both their girlhood and adult experiences. ”¹

Amrita Pritam presents her image in her descriptions of childhood, *girlhood* and youth too metaphorically at many points, that her autobiography becomes an appealing example, distinct in expression and images use for language and aesthetic vision.

Kamala Das’s ‘My Story’ gives us feelings of her identity of her inner urge for freedom, self-assertion, autonomy and establishment of her identity. She could not reconcile herself to a subordinate position in her life. Her husband could not satisfy her emotional needs and she had to seek compassions outside her marriage for her emotional needs. She has willfully turned to several men in the hope that she would one day be able to find an ideal lover who would love her for her own sake, who would not treat her as sexual object she has searched in her life for pure and unconditioned love.

Kamala Das was in dilemma over her marriage. She has realized that it was not love, but sex that marriage as an institution legalized. She was ready to defy subverting the traditional expectations from women. She felt that like men women too had the right to satisfy her needs.

There is distinct similarity between Kamala Das's 'MY Story' and Sylvia Plath's 'The Bell Jar' as both the creations are full of literary creativity like the protagonist of 'The Bell Jar' Kamala Das was unable to exclude from her life the option which would fulfill her humanity in other than domestic circles.

Like Amrita Pritam, Kamala Das have been very sensitive to adverse criticism. About critics Kamala Das has said with the contempt

*"They help to sell books, they attack, on the whole critics are an ugly lot full of ransom and frustration. They must use their fans for their own confront like cobras a Russell's vipers."*²

Shobha DE, the other prominent and cosmopolitan woman writer in English literature known for her feminist approaches is a best seller. The present day writers like Kamala Das and Amrita Pritam have a failure in their marriage life, but Shobha has survived in the second attempt of marriage, which has proved very successful. Her memoir is one way a record of historical incidents with literary touch.

Shobha De in a confessional manner has given a true account of her childhood days, adulthood as model, and her career as an editor. She has provided brief and sensitive details of her family, particularly her father. She has narrated number of incidents of her life for example as a youngster, and she was a rebel and always did things against the normal traditional way. As she writes in her memoir,

*"I must have created many problems for my parents as an adolescent. Journalists often asked me whether I was a rebel?"*³

As an editor, when she has made up her mind to depart with Nari Hira and to start Society. It was a challenging task for her as she has shared her experience in 'Selective Memories.' As she states in her memoir,

“The first thing to get right was the cover story, always the bane editors in search of the right subject .International reach on the matter had shown that woman sold better than men, photographs better than illustrations and babies best all.”⁴

Further, she narrates her mental conflict of ‘To Be or Not’ with her magazine ‘Society.’ She narrates her story prior to publication of ‘Society’. She was confused and admits,

“while I was enjoying ‘society’ editing enormously, one side of me was acting up, ‘listen you can do its own your own. Why work for somebody else? Goon, flout your own magazine.do it now.’”⁵

The failure to run the magazine and the broken marriage disturbed her too much and her conscience her womanhood and at one point she thought about identity crisis of her life as she writes,

“I had never been in such a situation before. Nothing, but nothing-was right financially or emotionally. My marriage was breaking up .The magazine I started ‘celebrity’, was facing all sorts of problems. For the first time in my adult life, I felt alone, alienated and isolated.”⁶

Hermemoir has depicted her created status, her family, remarriage with De, her sisters, and children. When, she glances back to her life at fifty, her life she feels contented. She expresses satisfaction as an executive and mother of six children. She has a successful life to narrate and inspire other women of the country.

At the end of her memoir, she writes,

“There is a sense of acceptance today that did not exist previously. This is who I am, no tricks, no games, no camouflage life isgoing on about.”⁷

Laxmibai Tilak, comparatively very senior writer to the other four women writers. She has no literacy background from her childhood days. She is fortunate that after her marriage at the age of nine her husband Waman Narayan Tilak has taught her reading and writing. He was a preacher and a known poet of Marathi literature. He had preferred to remain a philanthropic person rather than a family man. Laxmibai had faced dire poverty at her parents' house as well as in her in-laws' house. Tilak, had never bothered about household things and lavishly spend money for charitable works. In the initial stage, Laxmibai has started writing poems and later on she developed interest for fiction writing.' Smruti Chitre' is a narration she has done to her grandchild Devdutt. He has published it in installments at her later age of life. Laxmibai was initially disagreed, with Tilak's Baptism into Christianity. Due to realistic problems, she was convinced to accept new religion. She has learned many lessons through her transformation about caste Untouchability, which she has mentioned at a length in her memoir. In her memoir, she has mentioned and talked about Mr. Tilak more and less about herself.

Like other fourth world literature, the mainly oral literature of the marginalized sections of the Indian society has begun to gain momentum in the recent decades. This is an attempt to build the movement on the pillars of protest and resistance. The term 'Dalit' which means people who have been ground down, came into existence as part of this struggle for identifying and restitution, only untouchables are Dalit. Despite all these controversies, however, Dalit movement and Dalit literature have grown considerably in the past three decades in the path of revolt.

Urmila Pawar's 'Aaydan' represents this movement and growth of dalit literary activity. In other words, Pawar represents the marginalized group in two manners as a woman writer and a Dalit literary person.

The noted, Dalit writer Shanta Gohkale has observed,

'Narratives of Dalit woman's voyage through life told with a sense of irony and humor.

Aaydan is marked by honesty of its narration. '8

Urmila Pawar's Aaydan was published bit by bit in Marathi publication—1984 known 'Aksharcharwak' and mainly her first night marriage narration has attracted many in those days. As Urmila writes in her prologue Aaydan,

“Before plastic began to be utilized for making different objects of everyday use bamboo was the most common material used to make baskets containers and other things in general utility of the household. Aaydan is a generic term used for all the things made from bamboo; awata is another word. Outside the Kokan, the job of bamboo basket was traditionally being assigned to nomadic tribes, like Burud community. In the Kokan region, however it was the Mahar caste which undertook this task.”⁹

She accepts the influence of Dalit literature as well as the impact of Dr. Baba Saheb's movement of conversion from Dalit to Navbuddha. Urmila explained in her memoir,

“The pace of conversion picked up radically after the conversion to Buddhism. To begin with, there was tremendous interest in the new religion and in the images of Buddha and Dr. Ambedkar. Initially, it was difficult to replace the images of Gods. To replace it with Buddha And Ambedkar's, the age old habits of praying to the gods for praying for difficult times, were too strong to be given up.”¹⁰

She refers in Aaydan about her mother, her father was a teacher a reformist for the community but inside her house, he was a typical patriarchal and typical person. She has also narrated the submissive and oppressive character of her sister-in-law Paravti has no power in their house in their house to eat or sleep on her own wish.

She has also given references of her school life and particularly the items of the lunch boxes, which show the demarcation of upper middle class and Dalit community. The rarity of item brought by the upper class colleagues as she wrote,

“She couldn't think to talk to her family. Economic conditions were not permitting.”¹¹

The sexual abuses and sexual harassment at the school reveal our attention. She has sharp observations about her family members and acute cultural changes in her sister's language. Similarly, the language is tinged by caste. Pawar exemplifies, how Brahminical language can create a barrier among Dalit's instead of facilitates. Generally use the more formal 'plural 'form of 'you 'of Marathi to address their husbands, as Pawar writes,

"The behavior of tai in her marriage with her husband, her brother-in-law and use of brahminical dialects which created a distance between the husband and wife. I used to feel so angry about Tai's s imitating the Brahmin Godbole family using and in-laws, indeed. Our uneducated illiterate village women were much better. I think Tai's use of honorific created Distance between herself and her husband, which was never there in a husband –wife relationship in our community. "'¹²

Maya Pandit's translation does not always manage to reproduce the robustness and flexibility of Pawar's language. The crispness of her phrasing and the wryness of her humor, it tends more towards explanation than reproduction. The literary qualities of the feminist approach and sensibility of Dalit literature are perhaps missing. . Dr. Maya Pandit as 'The weave of My Life' translates her autobiography, Aaydan into English: A Dalit woman's Memoir. Urmila Pawar as an activist of the woman's lib and Dalit movement have presented her account of three generations of Dalit women through her mother's character and her mother-in-law. Urmila has narrated in this memoir her three roles as a daughter, wife and mother. She has confessed that the geographical, social and economic circumstances cause the problems for her and her community to carry up and self at par with public.

Laxmibai Tilak's 'Smruti Chitre' translated by Josephine as 'I Follow After 'in 1950, is written in colloquial Marathi it is a record of history of Marathi literature. She was recognized as Sahitya Laxmi of Marathi literature by Acharya Atre and others and was appealed not to write anything further after publication of ' Smruti Chitre'.

Laxmibai was an illiterate girl born in Chitpavan family got married at the young age of 11(eleven) to Shri Narayan Waman Tilak, who was a literary personality. He was influenced by his mother, who herself was a poet but due to his father's strict nature could not publish or show to anybody except young Tilak. This shows in the very beginning of the autobiography the seeds of patriarchal behavior of the male members of the family. Narayan Waman Tilak too did not provide any financial stability to Laxmibai throughout her life as he was changing jobs as per his whims and philanthropic nature. He has never taken care as a husband of Laxmibai or his children or provide them love and feelings of security in his life. He has converted to Christianity the third case of the autobiography after Kamala Das and Urmila Pawar, Laxmibai at later stage of her life followed her husband, started adopting orphan children, and nurtured them as her own children. At one time, the number of children has reached beyond their capacity to feed and ultimately hand over to an orphanage.

Many eminent writers of Marathi literature have appreciated 'Smruti Chitre' as record of history of last 50 years. Her light humor is the best part of the Autobiography, as it has not done any satire on anybody .There is not a single incident of backbiting or direct criticism on personal incident or any situation but very modestly she has narrated it in sober language. Her language is not literary but rustic and there is no influence of English or Sanskrit words .Her style and narration is spontaneous ad there is no element of artificial incident in it .There is no element of dramatization.

Smruti Chitre reveals many incidents of her sensible nature that even in trouble and painful situations she has not lost her endurance as a true Indian woman. She has not listed her problems. The male characters drawn by her were comparatively were crude and very selfish may be her own father or her father- in -law and other male characters too. Laxmibai and Tilak have no personal life as such, as they have no private time for themselves but for the cause of social service.

The works examined reveal the in-depth that typifies woman's writing elsewhere as well. Each writer, regardless of consequences in terms of a reception, sets down the degree of pain, suffering and protest or accommodation. The present study of these autobiographies discusses history, identity, conflict and consciousness in a protesting voice. There is a sense in which all of them also attempt a reconciliation with the facts that

they may have to be co-exist with the family and society at large .Although, it is not only gender consciousness that dominates women's autobiographies. Women writers differ from men writers also in their discussion of sex and sexuality. While women writers elaborate only sparingly on their affairs and sexual abuses.

As Jackie Huggins observes,

*'' Until there is a real understanding of racism in this country and genuine moves made towards racial equality, many women will not be prepared to talk publicly to audiences about the oppression they suffer through sexism.''*¹³

Urmila Pawar and Laxmibai Tilak have presented in details the problems of caste discrimination. Even today, the country is not free from oppression. There are fourth world societies in India in the form of the castes and displaced and dispossessed communities. The caste systems of India had ostracized certain sections of society as untouchables. Mainstream majority people of society eliminate this marginalized group. In order to, glorify certain sections and put them on a higher pedestal the dominant strata of society have portrayed and treated the outcaste as subhuman. Pawar has given a true picture of the caste and gender differences. She has narrated her husband Harish Chandra's example when he was posted at Ratnagiri. Harishchandra reacted very sharply for the caste discrimination due to low caste remarked against him and left the place without food.

10.2 Specific Observation of nature, language and culture

The feminine spirit and sensibilities of these writers are observed from their behavior and strong reactions in the form of their actions. In case of both Amrita and Kamala Das have had unconventional thinking and have therefore become quite controversial. They do not conform to the established norms of the society; they defy them. They have revolted against the traditional man woman relationship. Their attitude to sex is different from the puritanical attitude of their contemporaries. They challenge all the taboos.

They disapprove of the conventional marriage of girls at an early age and wide gap between husband and wife.

When we read their autobiographies Amrita Pritam's *The Revenue Stamp* and Kamala Das's *My Story* they reflect their inner urge for freedom, self-assertion, autonomy and establishment of their identity. Incidentally, both the writers had a literary background. Similarly in case of Shobha De writing articles doing editing at a magazine was an occupation and hobby as a freelancer. Writing novels is a new experience for her, as she has not experimented with this form of writing. Similarly when she has made up her mind to write her memoir she was not sure about the accuracy and adoption of this memoir writing. Pawar has also experienced of writing articles and short- stories in Marathi journals when she was doing job at Ratnagiri in the Government job. She was under the influence of Dalit writers as well as Dr. Ambedkar's movement.

This comparative study of the five women writers show not only their literary achievements and cultural periods of their time but also reveals simultaneously the social, economic and gender problems. One important factor is the broken marriage almost all the writers have faced in their lifetime. In case of Amrita Pritam after divorced from her husband, she stayed with Imroz for forty years of her life until her death. Kamala has not officially take divorced from her husband but from the beginning of the memoir, repeatedly she mentioned her dissatisfaction and even confessed that she would be not loyal to him at least physically. She has narrated number of male characters who have played an important role to satisfy her needs at least mentally. It is her rebellion nature and urge for love, the never-ending hunger for a suitable partner who can care for her and understand her feelings. Her feminine sensibility is expressed through each chapter of *My Story* from childhood days to her illnesses and the time she spent at Mumbai and Delhi with her husband. Pawar, Laxmibai and Shobha De, these women writers have also unhappy and troublesome marriage life. They could survive with the social custom of marriage. Due to their firmness, they could survive their family life. They have refused to bow down as ordinary homemakers against oppression and patriarchal orders.

These women writers have an important issue that is more than common. The spirit of secularism instilled in their writings. They spoke for and stood with strict discipline. They have proved themselves as secular in their approach to all the religions of the country.

Amrita has many Muslim friends. Kamala Das prior to her conversion to Muslim community has many Muslim friends. Laxmibai has proved more than any secular person has by adopting number of orphan children of different religion. Her conversion to Christianity and relations with the Missionaries indicate her true secular behavior and spirit. De, too, has maintained her secular character by detaching herself from any favor or bias feelings towards any group or community as a journalist and novelists. Urmila Pawar as Dalit writer never expressed any derogative remarks for the upper class people or use sarcastic language in her memoir.

Regarding the portrayal of the characters all, the women writers have similar approach. Their characterization of their family members is free from bias feelings. They have depicted them with natural flavor. Amrita has drawn picture of her father, friends and other literary personalities Kamala Das has drawn pictures of entire Nalpat house from her great grandfather, granny, and even maid servants. She has portrayed Mr.Madhvdas her husband in a bad light. Her character sketches schoolmates and particularly her lovers. Carlo's depiction draws our attention. De has given a full basket of characterization of celebrity personalities along with her family members and specially her children. The celebrities she has portrayed in true color and in a bold manner without ant prejudice towards their position or role in the society. She has also taken care that she has not attack any one of them personally. It is very clear that as a feminist by heart she has little favor in the presenting of women characters may be Zeenat Amman or Hema Malini. She has done her job graciously as it is not easy to remember and to depict their characteristics objectively.

Pawar has also drawn similar character sketches of her mother, father, sister and her bother along with her community people. Harish Chandra she has given lot of space like Laxmibai in her memoir for Mr. Waman Narayan Tilak she has also listed number of noted Marathi and dalit literary personalities and social workers those who have encouraged her for her writings. The women liberation group members and members of Ambedkar movement. She has not forgotten any person who has even done any little favor to her in her memoir. The minute details of the each character from her school time, classmate, and teachers specially one who was teaching English to her. Laxmibai has not much literary background and started learning at a later stage of her life but her narration and portrayal of the characters is unparalleled in the history of Marathi literature. The number of characters

she could portray is more than the total characters of the other four women writers could referred in their memoirs. Laxmibai has three areas in the characterization. Her family, her orphan adopted children and people from social organizations.

The women writers have share the common style of drafting similes, which can attract our attention. The Revenue stamp' has certain striking ideas and similes, which attract our attention. She calls Imroz her "15 Aug." which is a novel thing. About her sixteenth birthday she writes,

*"Like a thief, came my sixteenth year, stealthy like a prowler in the night stealing through the open windows at the head of my bed."*¹⁴

The identification with phoenix is very appropriate self-knowledge of the poet in Amrita as Goyal observes,

*"A genuine autobiography is both an essay on truth and experiences in being."*¹⁵

About her autobiography he says,

*"Neither salacious extroversion of Kamala Das's My Story nor the intellectual exhibitionism and show relationship of Nirad Chaudhuri's Autobiography of an 'unknown Indian.'"*¹⁶

Kamala Das on the other end has a fresh language and her vocabulary is rich and ample. Her similes like,

*"At night he was as if a chieftain who collected the taxes drew him from his vessel, simply without exhilaration."*¹⁷

The other place She writes,

*"The sun falls over the city gently like a silver of butler on a piece of toast."*¹⁸

Shobha De in her stylish English presented certain similes and metaphor too, which are very impressive. In her prologue to 'Selective Memory: Stories from My Life,' She writes,

*"For woman, a book in progress is like a secret lover. she has to hide from her family, steal time to go back to dream about." at other place she writes, "flowers became trademark, colourscoordinated and carefully picked to complement my wardrobe, campus life was a four year picnic exactly as my father had feared."'*¹⁹

On Hema Malini's marriage with Dharmendra, She has written her observation,

*"She was seen as a person who refused to buckle under pressure, someone who went on her life, ignoring contribution and flaunting society's rules but quietly."'*²⁰

Urmila Pawar's 'Aaydan': 'The Weave of My Life' is marked with honesty of its narration, told with a sense of irony and humor. Urmila looks at herself as a child, daughter, wife and mother as objectively as she does at Harish Chandra as a husband. 'weaving' happens to be the central metaphor of the present memoir weaving of bamboo baskets the main profession of the protagonist's mother, indicts their low caste as well as their dire economic poverty. As Urmila writes about the title of her memoir,

*"My mother used to weave Aaydan. I find that her act of weaving and my act of writing are originally similar actions. The weave is similar. It is the weave of suffering and agony that link us."'*²¹

In case of Laxmibai Tilak, her characterization is very familiar and comes from our nearby environment, realistic, descriptive and dramatic. Laxmibai's presentation is very bold and fearless; she brought truth as observed by herself. Her narration is supportive incidental and

bringing new dimension. ‘Smruti Chitre’ shows number of such similes, metaphors, and anecdotes, which make it a memorable. As Govindrao spoke to,

“Atyabai about Laxmibai and her marriage I am not going to search, you should not feel that I have wrong place for the girl by considering any their wealth of the firmly.”²²

Laxmibai has given example of her mother-in-law’s poem in her memoir,’ see what majesty pervades, ‘

*This doll of Vegas and wood
Instructress she of tender maids
In arts of motherhood,’²³*

In the words of H.B.pangarkar,

“There is a combination of arts and truth in her writing. Her writings are truthful and normal getting further artistic touch.”²⁴

Even Tilak has appreciated Laxmibai’s publication of her first novel. He writes,

“I am glad that mama has found something to interest her, but a novel means much exercising of brain and I am afraid and if she pushes on that may tell upon her health and make her worse.”²⁵

Laxmibai creates humour from the tragic situations also whenever her father- in- law Mamji taunts her,

“Were you a stone you could be used as a step to the latrine?”²⁶

Laxmibai thinks in her mind,

“who knows if I might be used as a step for the latrine or for an icon of God.”²⁷

When Narayan Tilak has published his first book named 'Goddess Prasad', which was published by Jagirdar of Vani. He has described the poems,

*"A little flattering a little quarrelling not as much as we have between husband and wife is like spicy chatni in dinner."*²⁸

The feminine sensibility arising in the depiction of these memoirs is remarkable, presenting Indian ethos, values, and cultural background. They have also contributed through their life style the voice of the lower middle class women and the important question of search for own identity. In short, the researcher observes the elements of feminist sensibility in these memoirs. In case of Laxmibai Tilak it is observed her as a hard-core feminist and sensible enough for the problems of women of her area. However, she could not do much but she could create an environment for the destitute women and homeless children in her orphanage. Even it is revealed in her speeches,

*"Days before she gave a full animated lecture on what could be done for fallen womanhood of India. With the result, fifteen men stood up and openly volunteered to do all they cared to save these women."*²⁹

Laxmibai has not only written in her life but she could prove that she has live up to the life she wanted to live for others. It means practically what she believed she has proved in her behavior and through her actions. At the last stage of her life, she has replied to Acharya Atre,"

*"The day I will get death that day only 'Smruti Chitre' will stop. My brother, relatives, community in the presence of all I tell to my publisher that until I breathe last Laxmibai will write."*³⁰

All the women writers have common family problems and circumstances but they could project Indian culture, its meaning and values. They have their limitations but the lamps of feminism they have lightens that has provided many women organizations to undertake the issues of poor, weaker and orphan women of the society. Their fight against patriarchal society, strong confession and rituals they could bring to the notice of the people for a

change. This may be considered that the attempts in various methods they have employed in eradicating the evil mind of the people will defiantly change our society.

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25. Pangarkar H.B. "Lok Nayak", Arihant Publication, Nashik, 1963. p. 123
26. Tilak Laxmibai, ibid p.138
27. p.137
28. p.139
29. p.140
30. p.144
31. p.157
32. p.158
33. p.159