

**SOULFUL REVELATIONS: A DUAL ODYSSEY INTO
SELFHOOD IN PAUL KALANITHI'S *WHEN BREATH
BECOMES AIR* AND MICHELLE OBAMA'S *BECOMING*.**

Dissertation

*Submitted to the University of Calicut in partial fulfilment of the requirement for
the award of Degree of Master of Arts in English Language and Literature*

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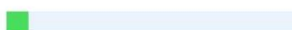
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Chapter I

Introduction

Man is a very complex constitution to understand and it takes several incidents and situations to make a man's self to be formed or transformed. Identity is something an individual built during their life. Sailing through the life journey each and every individual tend to make a better person within them that connects their personal, professional and social identity. It makes a man to be the best out of oneself that one showcase in the society. Identity plays a very important role in every life. Identity is described as the reality of being the person or thing that someone or something is. Memoirs are a type of literature where one portrays oneself in the very true way to show how they became who they are. Memoirs hold very much significance in showing one's identity how their life situations shaped their identity. Memoirs help individuals to tell their own stories in their own words. They open-up a very huge platform for self-expression and self-reflection, allowing authors to share their life journeys, viewpoints, and understandings. This authenticity fosters a deep connection between authors and readers. Memoirs include a wide range of experiences, making them a treasure of various views. They allow readers to discover the lived experiences of people from various backgrounds, cultures, and situation. This range develops our understanding of the human condition and the complex net of identities that shape it.

Identity theory, developed by Peter Burke and Sheldon Stryker, focuses on the formation and maintenance of personal identity it suggests that individuals construct their identities through social interactions and self- concept. The social identity theory is developed by Henry Tajfel and John Turner which deals with how group membership influences individual identity. One potential gap in this area is the need for more exploration of how individuals navigate multiple social identities and the

conflicts or synergies that arise from these intersecting identities. Additionally, further information regarding the influence of social identity theory in the justification for varying cultural contexts is valid.

Social identity theory allows to identify a certain group and show how individuals seek to build their own image and create a positive social identity among the group. It also explains how intergroup behaviour, like prejudice and discrimination, can arise when there is a serious threat to an individual's identity in a group. As George Meredith says "memoirs are the backstairs of history". Memoirs and Autobiography are both types of storytelling in the first-person perspective that focus on personal life experiences.

Autobiography focus on the comprehensive life story and memoirs give importance to specific events, relationships or themes and incidents. They are mostly thematic and selective that concentrate on a distinct period, relationships in author's life. They also explore on personal history and evolution of identity over a period of time. Memoirs tries to express the real thoughts, feelings and motivations to the readers. A successful memoir engage the readers emotionally and compel to an authentic narrative voice. The main elements of a memoirs are strong descriptive details and thoughtful self-analysis.

In the land of memoirs, the narratives of Paul Kalanithi in *When Breath Becomes Air* and Michelle Obama in *Becoming* stand as powerful proofs to the complex relationship of identity. These two authors, from immensely different experiences and life practices, invite us into the close spaces of their lives, sharing stories of private and proficient change. Their journeys cross the spectrum of human existence, marked by moments of deep joy and severe sorrow, success and failure, triumph and adversity. As readers accompany them through these chronicles, a central question emerges: How do these authors

negotiate their professional identities and personal identities in the face of life-altering events, and what can this reveal about the malleability and resilience of identity constructs as described in identity theory?

To address this question, it is essential to comprehend the backdrop against which their stories unfold. Paul Kalanithi, a neurosurgeon, and Michelle Obama, the former First Lady of the United States, inhabit distinct domains within the societal framework. Kalanithi's identity is deeply fixed in the world of medicine, characterized by rational care, life-and-death decisions, and a search for understanding the human brain. In contrast, Michelle Obama's identity is basically linked to public service, advocacy, and the complex role of FirstLady, wherein expectations are enlarged by tradition and society.

It is within the container of struggle and change that the dynamic nature of identity unfolds, raising questions about how the self-adapts, evolves, and remains strong. Identity theory, through its intricate perspectives on self-concept, self-verification, and self-esteem, can be a useful tool for distinguishing and comprehending the experiences of Kalanithi and Obama. Additionally, Social identity theory offers an additional framework for their stories within the context of societal expectations and norms, focusing on the influence of group memberships and intergroup dynamics on individual identity.

The aim of this research project is to explore into the narratives of Paul Kalanithi and Michelle Obama and to examine the way in which they negotiate their professional and personal identities in the wake of life-altering events. By doing so, we can gain insight into the adaptability and flexibility of identity constructs as stated by Identity theory. We will separate the experiences of these authors, their emotional

responses, identity shifts, and the plans they employ to maintain or transform their sense of self. The specific objectives in this paper is to analyse the memoirs of Paul Kalanithi in *When Breath Becomes Air* and Michelle Obama in *Becoming* to identify key life changing events and their impact on the author's identity. To apply identity theory to understand how Paul Kalanithi and Michelle Obama negotiate their private and specialized identity in response to their life. To examine the significance of memoirs as a genre of literature and role of memoirs in literature.

This research paper includes of three main chapters followed by a summarizing chapter. First chapter pages will cover a comprehensive exploration of Paul Kalanithi's memoir, delving into the key moments that shaped his identity. Applying identity theory to understand his self-concept, self-verification, and self-esteem in the face of chronic diagnosis. The chapter is titled as Identity and self- discovery in *WBBA*, discusses the importance of identity in life altering events and finally facing the inevitable fate in the light of identity theory. The chapter also shows the image of an excellent neuro surgeon who is been selflessly standing with his patients keeping an identity as a doctor. Also, the loving husband, father, and son who balances between all the life situations. Second chapter entitled as Identity, Race and Social change in *Becoming* deals with the successful growth of a women with her family and friends who is an inspiration to many. Michelle Obama is a pure example of a lady who hold a balanced identity even in challenging life situations. On seeing through the lens of identity theory the memoir shows how a person becomes a better version of oneself on moving to the levels of life. The chapter titles of the memoir show the gradual transformation of the women who deal with the life.

Identity theory will be employed to understand their self-concept, self-verification, and self-esteem in the face of adversity. The impact of Social identity

theory will be examined, focusing on how societal expectations and group memberships influence their identity development in the coming chapter.

Both memoirs encapsulate critical junctures in the lives of their respective authors. The conjunction of these life-altering events with the authors' professional and personal identities provides fertile ground for exploration. It is within the container of struggles and transformation that the active nature of identity unfolds, raising questions about how the self-adapts, evolves, and remains resilient. Identity theory, with its complex understanding of self-concept, self-verification, and self-esteem, can serve as a valuable lens through which to separate and interpret the experiences of Kalanithi and Obama. Furthermore, Social identity theory, which highlights the impact of group memberships and intergroup dynamics on personal identity, provides a supplementary framework for analysing their narratives in the context of broader societal expectations and norms.

The concluding chapter showcases an analysis that will expose serious insights that extend the scope of these memoirs. The chapter entitled as the Memoirs; Its Importance of memoirs as genre for understanding identity narratives These personal stories provide readers with a broad insight into the author's life. Theory in the field of identity and social identity recognize the importance of narratives and personal stories in shaping self- concept and collective identity. It also explore how the role of storytelling in identity formation and autobiographical accounts influence individual and group identities. The chapter will also examine the significance of memoirs. Importance of memoirs in literature and how they narrate the identity. The chapter also deals with the role of understanding identity through memoirs and insights on Identity theory and Social identity theory in both memoirs, highlighting their unique perspectives and common threads that connect them. Also deals with illustration of the

intersection of personal and professional identity, complexity of identity. Stating with memoirs as the mirrors of the self.

In conclusion, comparative study of WBBA and *Becoming* offers profound implications for the fields of identity theory and social identity theory. These memoirs challenge established notions of identity as a fixed construct and emphasize the dynamic and malleable nature of identity. They underscore the transformative power of representation, the intersection of personal and collective identities, the role of resilience in identity formation, and the capacity of personal narratives to initiate social commentary. The enduring significance of memoirs as instruments for understanding identity narratives encourages theory and practice welcoming the strength of storytelling to influence both individual and collective identities. These implications invite further exploration and research into the intricate relationship between personal narratives and the negotiation of identity constructs in our diverse and evolving world. This detailed study will be finding the real idea of identity and memoirs.

Chapter II

Identity and Self- Discovery in *When Breath Becomes Air*

“if I were a writer of book, I would compile a register with a comment, of the various death of men. He should teach men to die would at the same time teach them to live”

-Michel Montaigne

Life, with all its challenges and uncertainties, is a gift to be cherished and celebrated. Through our conscious engagement with the world around us, our pursuit of knowledge and understanding, and our commitment to compassion and empathy, we can illuminate the path towards a life imbued with meaning, purpose, and fulfilment. Life, in its countless forms, serve as the canvas upon which the human experience unfolds. From the intricate dance of particles at the quantum level to the complex interplay of ecosystems on a planetary scale, life is an enigma that elicits contemplation. Philosophically, it beckons us to consider the landscape of consciousness, the spark that transforms mere existence into a subjective journey of thoughts, emotions, and self-awareness. The theoretical examination of the importance of life is intricately entwined with the concepts of "memento mori" and mortality, adding a poignant layer to our thoughtful of existence. "Memento mori," a Latin phrase meaning "remember that you will die," serves as a powerful reminder of the transience of life and the inevitability of mortality. This reflection on our own finite nature prompts profound philosophical inquiries about the significance of our time on this temporal stage.

In contemplating the importance of life through the lens of "memento mori," we are compelled to confront the impermanence of our existence. This acknowledgment of mortality is not meant to instill fear, but rather to inspire an increased understanding of the moments we inhabit. It serves as a catalyst for philosophical introspection, urging us to question the purpose and the definition we assign to our lives in the aspect of an

inevitable and shared destiny.

Paul Kalanithi's memoir, *When Breath Becomes Air* is a poignant and deeply introspective account that serves as both a philosophical exploration of existence and mortality and a profound narrative on the negotiation of personal and professional identities. Released after the author's death in 2016, This memoir often readers and intimate glimpse into the life of a brilliant neurosurgeon who faced a terminal cancer diagnosis, forcing him to consider the meaning of life and the complex fabric of identity.

Paul Kalanithi was a great person who personified the never-ending pursuit of knowledge and comprehension of the human condition. Kalanithi's academic pursuits showcased his dual interests in science and the humanities, reflecting the multifaceted nature of his identity. His career took a momentous turn when he decided to pursue neurosurgery, a field known for its intellectual rigor and life-altering responsibilities.

In 2013, at the age of 36, Paul Kalanithi received the devastating diagnosis of stage IV lung cancer, and affliction that would irrevocably alter the course of his life. The neurosurgeon who had been dedicated to mending and preserving life was suddenly confronted with his own mortality. This pivotal moment in Kalanithi's life marked the intersection of his personal and professional selves in the most profound way. As a neurosurgeon, Kalanithi's had been entrusted with the lives and wellbeing of his patients, shouldering the immense responsibility of making life- death decisions. His professional identity was deeply intertwined with his role as a healer and a scientist. In his working life, he continues to practice healing and assists others in making transformative decisions that further define his identity as a person and a healer.

A thirty-five-year-old sat in her I see you bed machine of terror on her face she had been shopping for her sister's birthday when she had a seizure. A scan

showed that a benign brain tumor was pressing on her right frontal lobe. In terms of operative risk it was the best kind of tumor to have and the best place to have it; surgery would almost certainly eliminate her seizures. The alternative was a lifetime on toxic antiseizure medications. But I could see that the idea of brain surgery terrified her, more than most. She was lonesome and in a strange place, having been swept out of the familiar hubbub of a shopping mall and into the alien beeps and alarms and antiseptic smells of an ICU. She would likely refuse surgery if I launched into a detached spiel detailing all the risks and possible complications. I had met her in a space she was a person, instead of a problem to be solved. She chose surgery. The operation went smoothly. She went home two days later, and never seized again. (Kalanithi 90)

However, with his diagnosis, he found himself transitioning from the role of physician to that of a patient, from a position of authority to one of vulnerability. This transformation of identity forms a central theme in *When Breath Becomes Air*.

LYING NEXT TO LUCY in the hospital bed, both of us crying, the CT scan images still glowing on the computer screen, that identity as physician—my identity—no longer mattered. With the cancer having invaded multiple organ systems, the diagnosis was clear. The room was quiet. Lucy told me she loved me. “I don’t want to die,” I said. I told her to remarry, that I couldn’t bear the thought of her being alone. I told her we should refinance the mortgage immediately. We started calling family members. At some point, Victoria came by the room, and we discussed the scan and the likely future treatments. When she brought up the logistics of returning to residency, I stopped her. (Kalanithi 120)

Kalanithi's autobiography serves as both a record of his fight with cancer and proof of the evolving narrative power. He embarks on a journey to make a sense of his own existence to understand the fleeting nature of life, and to convey the myriad emotions, fears and hopes that accompany a terminal illness and mortality. Kalanithi's writing style is categorized by its exquisite blend of the scientific and lyrical. He crafts a story that speaks to readers' intellects and emotions at the same time by contrasting the sterile, clinical realm of medicine with the richness and warmth of human emotions. His words provide a bridge between his professional identity as a brain surgeon and his personal identities as a person facing his own mortality, encapsulating the essence of identity theory.

As readers journey through WBBA, they witness the profound negotiations of identity that Paul Kalanithi undergoes. The memoir encapsulates his evolving self-concept as he transitions from a doctor who wields surgical instruments to a patient who confronts painful treatments and uncertainties. His self-verification process is evident as he grapples with implications of his diagnosis, seeking validation and understanding from his medical colleagues and family. Moreover, Kalanithi's memoir serves as a thought-provoking exploration of the malleability and resilience of identity constructs as postulated in identity theory. His narrative is a proof to the human capacity to adapt, to reconfigure one's self-concept and to find the purpose and meaning in the stage of life's hardest adversities.

In the pages of WBBA, it will discover a profound sense of what it means to be alive in addition to a brief account of existence, to be human, and to navigate the intricate terrain of identity. The memoir, with its deep philosophical introspection and eloquent prose, has left an indelible mark on the world of literature and has cemented Paul Kalanithi's legacy as a brilliant thinker and a profound chronicler of the human

experience. Paul Kalanithi's memoir provides an avenue for investigating the interplay between personal and collective identity, the impact of intersecting social identities, and the changing role of memoirs in modern society.

Paul Kalanithi's professional identity as a neurosurgeon is central to his narrative. He describes the demanding and intellectually rigorous path that led him to the surgery lounge, where he made life and death decisions daily. His identity was closely linked to his medical expertise and his commitment to the wellbeing of his patients. He reflects on the duality of his existence, both as a doctor who understands the medical jargon and a patient who grapples with the uncertainties. Kalanithi's self-concept is deeply influenced by his medical training. He grapples with how to reconcile his self-concept as a physician with his new identity as a patient. He reflects on the duality of his existence, as both a doctor who understands the medical jargon and a patient who grapples with the uncertainties of illness. His self-concept becomes a dynamic entity, adapting to his changing circumstances.

As per identity theory, individuals seek validation of their self-concept. Kalanithi's journey includes moments of self-verification where he seeks understanding and validation from his medical colleagues. His desire for a certain amount of knowledge and control over his condition reflects the enduring impact of his work identity. The negotiation of his identity impacts Kalanithi's self-esteem. His self-esteem, which was closely tied to his accomplishments as a neurosurgeon, takes a hit as he contends with the limitations imposed by his illness. The contrast between his previous life and his new reality presents a profound challenge to his self-esteem.

No one asked about my plans, which was a relief, since I had none. While I could now walk without a cane, a paralytic uncertainty loomed: who would I be,

going forward, and for how long? Invalid, scientist, teacher? Bioethicists? Neurosurgeon once again, as Emma had implied? Stay-at-home dad? writer? Who could, or should, I be? As a doctor, I had some sense of what patients with life-changing illness faced—and it was exactly these moments I had wanted to explore with them. Shouldn't terminal illness, then, be the perfect gift to that young man who wanted to understand death?. (Kalanithi 144)

Kalanithi's narrative is a testament to the resilience of identity constructs. While his identity as a neurosurgeon is challenged and altered, it is not completely erased. Instead, it coexists with his identity as a patient. This coexistence reflects the adaptability and malleability of identity constructs, as described in identity theory.

Kalanithi's memoir showcases how he finds meaning and purpose even in the scene of terminal illness. He sets off on a new journey, writing his autobiography and trying to make sense of what it means to live and die. He illustrates the resilience of identity constructs by continuing to explore life's philosophical questions and donate to the fields of literature and medicine, all while facing the imminent end of his own life. The memoir that Kalanithi writes turns becomes a mirror of his changing self. It helps as a medium through which he negotiates his identity, and in turn, it allows readers to witness his transformation. The act of writing, a skill honed through his identity as a literature and medicine enthusiast, turn out to be a way of understanding his experience and sharing it with others. This anecdote serves as both a link between his personal and professional selves and evidence of the value of storytelling in identity negotiation.

WBBA is a profound exploration of identity in the time of a terminal illness. His memoir demonstrates the interplay between one's personal and professional identities as well as the flexibility and resilience of identity constructs. It serves as

proof to the profound capacity of individuals to negotiate their identities, find meaning in the midst of adversity, they persist in their pursuit of self-awareness under the most trying conditions. Investigating the relationship between the representation of identity and the theoretical foundations of identity theory. The scientific character of Kalanithi in WBBA offers an exclusive perspective on the connection of science, medicine, and the human experience. He combines his technical knowledge with his deep insights on life, death, and meaning in a way that is both effortless as a physician and poetic writer. His scientific background is evident in his lucid explanations of complex medical concepts, his insightful observations about the human brain, and his deep respect for the scientific process. He demonstrates a deep understanding of the limitations of science, yet he also recognizes its power to illuminate the mysteries of the human body and mind.

He struggles with the conflict between the objective scientific understanding of life and the subjective perception of human existence throughout the memoir. He acknowledges that science can provide a framework for understanding the physical world, but he also recognizes that it cannot fully capture the essence of human consciousness, emotions, and values. Kalanithi's scientific approach is balanced by his humanistic outlook. He is not content with mere explanations of physical phenomena; he seeks to understand the deeper meaning of human life, even in the verge of mortality. His memoir is a testament to the power of science to inform and enrich our understanding of the human experience.

Here are some specific examples of how Kalanithi's scientific character manifests in WBBA. His descriptions of neurosurgical procedures are very much showing how he is been as a surgeon. Kalanithi provides vivid and detailed accounts of his surgical experiences, giving readers a glimpse into the intricate space of head

surgery. He masterfully explains complex medical concepts in a way that is both informative and engaging. His reflections on the nature of consciousness also add to his identity. His education as a neurosurgeon provided him with a distinct viewpoint on the nature of consciousness, which he thoroughly examines in the memoir. He ponders the notion of a soul or an afterlife and wonders where the lines are that separate mind from substance. His use of scientific metaphors in which he often draws upon his scientific knowledge to illustrate his philosophical points. For example, he associates the process of dying to a cell undergoing apoptosis, a programmed form of cell death. This metaphor highlights the inevitability and naturalness of death while also suggesting a sense of order and purpose. His scientific character is an integral part of his memoir, *WBBA*. His scientific expertise provides a foundation for his understanding of the human condition, while his humanistic outlook allows him to explore the deeper meaning of life. His memoir is a commanding reminder that science and the humanities are not mutually exclusive but can rather complement and enrich each other.

Kalanithi's memoir, *WBBA* is a poignant and introspective journey through his personal life and the various identities he assumed throughout his life. He gracefully balances his identity as a renowned neurosurgeon, a dedicated husband and father, and a passionate writer, each identity shaping his perspective and experiences. As a neurosurgeon, Kalanithi's identity was deeply rooted in the land of science and medicine. He possessed a close understanding of the human brain and its intricate workings, dedicating his life to alleviating the suffering of others. His surgical prowess and intellectual curiosity earned him the respect and admiration of his colleagues and patients alike.

Outside the neuro surgery room, Kalanithi embraced the identity of a loving husband and father. He found solace and fulfilment in his family, cherishing the

moments of shared laughter, connection, and love. His dedication to his wife and daughter provided him with a sense of purpose and grounding amidst the challenges of his medical career. Despite the challenges he faces, he finds immense joy and fulfillment in his daughter, Cady. His identity as a father is shaped by his love for his daughter and his desire to provide her with a sense of security, love, and support. He cherishes the moments of shared laughter, connection, and love, finding solace and strength in their bond. Even as his health deteriorates, he remains committed to being a present and engaged father. He reads to Cady, plays with her, and shares his love and wisdom with her. He recognizes the importance of creating lasting memories and passing on his values to his daughter. His awareness of his mortality adds a poignant dimension to his fatherhood. He knows that his time with Cady is limited, and this awareness makes each moment together even more precious. He strives to live fully and intentionally, making the most of the time he has with his daughter. His experience as father shapes his identity. He recognizes that fatherhood is not just a role or a label but an intense and transformative experience that enriches his sense of self. He learns to see the world through his daughter's eyes, to appreciate the simple joys of life, and to find meaning and purpose in the act of caring for another. In one particular moving passage, he reflects his identity as a father. "Will a new baby take away from our time together?" she inquired. Do you believe that bidding farewell to your child will increase the agony of your passing? Wouldn't that be fantastic if it happened? "I mentioned," answered" (Kalanithi 143). He leaves a very close impact on his daughter, shaping her identity and instilling in her values of love, compassion, and resilience. His experience being a father is a monument to the strength of interpersonal relationships and how they support the ability to maintain one's identity.

Alongside his scientific and familial roles, Kalanithi also nurtured his identity

as a writer. He possessed a gift for expressing his thoughts and emotions in a clear, concise, and deeply moving manner. His writing allowed him to investigate deep inquiries about life, death, and significance, sharing his insights and reflections with the world. Throughout his life, Kalanithi continuously navigated the shifting landscapes of his various identities. He seamlessly transitioned from the controlled precision of the operation theatre to the warm intimacy of his family life, and from the analytical rigor of science to the creative freedom of writing. Every identity enhanced his comprehension of the self and the surrounding environment.

In the verge of his terminal diagnosis, Kalanithi's identities took on a deeper significance. His knowledge of medicine gave him the clarity and acceptance to face his own mortality. His love for his family gave him the fortitude and resiliency he needed to face the difficulties that were ahead. And his writing served as a cleansing passage, permitting him to process his feelings and share his wisdom with others.

His memoir is a testament to the power of embracing multiple identities. He demonstrated that we are not defined by a single role or label but rather by the multifaceted tapestry of our experiences and relationships. His journey encourages us to explore and embrace the various facets of our identities, allowing them to enrich and shape our lives. Paul Kalanithi's memoir, *When Breath Becomes Air*, offers a unique and insightful perspective on the intricate world of neurosurgery. Through vivid descriptions and thoughtful reflections, he guides readers into the surgery room, allowing them to experience the delicate balance of precision, artistry, and humility that characterizes this demanding discipline.

His descriptions of neurosurgical procedures are captivating in their blend of technical detail and emotional resonance. He masterfully weaves together intricate

medical terminology with personal observations, bringing to life the challenges and rewards of operating on the human brain. In one particularly striking passage, Kalanithi describes the process of removing a brain tumor;

Another day, I placed an electrode nine centimeters deep in a patient's brain to treat a Parkinson's tremor. The target was the subthalamic nucleus, a tiny almond-shaped structure deep in the brain. Different parts of it subserve different functions: movement, cognition, emotion. In the, we turned on the current to assess the tremor. (Kalanithi 106)

His explanations are filled with a profound feeling of wonder and respect for the human brain; they are not just clinical reports of medical operations. He marvels at its complexity, its capacity for consciousness and creativity, and its vulnerability to disease. In another passage, Kalanithi muses on the fine line that separates neurosurgery's creativity and precision;

The neurosurgery seemed to present the most challenging and direct confrontation with meaning, identity, and death. Concomitant with the enormous responsibilities they shouldered, neurosurgeons were also masters of many fields: neurosurgery, ICU medicine, neurology, radiology. Not only would I have to train my minds and hands, I realized; I'd have to train my eyes, and perhaps other organs as well. (Kalanithi 72)

His descriptions are also marked by a profound sense of humility. He acknowledges the limitations of medical science, the ever-present risk of complications, and the weight of responsibility that rests on the surgeon's shoulders. In one poignant reflection, Kalanithi writes. "We neurosurgeons are but humble stewards of the mind, granted the privilege of intervening in the delicate machinery of human

consciousness. We walk a tightrope between hope and despair, striving to heal while always mindful of the fragility of life.” (Kalanithi)

His memoir offers a rare glimpse into the world of neurosurgery, revealing its challenges, rewards, and profound impact on human lives. His memoir also offers a profound and moving exploration of the impact of mortality on identity. As a neurosurgeon facing his own terminal diagnosis, in light of his own mortality he wrestles with the fundamental problems of existence and death in an effort to find meaning and purpose.

Through his personal narrative, he demonstrates how the awareness of one’s own mortality can profoundly impact one’s sense of self. He confronts the unavailability of demise and the challenges of maintaining a sense of identity as one’s physical and cognitive abilities decline. The memoir also highlights the importance of living with a sense of purpose and meaning during mortality. He emphasizes the need to find value in the present moment, to cherish relationships, and to pursue meaningful endeavours. His reflections on mortality also extend to his role as a physician. He muses over the moral conundrums that confront medical professionals, the delicate balancing act between hope and despair, and the tremendous effects that disease and death have on patients and their families. Over all his memoir not merely a personal reflection on mortality; it is a universal exploration of the human condition. He invites readers to confront their own mortality, to reflect on their lives, and to find meaning in the period of life’s inevitable end.

The idea is clear that the memoir deals with the theme of identity in the context of terminal illness. Memoir in the terms of identity moves with the readers to think, what makes life living to its fullest and what make the life meaningful? our identity

holds our physical and mental characteristics, as well as our social roles. That is, our identities are shaped by our physical selves, mental states, and interpersonal connections. This chapter discussed how Kalanithi is been surfing through his life journey and identity in various situations. He also gives a clear point in his memoir about how he redefined and restarted his identity after his diagnosis and throughout his treatments. And how he was been ready to point the end and death. At the sentiment of his story, it is a question of consciousness that makes to think of what is to be alive, how to live and face the life at a crucial diagnosis. In conclusion, Paul Kalanithi's *When Breath Becomes Air* offers a rich and nuanced exploration of identity theory, demonstrating the fluidity, complexity, and deeply personal nature of self-formation and meaning-making in the face of life's inevitable challenges. His memoir serves as a reminder of the importance of living with purpose, cherishing relationships, and embracing the transformative power of self-reflection.

Chapter III

Identity, Race and Social Change in *Becoming*

Michelle Obama in her latest work *The light We Carry* states that “I believe that each of us carry a bit of inner brightness, something entirely unique and individual, a flame that’s worth protecting. When we are able to recognize our own light, we become empowered to use it. When we learn to foster what’s unique in people around us, we become better able to build compassionate communities and make meaningful change.” (Obama) to show how to keep the inner light within her and other people around her. She believed in herself and shows her uniqueness in her identity. She affirms that it is very mandatory to understand oneself and use our strength in a very effective way. It also helps to built a better identity to the person.

This introduction provides an overview of *Becoming*, a literary work that offers us to witness the formation of a remarkable woman's identity against the backdrop of American history. The parts entitled becoming me, becoming us, and becoming more shows the changing personality and identity of an American women who yearns for better version of her own from all her perspectives of life journey. It shows the negotiation of identity in multiple levels. *Becoming*, the memoir of Michelle LaVaughn Robinson Obama, is a compelling narrative that transcends the traditional boundaries of political biography. Published in November 2018, the book offers readers a rare opportunity to delve into the life of one of our time's most widely recognized and influential women. Beyond a recounting of her years in the White House as First Lady, Michelle Obama's memoir is a deeply personal exploration of her journey, her beliefs, and her identity. Michelle LaVaughn Robinson Obama, born on 17 January, 1964, in Chicago, Illinois, possesses a life story that reflects the multi-faceted nature of identity and the American

experience. Her childhood and early years marked by a close-knit African American family who focused on her education, hard work, and service. These formative years laid the foundation for the woman she would become.

Michelle's academic excellence led her to Princeton University, where she grappled with the complexities of being one of the few African American students on campus. She then pursued a law degree at Harvard Law School, distinguishing herself with her intellect and commitment to social justice. These educational experiences contributed to her self-concept and her understanding of the significance of identity within the context of race and achievement;

Still, it was impossible to be a black kid at a mostly white school and not feel the shadow of affirmative actions. You could almost read the scrutiny in the gaze of certain students and even some professors, as if they wanted to say, “I know why you’re here.” These moments could be demoralizing, even if I’m sure I was just imagining some of it. It planted a seed of doubt. Was I here merely as part of a social experiment. (Obama 78)

Education became a milestone in her identity. She excelled academically, attending Princeton university and Harvard law school. Her pursuit of academic excellence reinforced her self-concept as an intelligent and capable individual, although it was not without the burden of being one of the few African American students in predominantly white educational institutions. Every instance she faced in her school and college life reflected as a great woman she became later as the chapter entitles becoming me;

Had I decided to believe her, her pronouncement would have toppled my confidence all over again, reviving the old thrum of not enough, not enough. But three years of keeping up with the ambitious kids at Whitney Young had taught

me that I was something more. I wasn't going to let one person's opinion dislodge everything I thought I knew about myself. (Obama 66)

Her professional career, which began at a law firm in Chicago, evolved to encompass roles in public service and community engagement. Her work, particularly in public service, was a testament to her dedication to improving the lives of others and her commitment to making a difference. These roles are integral to her professional identity, one that exceeded conventional meanings to represent both a high-achieving lawyer and a devoted advocate.

Becoming resonates with the quintessential American narrative of progress, ambition, and the pursuit of dreams. Michelle Obama's story is a symbol of the American Dream—of rising above one's circumstances, breaking barriers, and achieving success through hard work and determination. Her identity is deeply tangled with this narrative, as she navigates the complexities of being a black woman in America while striving for excellence.

In her memoir, Michelle explores the multifaceted nature of identity, considering how her racial identity, gender identity, and social class influenced her self-concept and her understanding of her place in the world. She grapples with the expectations and stereotypes associated with being an African American woman, challenging societal norms and recording her own path.

Central to Michelle Obama's identity is her relationship with Barack Obama, the man who would become the 44th President of the United States. Their love story, as narrated in memoir, is a testament to the idea that personal identity is not static but is shaped by the people we love and the choices we make. Her journey into married life and motherhood is a significant chapter in her identity narrative, illuminating the complexities of balancing personal and professional identities. She was not merely a

supportive partner to President Barack Obama but an active participant in shaping the nation's narrative. Her identity was connected with her commitment to public service and her efforts to address pressing social issues. She describes herself as a solitude-loving individualist, while her husband, Barack, is an outgoing family man. Their contrasting personalities presented a unique challenge. She writes;

what happens when a solitude-loving individualist marries an outgoing family man who does not love solitude one bit? The answer, I'm guessing, is probably the best and most sustaining answer to nearly every question arising inside a marriage, no matter who you are or what the issue is: you find ways to adapt.

(Obama 171)

he recognizes her personal strengths – including education, a strong self-esteem, and drive – that she credits for her role as a mother. During Barack's absence while working on her book, she navigates their new roles. The phrase "my husband" suddenly seems both exotic and pleasant, bringing back memories of a man who isn't there in person.

As a mother, Michelle navigates the challenges of raising her daughters, Malia and Sasha, in the public eye. Her identity as a parent is intimately linked with her role as a political figure, and she shares the joys and trials of parenting in the White House. This interaction demonstrates how identities, both personal and professional, interact and change. She has spoken openly about the importance of family, motherhood, and creating a nurturing environment for children. She has also spoken about balancing her roles as a mother and her public responsibilities. Frequently, she has recounted stories about the difficulties and happiness of raising her daughters in the White House, in order to create a strong and nurturing home environment. She has also used her platform to address broader issues that affect families, such as quality education, equal

rights and work-life balance.

Michelle's journey from her law profession to her position as a public advocate and First Lady is vividly depicted in *Becoming*. This change represents a key point in her identity journey, as she shifts her focus from the courtroom to the community. Her dedication to issues like education, military families, and health is emblematic of her evolving self-concept, which encompasses not only her roles as a wife and mother but also as a leader and advocate.

Michelle Obama's support and commitment to social causes represent the merging of her private and qualified identities. Her advocacy on issues like healthy eating and education not only reflects her passion but also her understanding of the deep effect she can have as a public personality. This evolution of identity is a central theme in her memoir. Michelle's story is nevertheless very personal, even though her position as First Lady within Barack Obama's administration is distinguished by a degree of public scrutiny and concern few can really comprehend. Her time as Initial Lady offers readers a special glimpse into the intertwining of identities both personally and professionally in extreme circumstances. Her initiatives, such as "Let's Move!" and "Reach Higher" reflect her commitment to the betterment of society, especially for young people. Her identity as a mother and advocate lives with her identity as a symbol of hope and change for a nation.

The exploration of identity in *Becoming* mirrors the principles of identity theory. Michelle Obama's self-concept, self-verification, and self-esteem evolve as she navigates various roles and life experiences. Her narrative is evidence to the malleability and flexibility of identity constructs, as she adapts and transforms in response to life's challenges and opportunities. The memoir is a reflection of how identity is not static but ever-evolving, shaped by life events and personal growth. It

highlights the deep negotiation of identities both personally as well as professionally and the flexibility of these constructs.

Becoming is more than a memoir, it is a voyage of inspiration and self-discovery. Michelle Obama's narrative encompasses themes of empowerment, resilience, and the persistent search of self-realization. It demonstrates how people can mold their identities and ultimately wield them as tools for creating positive impacts on the world. As readers embark on this literary venture, they will uncover the tale of a woman whose identity mirrors the diverse fabric of American existence. Michelle Obama's story showcases how identity is constantly changing, and her memoir offers a chance to delve into the challenges of self-perception, self-validation, and self-worth within the framework of an extraordinary life. *Becoming* is a celebration of identity and a search of the permanent quest to become the best version of oneself.

The memoir *Becoming* offers a profound exploration of identity, providing readers with a unique glimpse into her complex self. As the first African American First Lady of the United States, her narrative is shaped by a complex relationship of personal and social identities. This analysis delves into how *Becoming* investigates Michelle Obama's identity, particularly as a woman of color in the public eye, and examines the intersection of her personal and social identities.

The central theme in *Becoming* is her process of self-discovery. Her public role is not the only thing that defines her, as she gives readers a personal look into her life, beginning with her childhood in the South Side of Chicago. Her family, upbringing, and values are fundamental to her personal identity. Michelle's upbringing is defined by the principles instilled by her working-class parents. Marian and Fraser Robinson, her parents, created a secure and supportive atmosphere that highlighted the value of education, diligence, and community. Her upbringing established her identity, fostering

a strong sense of responsibility and empathy.

Education became a fundamental part of Michelle's sense of self. She performed exceptionally well in her academic pursuits, studying at Princeton University and Harvard Law School. Despite the difficulty of being one of the few African American students in predominantly white classrooms, her desire for academic achievement increased her self-confidence in her knowledge and skills. Michelle's professional identity is formed as a young lawyer. Working at Sidley Austin gave her insight into the challenges of corporate law, while also kickstarting her path towards public service and community involvement. This change shows the intricate makeup of her identity, representing her as both a successful champion and a fighter for social equality.

The memoir captures the growth of Michelle her identity as she changes from a legal career into the world of public service. Her identity as an advocate for social causes is interwoven with her identity as a mother and a partner to Barack Obama. Her marriage to Barack Obama and the birth of their daughters, Malia and Sasha, represent a significant chapter in her identity journey. Her roles as a wife and mother coexist with her public responsibilities. Her personal identity is deeply tangled with her character as the matriarch of her family. Her relationships with her loved ones are so firm and warm that it makes an incredible part of her identity.

The transformation of her identity from a lawyer to a public advocate is a critical part of *Becoming*. Her dedication to causes like healthy eating, education, and military families is a reflection of her developing self-concept, which embraces her positions as a leader, advocate, and wife and mother in addition to these roles. Michelle Obama's narrative reflects the details of balancing personal and professional identities. Her support for issues like healthy eating, with initiatives like "Let's Move!" combines her part as a mother with her part as a public personality. Her identity becomes an

active unit, repeatedly adjusting to her changing surroundings and evolving responsibilities. *Becoming* revolves around Michelle Obama's identity's tenacity. Identity constructions are flexible and malleable, as demonstrated by her story. She evolves her identity in reaction to opportunities and obstacles in life, moving from being a private citizen to a public person and from being a lawyer to an advocate. Her identities as a public advocate and a woman of color coexist together. She recognizes that her multifaceted identity can be a source of empowerment and strength, and she embraces the richness of her self-concept. Her experience demonstrates how people can continue to define their identities in spite of obstacles and expectations from society.

Becoming emphasizes how important representation is. Michelle Obama's identification as the first African American First Lady represents hope and progress for the country in addition to being a personal journey. Her narrative offers motivation to those who have historically been underrepresented in positions of influence and authority. Her advocacy of flexibility and education underscores the significance of representation in energizing and enabling oppressed populations. Her social identity as a well-known person is used to impact public opinion and bring about constructive change.

Michelle Obama's story in *Becoming* serves as proof of the ongoing search for self-awareness and personal development. Her identity is complex and always changing, encompassing her roles as a mother, an advocate, and a visible woman of color. Her narrative serves as a mirror of the flexibility and resiliency of identity constructions as well as the influence that representation has on societal development. Readers are allowed to observe the complex dance of societal and personal identities in the life of an extraordinary lady as they turn the pages of *Becoming*. The memoir by Michelle Obama explores the never-ending struggle to become one's best self and celebrates identity.

Chapter IV

Memoirs as Identity Anchors in Shaping Identity

Memoirs in literature holds a very unique place within other genres. Memoirs provided us a vivid light to understand the character and the life of the individuals. Through memoirs we get a high chance to study about the interplay of personal, professional and social identity of an individual. As identity theory states individuals construct their own identity through their social interactions and self-concepts. Memoirs are autobiographical accounts that document real life experiences, thoughts and emotions. Memoirs provide us with the solution to the question of who we are and how life contributes to the formation of who we are.

There is a very important role for memoirs on showing one's own character and identity in a very efficient way. As we have seen in chapters ahead it is clearly visible that memoirs play as a mirror to their own self. Looking at the significance of memoirs in literature, it is understood that it all adds up with real within the person or the author;

I am somewhat surprised that the personal narrative survives as a writing assignment. The personal narrative has drawn criticism for encouraging the naive idea of a single, static, true self, despite students' preference for it. It appears that first-year college writing classes are favoring combative, divisive debate assignments over personal narratives, and this trend has permeated high school assignment programs and the Common Core requirements. Some teachers will even say that the personal narrative is too easy for students to write because it is organized chronologically while others would counter that using a familiar structure makes it possible to focus on other more important skills. (Mack 64)

Here in the situation of both the writers they simply put out the real image of their self through their memoirs. Kalanithi and Michelle Obama uses personal

narratives to tell their own stories in their own way and words. As a doctor Kalanithi uses his professional way of talking to express his life and situations. He provides his own self through personal narrative that enables him for self-expression and self-reflection. This also enables him for share his life as raw as it is. This make the reader to have a deep connection with the author and his identity. In the instance of Michelle Obama, her life story is told in a sympathetic manner that inspires admiration for how she overcame adversity to become the strongest woman alive. She tries to inspire all the reader through her personal narratives and life journey. The sincere narration of life keeps the readers and author within a very true bond to continue their quest for her identity and herself in various ways. The memoir is journey through the same path they travelled and moved despite of many challenges they faced in their life.

Memoirs attempt to depict a wide range of experiences that the author has when dealing with different points of view. This takes the readers to a different level of understanding ones life and the situations they face in their life in finding their ideal identity. Experiences are on the basis of their backgrounds, cultures and professional life they walk through. This huge differences around the people make to understand the connection between human and the surroundings that helps to understand the identities shaped by it. In Kalanithi's case, as we had observed in the hospital, his family and his love of books have influenced the most similar aspects of his life. Even his memoir is been completed by his wife that shows the connection he holds with the surroundings and people around him. Diverse perspective also enable reader to understand the life and life situations that made them who they are. As we look into the life of Michelle Obama this is very much bounded to reveal her identity.

She is made up by what is around her. Her childhood, her country, her community and everything make the best out of her as we surf through her memoir. Most importantly the role as a wife of the president of America an African lady makes her unique. All these situations and challenges she faced contributes to understand her identity as a very successful women with no hatred.

The significance of representation in these memoirs cannot be overstated. Michelle Obama's role as the African American First Lady and Paul Kalanithi's representation of terminally ill patients offer inspiration and empowerment to individuals who have historically been underrepresented in positions of power and influence. These memoirs demonstrate the profound impact of representation on personal and collective identities.

The representation in *Becoming* and *WBA* underscores the potential for positive change through the negotiation of identity. Michelle Obama's narrative inspires women, people of color, and marginalized communities to aspire to positions of leadership and advocacy. Paul Kalanithi's representation provides a voice for terminally ill patients, encouraging discussions about mortality and the human experience. Both authors exemplify how individual narratives can influence.

Memoirs provide a unique platform for understanding the intersection of personal and collective identities. Kalanithi's narrative showcases the interplay between his individual identity and the collective identity of the medical community. His experience as both a surgeon and a patient highlights the dynamics of social identity theory within the medical profession. In *Becoming*, Michelle Obama's narrative illustrates the complexities of balancing personal and collective identities as a well-known person. Her position as the First Lady expands her individual identity to include her role as a representative of the United States.

The intersection of personal and collective identities in these memoirs underscores that individuals are not defined by a single dimension of their lives. Their identities are complex and diverse, showcasing the constantly changing aspect of the self. Readers are encouraged to think about how their individual and group identities come together and impact their self-perception. The analysis's most important conclusion is that identity structures are resilient. In his story, Paul Kalanithi demonstrates how identity can change and evolve when challenged with a terminal illness. Transitioning from a doctor to a patient demonstrates that people can still redefine themselves and discover purpose, even in the toughest situations. Michelle Obama's transformation from a lower-class upbringing to the presidency shows how people can adjust and succeed in various social and professional environments.

These memoirs offer a counterpoint to deterministic views of identity and society. They challenge the notion that one's identity is preordained by circumstances or societal expectations. Instead, they celebrate the enduring quest for self-realization and personal growth. Readers are encouraged to embrace the dynamic aspect of the self and acknowledge their own agency in forming their identities.

Memoirs, as demonstrated by Kalanithi and Obama, serve as vehicles for social commentary. They initiate conversations about race, gender, leadership, mortality, and representation. The personal narratives in these memoirs become lenses through which societal issues are examined. Kalanithi's contemplation of mortality prompts discussions about the human understanding and the medical profession's approach to death. Michelle Obama's experiences as a woman of color in the public sense raise questions about race, gender, and societal expectations.

Memoirs can shape public perceptions and contribute to social discussions. They offer a space for people to share their personal experiences, difficulties, and successes.

This is beneficial to make people more conscious of social issues. Readers are urged to participate in conversations about these subjects, promoting increased awareness and empathy. Another significance of memoir is better understanding and empathy towards the authors. This allows the readers to stand along with the author for understanding their life and situations. This helps to share the same thoughts and feeling the author faced that makes the readers to get the exact way of being them with their identity.

Memoirs enables to understand their social, cultural and personal differences makes to their identity. The readers feels immense feeling of sadness reading Kalanith's memoir as he is been struggling between life and death. His life turns to a tragedy that makes a feel of sympathy towards his immense desire to live a happy life with his family. How he struggles being a surgeon to the position on a patient. The situations were he meet her daughter and hopelessly looking at her that he can't live with her. Although we can feel the warmth of a loving father and a excellent husband in him. In the case of Michelle Obama its been no so emotional but inspirational and encouraging. We see the serious positions she handled so close and clear. Her cultural and social identity is been felt through the pages of her memoir. Problems she faced as an African American lady is been felt by the readers although we are not a part of the social background. In short we can say that it is like stepping into the same shoes of the authors and getting better insights of their identity and how their surroundings created the person who they are.

Memoirs also add on to the very concept of literature that it holds the history or the time it is been produced. Memoirs in fact can be called as the historical documents that show the readers the social construct and norms existed during the text is written. Readers can get cultural and historical context in which their identity is been shaped and the real picture of their self towards those settings. WBBA is an excellent piece that

tells the story of the time where the writer's family was an immigrant who struggles for livelihood in the new place. And also it shows the settings of the time where the author failed to find a proper career in between passion and interests. All these aspects give a way to enhance the development of the identity of the author who finally dies and the only thing left after his death is his memoir.

That made him to express who he is in the front of world. Through his memoir he created a space for himself and that shows who he is contemplating turning into a memoir, it is essentially a historical account of the experiences of an African woman who intersects with American president Barack Obama. Her diverse range of experiences in the White House during that period also solidifies the memoir as a piece of history. The memoir narrates the transition from the late nineteenth century to the modern world, providing readers with insights into the changing times. Undoubtedly, Michelle Obama's memoir serves as a superb example of a history time capsule. It is believed that the most ancient memoir dates back to the twelfth century.

Probably the oldest post-Augustine memoirs date from the twelfth century and were written by French monks. One of them, Peter Abelard's *Historia Calamitatum (The Story of My Misfortunes)*, remains a compelling cautionary tale and, in its depiction of mental and physical hurt, anticipates today's misery memoirs. It is addressed to an unnamed correspondent, and its purpose, Abelard writes, is consolation: "In comparing your sorrows with mine, you may discover that yours are in truth nought, or at the most but of small account, and so shall you come to bear them more easily." (Yagoda54)

Memoirs plays an inevitable role in understanding identity is another topic to be discussed. As it proved its authenticity and trueness of the author without any secondary source or person in between. Its been from the author himself to the readers

who searches for their identity and story. Through memoirs most of the authors tries to reflect their image very deeply. It is a kind of self-reflection that makes their memoir different from one another. They try to explore their own identities and many factors that influenced in shaping their identity. That may include their professional experiences, relationship with the people around, and the life changing and challenging experience they go through. Memoirs mainly focus on self, self- concept, self- verification and self-esteem. As it is main components of identity theory. *WBB* and *becoming* is a very piece of self- reflection of the authors.

Chapter V

Conclusion

An in-depth examination of memoirs within the context of Identity and Social identity theory can provide extensive insight into life and personal experiences. The memoirs *When Breath Becomes Air* by Paul Kalanithi and *Becoming* by Michelle Obama offer two distinct and compelling perspectives on the theme of identity. Kalanithi's memoir discusses grappling with identity during illness, while Michelle Obama's memoir examines the complexities of being a woman of color in the public eye. This analysis will compare the themes, narratives, and insights on Identity and Social identity theory in both memoirs, focusing on their distinct perspectives and shared connections.

Both memoirs revolve around the theme of identity transformation in the aspect of life-altering events. In *WBBA* Kalanithi's identity as a neurosurgeon is profoundly challenged when he receives a cancer diagnosis. His journey from a physician to a patient underscores the malleability and resilience of identity constructs as described in identity theory. Kalanithi's narrative reflects the adaptability of identity, the pursuit of self-realization, and the search for significance in the presence of death. In contrast, Michelle Obama's *Becoming* examines identity transformation within the context of public life. Her transition from a private individual to the Foremost Lady of the United States marks a significant evolution of her identity. Her narrative reflects the impact of public perception, the intersection of personal and collective identities.

Social identity theory is particularly relevant in Michelle Obama's memoir. Her status as a woman of color and the first African American First Lady of the United States is strongly connected to her social role as a representative of her community. The role of her narrative is heavily influenced by her experiences as a woman of color

in America and the societal expectations placed on her as a black woman. In *WBBA* social identity theory is less overt but still present. Kalanithi's identity as a physician places him in a professional community that influences his sense of self.

Both memoirs emphasize that identity is not fixed but an evolving journey. Kalanithi's exploration of identity is a journey through illness, mortality, and philosophical introspection. He negotiates his self-concept as a neurosurgeon and a patient, drawing upon his medical knowledge to understand the complexities of his illness. In *Becoming* Michelle Obama's identity journey starts from her upbringing in a working-class family to her role as a national figure. Her identity as a mother and a wife intersects with her identity as a public advocate, reflecting the dynamic nature of identity.

Public perception plays a significant role in both memoirs but in distinct ways. In *WBBA*, public perception primarily involves the medical community's perception of Kalanithi as a patient. He seeks validation and understanding from his medical colleagues, reflecting the influence of public perception on his self-concept. The book also addresses the public perception of critically ill patients and their roles within society. Whereas in *Becoming* her public image is shaped by media, societal expectations, and stereotypes associated with being a woman of color in the public eye.

Both memoirs illustrate the intersection of personal and collective identities. Kalanithi's personal and professional identities collide when he transitions from a physician to a patient. His narrative underscores the interplay between his individual identity and the collective identity of the medical community. In Michelle Obama's narrative highlights how her personal identity as a woman, mother, and advocate intersects with her collective identity as the Lady and a representative of the African

American community.

The importance of representation in forming both individual and societal identities is emphasized in both memoirs. A type of representation for terminally sick people is provided in Kalanithi's story, giving them a voice and insight into their circumstances. His autobiography encourages readers to reflect on the purpose of life and the human condition in light of mortality. Michelle Obama's portrayal as the initial African American first lady has significant historical and cultural significance. People who have historically been underrepresented in positions of influence and authority are given more confidence by her story. Her story reaffirms the notion that people can successfully define their identities and inspires underprivileged populations.

Memoirs emphasize that people are not limited to a particular aspect of their lives and celebrate the richness of identity. Kalanithi's persona comprises his functions as a doctor, a patient, a spouse, and a parent. Equally complex is Michelle Obama's identity, which includes her responsibilities as a leader, a mother, a wife, and a woman of colour.

In the framework of larger societal identities, both writers negotiate their unique identities. Paul Kalanithi's social identity is intimately associated with his occupation as a medical practitioner. He belongs to the medical community, which has its own collective identity and aspirations, as a neurosurgeon. When he confronts his diagnosis, he seeks for explanation and affirmation from his medical colleagues, demonstrating the power of this medical community. In addition, his identity as a patient merge with a larger social identity concerning death and terminal disease. Michelle Obama's social identity as the First Lady encompasses her identity as an American representation in addition to her individual functions. Her identity is entwined with the national identity of the United States of America. Her status as a well-known figure and activist illustrates the impact of social identities pertaining to gender, race, and leadership. Her

status as the African American Lady bears remarkable cultural significance and historical relevance, strengthening the social identity of advancement and representation on a larger scale.

Both authors face significant challenges that test their identities and social identities. Kalanithi's cancer diagnosis presents a profound challenge to his identity as a physician. The transition from healer to patient compels him to face his own finite existence and reevaluate his self-concept. His ability to navigate his identity while dealing with his illness showcases his strength and flexibility, showing how powerful identity can be in shaping one's life. As a Lady, Michelle Obama must contend with the demands of society and public scrutiny. Public perception, media portrayal, and stereotypes associated with her gender and race influence her self-concept. She demonstrates resilience by striving to show her true self in public and staying dedicated to her leadership and advocacy.

These individual accounts, all presenting diverse viewpoints on identity, hold importance for our comprehension of both the individual and society. Memoirs, such as those of Kalanithi and Obama, serve as mirrors of the self, offering readers an opportunity to witness the intimate journey of self-discovery. They reveal that identity is not a static construct but a dynamic, evolving process. Kalanithi's journey from a surgeon to a patient and Michelle Obama's transition from a working-class upbringing to the White House illustrate that life's challenges and opportunities can reshape one's self-concept. The resilience of identity constructs is evident in their narratives, challenging the notion that identity is fixed and unyielding.

Memoirs provide a unique platform for understanding the intersection of personal and collective identities. Kalanithi's narrative showcases the interplay between his individual identity and the collective identity of the medical community. His

experience as both a physician and a patient highlights the dynamics of social identity theory within the medical profession. In *Becoming* Michelle Obama's narrative illustrates the complexities of balancing personal and collective identities as a public figure. Her role as the Lady extends her personal identity to encompass her identity as a representative of the United States.

Memoirs, as demonstrated by Kalanithi and Obama, serve as vehicles for social commentary. They initiate conversations about race, gender, leadership, mortality, and representation. The personal narratives in these memoirs become lenses through which societal issues are examined. Kalanithi's contemplation of mortality prompts discussions about the human knowledge and the medical profession's approach to death. Michelle Obama's experiences as a woman of colour in the public eye raise questions about race, gender, and societal expectations. Memoirs possess the ability to impact public perceptions and inform social discourse. They provide a forum for individuals to share their thoughts, experiences, struggles, and victories, which in turn advances knowledge about society problems. Increased awareness and empathy are fostered by encouraging readers to participate in conversations on these subjects.

The enduring significance of memoirs as a genre for understanding identity narratives cannot be overstated. These personal narratives allow readers to deeply relate to the author's adventures, obstacles, and personal growth. Memoirs serve as invaluable instruments for empathy, allowing readers to step into the shoes of the authors and witness the intricacies of their identities.

The unique experiences, challenges, and influences of Paul Kalanithi and Michelle Obama have profoundly impacted their identities and social identities. Kalanithi's journey from physician to patient and his contemplation of mortality highlight the resilience of identity constructs. Michelle Obama's journey from a

working-class upbringing to becoming the First Lady of the United States highlights how representation and identity can be transformative and complex.

These authors' narratives serve as powerful testaments to the complexities of identity and the enduring quest for self-realization. Their individual and collective identities reflect the profound influence of personal backgrounds, education, professional experiences, and societal contexts. These memoirs offer readers a window into the dynamic and ever-evolving nature of identity, shaped by life's challenges, opportunities, and the profound impact of presenting something visually. Both memoirs emphasize that identity is not a static construct but a dynamic and evolving journey. Kalanithi's exploration of identity is a journey through illness, mortality, and philosophical introspection. He negotiates his self-concept as a brain surgeon and a patient, drawing upon his medical knowledge to understand the complexities of his illness. His self-concept adapts to his changing circumstances, revealing the resilience of identity constructs.

In *Becoming*, Michelle Obama's identity journey spans from her upbringing in a working-class family to her role as a national figure. Her dual roles as a public champion and a mother and wife illustrate how identities are always evolving. Her narrative underscores the capacity of individuals to shape their identities and effect positive change in society.

Furthermore, memoirs illuminate the complexities of identity, challenging prevailing notions and inspiring readers to mirror on their own self-concept. They celebrate the enduring quest for self-realization and empowerment, serving as sources of inspiration and motivation. Memoirs provide insights into the resiliency and flexibility of identity constructs, serving as windows into the human condition. Our research suggests, among other things, that identity be rethought as dynamic and flexible. Paul

Kalanithi's transformation from a Michelle Obama's journey from a working-class background to become the First Lady of the United States and her journey from neurosurgeon to terminal cancer sufferer both demonstrate that identity is not a set concept.

Identity theory often portrays identity as a stable and consistent entity, but these memoirs challenge this notion. Both memoirs serve as symbols of representation, inspiring and empowering others. Kalanithi's narrative offers a representation for terminally ill patients, providing a voice and insight into their experiences. His autobiography enables readers to consider life's meaning in light of the inevitable passing of a significant character in human experience. Michelle Obama's presence as the African American First Lady carries profound cultural and historical significance. Her story empowers individuals who have traditionally been underrepresented in positions of power and influence. Her narrative emphasizes how personal stories impact the wider society to marginalized communities and reinforces the idea that individuals can shape their identities and achieve success. The influence of representation extends beyond the personal narratives of the authors, highlighting the influence of personal narratives on the broader community.

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