CHAPTER FIVE

THE RHETORIC OF SPATIALITY AND TEMPORALITY IN SELF NARRATION

In the words of Eveline Kilian and Hope Wolf from their "Introduction" to *Life Writing and Space:*

> Formation of the self often relies on spatial movement, on re (locating) the self in different places and social spaces. Consequently, the journey is one of the most common narrative tropes in life writing, with the physical journey corresponding to an inner, metaphorical journey of the self. (1)

Spaces or places often get imagined, fantasized or dreamt in order to create an all new dimension of the self. This chapter proposes to bring out the importance and constitutive role of space, place and time in select Indian English autobiographies. It tries to show how subjectivity draws heavily on spatial ideas, rhetoric and metaphors and how remembered spaces, natural spaces, restructured time also function as tropes in construction of identities. The poetic spacing of the self through geographical emotions, ecological features or image of the home will mainly be studied in this chapter.

At the very outset, the comprehension of Bakhtin's concept of "chronotope" is integral to the exploration of the temporal and spatial dimensions in literature. The idea of "chronotope" can be found in the chapter "Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel" from Bakhtin's *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981). He assigns the name "chronotope" (literally, "time space") to "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature" (Bakhtin 84). He justifies the use of this scientific space-time concept by saying that it has been borrowed for literary criticism as a metaphor. He regards chronotope as "a formally constitutive category of literature" (84). Bakhtin formulates that the chronotope brings out generic distinctions. An intersection and fusion of time and space characterize the artistic chronotope. Besides illustrating chronotopes in different genres like Greek Romance, Rabelaisian novels, etc. Bakhtin also theorizes a section on ancient biographies and autobiographies which is both relevant and significant for my work too.

He throws light on two essential types of autobiography in ancient Greece. The first type he regards as "Platonic" for it could be found in the works of Plato like *Apology for Socrates* and *Phaedo* (399 BC). This type had the chronotope of "the life course of one seeking true knowledge" (130). The life of such a writer is divided into

periods where he passes from ignorance to self-criticism to self-knowledge. The second type is the rhetorical Greek autobiography where the "exterior real-life-chronotope" is predominant. The real-life chronotope is constituted by the public square. The Greek public square laid bare an individual's entire life in the public domain. The self-consciousness of those individuals in fact originated there. Nothing remains individual or solitary in this kind of chronotope. "In ancient times the autobiographical and biographical self consciousness of an individual and his life was first laid bare and shaped in the public square", writes Bakhtin (131). It was characterized by a public wholeness of the human image. The classical Greeks believed every phase of existence and self-consciousness to be audible and visible. Bakhtin notes that the focus shifted to "silent thoughts" and "mute registers" only with the Hellenistic and Roman ages. The chronotope of the public square gradually got lost and with the private life, new spheres of consciousness arose. Bakhtin identified yet another real-life chronotope in Roman autobiographies and memoirs which began from the family. Such writings manifest a "family clan consciousness of the self" (137). But such autobiographical self- consciousness again had more of a public rather than private nature.

Later he talks about some modified versions of ancient autobiography where the public square began to be mocked and the private sphere gained prominence. He refers to the ironic and humorous autobiographies in verse by Horace, Ovid and Propertius which parodied public and heroic forms. He also draws in the shift to intimate, closed and private spaces with a view to compose the private self in Cicero's letters to Atticus. Regarding biographical time in ancient biographies, Bakhtin observes that in the context of the character time is reversible:

> Biographical time is not reversible vis-a-vis the events of life itself, which are inseparable from historical events. But with regard to character such time is reversible: one or another feature of character, taken by itself, may appear earlier or later. Features of character are themselves excluded from chronology: their instancing can be shifted about in time. (142)

Such type he regards as "Plutarchian biography" where the character doesn't grow but is filled in gradually till the end of the biography. He calls the second type of biography like that found in case of the Roman historian Suetonius as "analytic":

> At its heart we have a scheme with well defined rubrics, beneath which all biographical material is distributed: social life, family life, conduct in war... Various features and qualities of character are selected out from the various happenings and events that occur at different times in the hero's life, but these are arranged according to the prescribed rubrics. (142)

With these two types, Bakhtin intends to show how the temporal progression of the biographical sequence got broken down in ancient works. Such a disruption of temporal progression or a linear flow of time is invariably evident in autobiographies of different epochs. Many critics have, however, pointed out that a definitive definition of "chronotope" is never offered by Bakhtin apart from examples and generalizations. "This lack of analytical precision in Bakhtin's essays has led to a proliferation of heterogeneous chronotopic approaches to literature and, more generally, culture", (5) write Nele Bemong and his co-editors in *Bakhtin's Theory of the Literary Chronotope: Reflection, Applications, Perspectives* (2008). Despite such considerations, his insights on the artistic composition of spatio-temporal dimensions, the nature of public and private spaces or temporal progression in life writing would definitely be of relevance for the theorization of this chapter.

Jerome Bruner in the essay "The "remembered" self" (1994) writes that the self is a perpetually rewritten story (53). The act of remembering also changes the structure of the entire self narration. Weaving strands in narrative as per convenience is often witnessed in almost all the autobiographies taken for this study. Remembered times are identified in relation to remembered events. To quote Louis A. Renza from the essay "The Veto of Imagination: A Theory of Autobiography" (1997), "One can try to suppress the consciousness of pastness; or one can 'confess' it openly to oneself; or one can even extol it and emphasize the narcissism proposed by the autobiographical act" (Renza 279). The author is faced with a monumental decision in portraying his past because, as Barrett John Mandel argues, "…his *present* creates his past 'by inspiring meaningless data with interpretation, direction, suggestiveness–life. But as long as I live, my past is rooted in my present and springs to life with my present'" (271-272). Taking all those problematics into consideration, heterotopia, eco-autobiography, poetics of space, retrospective teleology shall be some of the major critical lenses in this chapter.

The primary texts analysed in this chapter are Cornelia Sorabji's *India Calling* (1934), Jawaharlal Nehru's *An Autobiography* (1936), Mulk Raj Anand's *Seven Summers* (1951), N.C. Chaudhuri's *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* (1951), Dom Moraes' *My Son's Father* (1968) and *Never at Home* (1992), Khushwant Singh's *Truth, Love and a Little Malice* (2002) and Salman Rushdie's *Joseph Anton* (2012).

Relevant Theoretical Frame

According to the space theorist Gaston Bachelard, all spaces, especially home are replete with imaginations of the mind. For him, our houses are dreamt into existence or rather, our fantasies are housed. "Space that has been seized upon by the imagination cannot remain indifferent space subject to the measures and estimates of the surveyor" (xxxvi), writes Bachelard in his famous treatise *Poetics of Space* (1957). He also throws light on "day-dreaming" as an integral part of imagining home. All these viewpoints shall serve as important points of reference for this chapter.

Bachelard's work is also one of the main points of reference for Michel Foucault's famous essay "Of Other Spaces" (1986). It is the translated version of "Des Espaces Autres" (1984) based on Foucault's lecture in 1967. To quote his idea of heterotopia: "The heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible" (25). The example of the garden is of course the most prominent one as different types of vegetation come together in it. "The garden is the smallest parcel of the world and then it is the totality of the world" (Foucault 26). Moreover, Foucault regards museums and libraries as heterotopias which indefinitely accumulate time. They create a sort of timeless time with everything coming together–all ages, forms, tastes, ideas and so on. This chapter would explore how a similar juxtaposition of real and imagined spaces happens in case of life writing too in the Indian context. An entire lifetime spent in different places, eras come together in a compact space in an autobiography or memoir. Also significant in this study is the "heterotopia of crisis" which implies sacred or forbidden spaces and the "heterotopia of deviation" where individuals behaving differently are placed like that of psychiatric hospitals, prisons, etc. The chapter plans to analyse cases like Nehru's prison experience in the light of "heterotopia of deviation" and Sorabji's zenana as "heterotopia of crisis".

Edited by Eveline Kilian and Hope Wolf, *Life Writing and Space* (2016) is a notable contribution to the area that explores the spatial dimensions of life writing. It is a significant work elaborating, through a number of essays the role of space in the construction of selves and identities in life writing. The very introduction of the book offers a comprehensive theoretical base on space that runs throughout the chapters that follow. It begins with the proposition that life writing and space are interconnected and that how we narrate ourselves depends on how we locate or relocate our identities in space or in terms of certain places. As Kilian and Wolf write in the "Introduction":

> ...mobility initiates a dynamic of (re) creation and decreation of the self, one that is explored in several of the following chapters and that is intimately linked to the ideological forces inherent in spaces as well as places and the subject's ability to engage with, and resist, them. (4)

Many essays throw light on how space is experienced and imagined, which is of particular relevance in this case as the chapter strives to analyse how space is imagined in autobiographies. Foucault's "heterotopia", Lefebvre's theory of space as a social product, Edward Soja's theory of third space and Gaston Bachelard's "poetics of space" form the theoretical pillars used to grab the mutual constitution of space and subjectivity in *Life Writing and Space*. The reference to David Harvey in comprehending imagined spaces is also very noteworthy: "For Harvey, lived space is dominated by the 'imagination' and linked to the production of alternative spaces in the form of 'utopian plans', 'imaginary landscapes' or 'spaces of desire'" (Klein and Wolf 5). Some chapters take up the concept of "heterotopias" "to explore what happens when versions of the self are projected into remembered or fictionalized representations of physical spaces" (5). The book interprets how life writing is shaped by spaces like margins, temporary homes, gardens etc. and also how life writing might lead to the ways in which those spaces are imagined. "It shows how the concepts of subjectivity draw on spatial ideas and metaphors, and how the grounding or uprooting of the self is understood in terms of place" (Klein and Wolf 7). This chapter also plan to explore the same to examine how lives are imagined differently through life writing. Imaginary landscapes are relevant to Rushdie's self- narratives whereas "spaces of desire" can be found evident in the memoirs of Kamala Das and Dom Moraes.

Place seen as rhetoric of exile rather than a real exile also frames a metaphor for the migrant autobiographer's memoir. The Marxist critic Aijaz Ahmed observed Third world literature's tendency of "inflating the choice of immigration into a rhetoric of exile" (86). Ahmed argues in "Language of Class: Ideologies of Immigration" from the book *In Theory: Nations, Classes, Literatures* (1992) that the nature of exile and diaspora presented by Indian English writers is just an "inflationary rhetoric". He asserts that the upper class Indian who chooses to live in the metropolitan country is then called the diasporic Indian (Ahmed 86). Exile becomes a condition of the soul rather than a material condition. This rhetoric shall be studied mainly in case of Dom Moraes and Rushdie here.

This chapter also looks into the creation of a new self through the space of geography and nature or ecology. As Bryher expresses in *The Heart to Artemis* (1962), "All my life I have suffered from 'geographical emotions'. Places are almost as real to me as people" (26). The autobiographical voice is framed by the natural setting in many writers. Chaudhuri, Anand show glimpses of an intertextuality of autobiography and landscape writing. A convergence of life-writing and ecology can be found there. Drawing from Janet Varner Gunn's *Autobiography: Towards a Poetic Experience* (1982), Neil Evernden's essay "Be-yond Ecology: Self, Place and the Pathetic Fallacy" (1978), Edith Cobb's *The Ecology of Imagination in Childhood* (1977) and Michael J. McDowell's essay "The Bakhtinian Road to Ecological Insight" (1996), Peter Perreten attempts to theorize his concept of eco-autobiography in "Eco-Autobiography: Portrait of Place/Self-Portrait" (2003). To quote Perreten's view point, "The appositional structure of the title, "Eco-Autobiography: Portrait of Place/Self- Portrait," suggests my process of combining landscape writing and self writing first on a theoretical level and then in selected primary texts" (1). His theory of eco-autobiography will be used to interpret how many Indian English self narrators create or discover a new self in nature.

Eco-autobiographical nuances and geographical emotions in self imagination

Nature, roads, trees play an important role in child Mulk Raj Anand's imaginative self formation. The two parts in *Seven Summers* are titled "The Road" and "The River" respectively. Wide, open roads fascinated him as is evident from the very first chapter of the memoir *Seven Summers.* He romanticizes the sun and the green trees. The first vivid memories he had were those of the sunshine, the lush casuarina trees and a long

straight road that awed him.

As a lonely child he found refuge under the shade of the dense trees in the grove where he roamed, "…the grasses and flowers of the Sahib's garden, where I occasionally strayed, and the ever-changing life of the road…" (Anand 25-26). The frequent reference to the road shows how he perceived his identity through the same. He rolled in the dust of the road and had conversations with men, beasts and birds on the road. The road also dominated his life with its unknown past and its undiscovered future. There is a visible shift of topographical perception to more of an imaginative mode. Just like Wordsworth, Anand portrays a Romantic experience of landscape. He compares himself to parrot, mouse, earthworms which were busy in building their own worlds in nature. Roads find mention quite a few times. He found the roads challenging, difficult and immeasurable "with its uncrossable girth" as he expresses during his visit to the Sparrow House with his parents.

Just like the road, rivers also fascinated Anand during his childhood and made him rethink his self in terms of that. He regards the river Lunda (a name given to Kabul in Nowshera) as mischievous, capricious and uncanny "in its ferocious passage to join the Indus at Attock" (144). Running through the pathway leading to the dry river bed gave him a boundless sense of freedom from the usual routined life. The unknown course of the river intrigued him in the manner of the road. "I was much taxed by various metaphysical problems about this river: where it came from and where it went", writes Anand (145). His father later provided him with all the explanations. He used nature as a metaphor to contemplate his own self:

> On being told that I did not know how to swim, and that the river was deep and the sea deeper, I tried to prove that I would surely evaporate into a rain cloud on the way and come back in the form to the exact place I had started from, if the worst came to the worst. (Anand 145)

He was perplexed by the vastness of the rivers flowing into the sea. The mesmerizing green fields also triggered the romantic soul in him. One is reminded of Wordsworth's poem on the daffodils when Anand writes, "And my childish imagination tried to figure out how many lakhs of the blades of green grass, and how many crores of the stalks of green plants, and how many green leaves of trees must be there to make the land that

vast stretch of green" (187). A very romantic picture of his maternal village of Daska can be witnessed in his narration where he is overwhelmed by the widespread mustard fields and the extremely blue, clear sky. He found refuge in those mud housed villages. Very significant is a chapter towards the end of the book where he visualizes himself as a stream, perennially flowing despite all hurdles or disruptions: "I see myself, despite the rigours of the restricted, narrow routine world of the cantonment with all its taboos, flowing like a stream, now bright and vivacious with the sunbeams which played upon it, now gloomy with the tears of my sorrow, but always flowing ..." (Anand 229).

Like the stream, Anand did not know the direction he was bound for and he also changed his course often. Besides, he perceived his creative urges as other streams which flowed close to him only to manifest the bigger meaning of life in the long run. To him, the river was a metaphor for life in the broader sense. Certain sights and sounds of the landscape that Anand witnessed in the first seven years of his life got engraved in his mind forever. Roads, rivers are given human attributes metaphorically in his memoir which is a true representation of an eco-autobiography in Peter Perreten's terms.

N.C. Chaudhuri's narration in his first autobiography shows how changes were registered in the self by means of geographical or topographical locations saved as unaltered in our memories. Bryher in his memoir *The Heart to Artemis* talks of a "geographical emotion". He had a deep connection to geography and he often valued places more than people. A similar vein runs in Chaudhuri too. He narrates in detail his interaction with landscapes, season changes, birds, trees, water etc., in the villages during his childhood. Of one such experience he says: "It is strange and in some ways a most revealing experience for a terrestrial creature like man to get into intimate tactile relationship with the weeds and plants of water" (Chaudhuri 8). Even the change of seasons affected his worldview and identity greatly. "A revolution took place between mid-October and mid-November, which was like passing from Shakespeare's sea dirge to Webster's land dirge. If, as Charles Lamb has equally said, was of the earth earthy", writes Chaudhuri (10-11). The activities of caterpillars, ants, centipedes, mosquitoes and other insects during seasonal change and the affect those had on them find elaborate depiction in Chaudhuri's narration. He was fascinated by all the rituals in his

village connected to seasonal change. He also devotes pages in explaining the variety of flowers that marked seasonal change in a very romantic way.

N. C. Chaudhuri tried to discover a new self in nature. His experience with topography is intertextual from the start. The first few chapters of his autobiography give the reader an essential glimpse of "eco-autobiography" where topography leads to a new kind of self-formation. Peter F. Perreten in his paper "Eco-Autobiography: Portrait of Place/Self Portrait" defines it as "a type of autobiographical text that enables nature or landscape writers to discover 'a new self in nature'" (1). Elaborate depiction of landscape in Kalikutch reflects how he tried to retrace his self through that. Interestingly, he talks of a particular sensitivity to huge trees or deep jungles. Animism and imagination get portrayed when he shares his experience with oak trees in the Khasi hills on a morning of 1932. "My animism took the form of a hyperaesthesia in the presence of trees", (86) writes Chaudhuri. Whenever surrounded by thick and dark plantation, he had a feeling that something mysterious passed from the trees onto him. He could only breathe freely when he reached the open top. Pathetic fallacy can therefore be discovered here as the trees are almost given a voice.

In Nirad Chaudhuri's autobiographies, the literary construction of space is vital to understanding heterotopia. His depictions of place and space are filled with his literary imaginations. His birthplace, ancestral village, maternal village, Calcutta, England–all these varied places get amalgamated together across time in *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*. As Foucault asserts in "Of Other Spaces", "The heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real space several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible" (25). Chaudhuri reimagines himself in terms of houses, landscapes, cities. Though he never saw England before, Chaudhuri compares his birthplace Kishorganj to an English country town. His idea of the English country town was framed only by illustrations and descriptions. He even calls the river flowing by their small town as Nile and the country boats as "the model boats found in the tombs of the Middle Kingdom of Egypt" (Chaudhuri 7). The boats were, for him, "triremes"—an ancient type of boat used by civilizations of the Mediterranean Sea.

Also, Chaudhuri had no recollections of his stay in Shillong but he imagined the town based on the depictions given to him. He even vindicates the accuracy of his

imaginative evocation by relating how he found the sites just the same as he had imagined when he visited there after marriage in 1932. In *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* he devotes pages to his imagined idea of the landscape of Shillong. A very romantic idea of the town, its landscape and people were instilled in him by his mother and grandmother in Kalikutch. "The evocation was so continuous that the idea of Shillong became the intangible fourth dimension of Kalikutch" (106). Pine logs sent to his mother and his uncle's orchid collection gave him the strongest impression of Shillong. In a similar vein, a whole lot of ideas and associations made him picturize and describe England even when he was far from visiting it. Verbal depictions, pictures and books were his only source of accessing the country. His impression of England being a country of great beauty stemmed from that. All the images, pictures and poetry framed the pictorial English landscape in his mind: "This characteristic vision of the physical aspect of England as half land and half sea was confirmed in me by my reading of English poetry" (Chaudhuri 124). As the geographer Yi Fu Tuan notes in his book *Space and Place* (1977), "Human places become vividly real through dramatization" (Tuan 178). A lack of open space as if chocked his mental space too as evident from his experience amidst landscape in Shillong.

While in Calcutta, Chaudhuri did a class-wise division of houses. He compared the great mansions with the grandness of the Buckingham palace. He never saw the interior of those houses but he imagined the entire structure and arrangements within: "But I can imagine them as a suite of bedrooms, fitted up in a very eclectic style, rather cluttered up, but lacking nothing in the Indian manner, and latterly in the European as well, that could conduce to laziness" (416). Chaudhuri brings in his Greek imagination while explaining the cohesive and friendly aura in Kishorganj and the equality of all citizens staying there. According to him, "It must have been a feeling of this kind which lay at the root of the Greek loyalty to the polis" (41). Yet another analogy runs in the same vein where he compares life in Kishorganj with that of the life of an English gentleman, "Our life offered no analogy to the life of an English gentleman of a bygone age, distributed between his town and his country house" (55).

The elaborate depiction of his houses in the villages or in Calcutta bring in an altogether different imaginative tone to the spatial dimension. Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* becomes an important reference for that. As he writes at the very outset,

“Imagination augments the values of reality” (Bachelard 3). The house holds childhood memories in a motionless manner besides localizing our memories. He further writes, “And so, beyond all the positive values of protection, the house we were born in becomes imbued with dream values which remain after the house is gone (17). Chaudhuri remembering every aspect of his childhood houses resonates Bachelard’s conceptualization of day-dreaming while recollecting the past. “The house shelters daydreaming, the house protects the dreamer, the house allows one to dream in peace” (Bachelard 7). Chaudhuri’s consciousness can be viewed through the house images. His depictions qualify the “oneiric” house of Bachelard: “All I ought to say about my childhood home is just barely enough to place me, myself, in an oneiric situation, to set me on the threshold of a day-dream in which I shall find repose in the past” (13). The intimacy of the past in our day dreams is recaptured in the houses. The oneiric house holds thoughts, dreams, ideas, memory, imagination and so on.

Chaudhuri has the retrospective yearning for a home that no longer exists. He is often nostalgic about the villages of Kishorganj, Banagram and Kalikutch. Svetlana Boym in her book *The Future of Nostalgia* (2001) theorizes the intimate connection between nostalgia and spatiality as past homes, countries, etc become the main objects of retrospective yearning or longing. A similar link between nostalgia and the space of home reflects in Chaudhuri too. In Bachelard’s words, “But over and beyond our memories, the house we were born in is physically inscribed in us (14)”.

One can find varied connotations of houses in Chaudhuri. He mentions how he could never consider his Kishorganj house as a home. For him it was only meant for lodging. Again, the predominant presence of blood relations in Banagram made him associate his house there as a home. The quality of the oneiric house gets reflected when Chaudhuri calls the double-fly tent like structures made in his Banagram house for extra guests as “Swiss cottage”. Moreover, Chaudhuri attributes human characteristics to his mother’s village Kalikutch : “…a world so different, so humble, so full of humility, and so self-effacing in bamboo and cane greenery, that it brought tears to one’s eyes” (85). He later relates how his spirit matched the spirit of Kalikutch in childhood.

In case of Khushwant Singh, he locates and relocates his self with changing

places like Lahore, Bombay, Delhi as recounted in his autobiography. His experiences in Delhi have very little mention in his autobiography though he devotes an entire novel to Delhi. Khushwant Singh's narrative reveals his longing for his birthplace Hadali in Pakistan even after India's independence. He became extremely emotional and nostalgic when he visited there during his law practice in Lahore. He was overwhelmed by the loving welcome he received there in 1987. Pakistan, England, Lahore, Bombay, Delhi, Shimla become tropes that create Singh's autobiography in many ways. The title of the chapters like "Discovering England", "Lahore, Partition and England", "Discovery of India", "Pakistan" make this fact even clearer. He becomes nostalgic about the lush greenery, the snow-clad mountains and the vibrant bird life in their beautiful house Sunderban in Mashobra. Lahore became important to him for his job. But he had to stop going back to Lahore after the partition. He had closure with Bombay when he worked with "The Illustrated Weekly". Hence an entire chapter is devoted to Bombay. According to Singh, staying in Bombay changed him a lot as a Sikh. Being a journalist, Singh tries to give an objective description of Bombay as experienced by him during the editorship of "The Illustrated Weekly of India". Bombay remained an integral part of his existence even after he had left the place, as Singh writes:

> Scenes of Bombay kept haunting me for several months: oddly enough, it was not the people but the monsoon, the sound of dancers' bells practising for gudi padwa along Marine Drive, the sheets of rain coming down like a gossamer curtain, the dogs who wagged their tails as I passed them on my way to office. (275)

Geographical emotions thus contributed a lot in the creation of his self.

Heterotopic spaces, ecological tropes and the "rhetoric of exile"

"Heterotopia of crisis" is very much visible in Cornelia Sorabji's *India Calling*. Those are places that are sacred or forbidden in relation to the environment or the mainstream society around, hence the space of zenana also comes under its umbrella. The purdahnashins were set aside in a forbidden space from the dominant male gathering in the Hindu royal societies. This heterotopic space of zenana becomes the main trope around which Sorabji shapes her memoir. The private space of the zenana is made public

by Sorabji's field study. To quote Chandani Lokuge from her "Introduction" to *India Calling*, "As Sara Suleri observes, 'the zenana becomes the essential space of Indian femininity and it is only after such a sanctum has been penetrated that the Anglo-Indian can claim to "know" the Indian'" (xxii). Sorabji strives to remove the boundary between the outside world and the inner domain which are otherwise completely incompatible.

Cornelia Sorabji becomes nostalgic about her houses in her childhood which were mostly in the English fashion. She writes how she was brought up in "a home furnished like an English home" (7) which showcases her affinity for the English architecture. Her house became the expression of her inner anglicized being. Talking about the properties owned by her parents and especially the cottage in Pune she writes, "These homes of my childhood were like any house inhabited by the English community—single storied Bunglows with deep verandahs, set in gardens of flowers and shady trees" (Sorabji 8). Moreover, she insists that her Parsee friends also had houses furnished in an English Victorian style. The heterotopia in *India Calling* can best be understood with the representation of two completely different worlds coexisting together–that of Sorabji's English styled home and the confined abode of the purdahnashins in zenana.

In Nehru's self-narrative, Cambridge, Harrow, Kashmir, Delhi, Amritsar and many other such places come together in a heterotopic frame. Again, in the chapter "Animals in Prison" Nehru upholds his imagined bond with the insects, animals and birds in the prison. "I was not alone in my cell, for several colonies of wasps and hornets lived there, and many lizards found a home behind the rafters, emerging in the evenings in search of prey", (369) writes Nehru about his stay in the Dehra Dun Gaol where he was imprisoned for fourteen and a half months. There they also had access to viewing the Himalayas nearby which became a source of refuge for him. Even while inside the cell, the landscape was all over his mind. Attributing living features to the mountains, he mentions having developed a "secret intimacy" with the same (370). He discovered a new self in nature. Referring to the sublime mountains he expresses, "Its solidity and imperturbability looked down upon me with the wisdom of a million years, and mocked at my varying humours and soothed my fevered mind" (370). The varied shades of the four seasons in Dehra Dun also overpowered him with all its mystery. Nehru became very conscious of the space he shared with the insects. He depicts in

detail his co-existence with the same. While he was in a "continuous war" with bed-bugs, mosquitoes, flies etc., he tolerated hundreds of wasps and hornets in his cell. In a very imaginative manner he relates the instances of being angry with the wasp which had stung him and then trying to exterminate them despite their brave fight in defence. The insects teaming with life gave him an all new perspective towards life amidst the four dark prison walls. He adheres human qualities to them as well: "For over a year after that I lived in that cell surrounded by these wasps and hornets, and they never attacked me, and we respected each other" (371). The confined prison space brought him closer to nature and its other beings making him imagine himself in an all new way. He had close experience of companionships with squirrels in Lucknow gaol, pigeons in Almora prison, parrots in Naini prison and a variety of other birds in Dehra Dun gaol. He got emotionally connected with a little kitten there, but more notable is his strong love for a female dog and her puppies in the Dehra prison amidst all odds.

The confined space of the prison walls could not confine his heart. He could rather create bigger connections with nature and animals there. The prison plays a vital role in framing Nehru's autobiographical consciousness in several ways. He wrote *An Autobiography* while he was in his prison barrack at the Almora District gaol. Prisons are a heterotopia of deviation, as theorized by Foucault:

> But these heterotopias of crisis are disappearing today and are being replaced, I believe, by what we might call heterotopias of deviation: those in which individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed. Cases of this are rest homes and psychiatric hospitals, and of course prisons... (Foucault 25)

The prison witnesses a juxtaposition of criminals from varied sections of the society– political prisoners, ordinary prisoners, lifers, teenage prisoners and so on who are otherwise incompatible in a society together. The co-existence of different types of prisoners can be understood when Nehru elaborates: "Indian prisons contain hardened criminals, persons who are aggressively anti-social and dangerous to the community. But I have been amazed to find large numbers of fine types in prison, boys and men, whom I would trust unhesitatingly" (232). In the Lucknow District gaol, every effort

was made to keep the ordinary prisoners away from the political prisoners like Nehru.

As a political prisoner, Nehru experienced relatively better treatment in most of the prisons in contrast to the tragic experience of the ordinary prisoners as recounted by him. It was from them that he had a glimpse of the realities of prison life: "It was a story of violence and widespread graft and corruption. The food was quite amazingly bad; I tried it repeatedly and found it quite uneatable" (Nehru 102). Again, lifers are those who are given life sentences for some huge crime. The presence of teenage prisoners with no scope for reform or recreation was the saddest thing Nehru found about the gaol. Also, there were the European prisoners who were the most privileged of the lot.

While in prison he longed for the outside world but again he wrote three of his best books during that phase. Towards the beginning of his gaol days, Nehru did feel the necessity of privacy while sharing the barrack with many other political prisoners. As he relates his experience in Lucknow District gaol, he was always on public display– bathing together, washing together, eating together. "It was a great nervous strain for all of us, and often I yearned for solitude", writes Nehru (99).

The rare sight of the pole star and the blue sky was the most comforting refuge for him in the otherwise dull Naini prison. Nature became a metaphor for his carefree self seeking for solitude. In search of solitude, he spent time outside the barrack in Lucknow District gaol where the skies, clouds and rain became his space of refuge amidst the confinement. Time was also like a burden for them in prison. But the rare glimpses of nature served as the perfect outlet. As Nehru recounts, "But the time I spent in watching those ever-shifting monsoon clouds was filled with delight and a sense of relief. I had the joy of having made almost a discovery, and a feeling of escape from confinement" (100). Landscapes therefore played a very crucial role in bringing back life to him. In this regard, Philip Holden's claim that a masculine self-fashioning of Nehru gets reflected in his prison experience with the metaphorization of landscapes is very significant:

> As with bodily discipline, so the landscape of Kashmir takes on a metaphorical valence both inside and outside Nehru's text. In his first epilogue to the Autobiography, the author compares both his own life and the project of

> the realization of the nation to mountain climbing. (Holden 7) Through his invocation of sublime landscapes, Nehru also maps his own participation in nationalism onto Enlightenment tropes of progress, discipline, and rationality in the face of the overwhelming forces of nature... (8)

The chapter "My Wedding and an Adventure in the Himalayas" upholds Nehru's discovery of an all new self in nature, especially in mountains. He wandered for many weeks in the mountains leading to Ladakh with a cousin just after his wedding. He found a deep level of peace amidst the desolate mountains with lifeless rocks and ice at the Zoji-la pass: "Yet I found a strange satisfaction in these wild and desolate haunts of nature; I was full of energy and a feeling of exaltation" (Nehru 41). The valleys and mountains of Kashmir also fascinated Nehru extremely. While in prison, he took refuge in day-dreaming on visiting the mountains to satisfy his wanderlust. The prison therefore became a space for his day-dreaming too. Though not his house, it sheltered day dreams in the words of Bachelard. A privileged stay in prison helped him in solitary day-dreaming. To quote a relevant portion:

> Instead of going up mountains or crossing the seas I have to satisfy my wanderlust by coming to prison. But still I plan, for that is a joy that no one can deny even in prison, and besides what else can one do in prison? And I dream of the day when I shall wander about the Himalayas and cross them to reach that lake and mountain of my desire. (Nehru 43)

When sent to the Dehra Dun gaol for a second time from Alipore gaol, Nehru craved for a closure with nature amidst the extremely strict solitary confinement. The architecture of the circular walls in Naini prison cell made Nehru feel more oppressed and depressed. He felt that the absence of corners and angles added to the sense of oppression (230). His imagination made him compare that cell to an enclosed well. As he recounts his claustrophobic experience: "At night the wall enclosed me all the more, and I felt as if I was at the bottom of a well. Or else that part of the starlit sky that I saw ceased to be real and seemed part of an artificial planetarium" (Nehru 230). Pathetic fallacy can be seen in his depiction of the Himalayan mountains close to Almora District gaol:

> Calm and inscrutable they seemed, with all the wisdom of the past ages, mighty

> sentinels over the vast Indian plain. The very sight of them cooled the fever in the brain, and the pretty conflicts and intrigues, the lusts and falsehoods of the plains and the cities seemed trivial and far away before their eternal ways. (Nehru 588)

In the manner of Nehru, Dom Moraes also tried to discover a new self in nature through his childhood imagination. Use of pathetic fallacy, symbolisms in nature render many of his autobiographical narrations in *My Son's Father* poetic. Describing the park and the palm trees outside his Bombay house Moraes writes: "Above these the glaring sun pulsed like an eye: vultures soared up towards it on tremendous, idle wings" (3). This is followed by a very romantic depiction of the Arabian Sea and its play with the sunrays as was visible from behind his flat. He mingles his personal experiences with that of nature's in many instances, like when his father leaves for Burma. "After he went, the first monsoon I remember broke: the sky went coppery, and was filled always with a dirty fleece of cloud, infested by winged creatures, aimless and concentric", writes Moraes (4). Detailed depiction of jungles, animals can also be found in his trip to Ceylon.

For Moraes, home always stood for suffocation owing to his hysteric mother: "My mother took no interest in the house, or indeed in anything else" (24). The utter lack of space at home often led him to seek refuge in nature and such other places. Despite being in the same house, he preferred staying more in the lap of nature. As he recounts, he lived his own life in a garden in Bombay (43). He rested on the smooth bole of a tree there the whole day reading books of different kinds. Moraes' experiences in India, England, Sri Lanka, Rome, Australia all come together in *My Son's Father.*

Autobiographers like Moraes, Rushdie and Sorabji too are uprooted or diasporic in their own way. In this context, the "rhetoric of exile" appears to be a common feature among the Indian English writers. Writers like Rushdie, Jhumpa Lahiri immigrated to London or New York by choice, but, exile, homelessness and diaspora continue to be a part and parcel of their self expression. Meenakshi Mukherjee writes: "Instead of seeing my Indianness as a fragile identity to be preserved against obliteration, I see it now as a set of fluid identities to be celebrated... Indianness is now a metaphor, a particular way of comprehending the world" (Mukherjee Preface). India becomes an imaginary place

for the diasporic writers unlike the writers residing in India. It is through the rhetoric of exile that they imagine and create a part of their selves. To quote this aspect of Rushdie in *Joseph Anton*:

> He was a migrant. He was one of those who had ended up in a place that was not the place where he began. Migration tore up all the traditional roots of the self. His beloved Bombay was no longer available to him; in their old age his parents had sold his childhood home without discussion and mysteriously decamped to Karachi, Pakistan. (Rushdie 53)

In this context, mention must be made of his treatise on immigration and diaspora, *Imaginary Homelands* (1991) where he writes, "...we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind" (Rushdie 10). The rhetoric of exile is also very much prevalent in Moraes' *Never at Home* where he constantly expresses his troublesome sense of belonging shifting between England and India. Although born and brought up in India, he could never identify a sense of belonging with this country. In India he did not match with the typical Indian ways or culture while in England his complexion differentiated him from the English. He studied in England and returned to India after twenty long years, only to face the harsh diasporic reality from which he had been long evading:

> Through a historical accident and, because the British ruled the country when I was born—and for the last two generations my family had been educated by them—I only spoke the English language; the Indian languages were foreign to me. So were Indian traditions, Indian customs and an entire style of life... Very early on, I started to write poetry in English. (Moraes viii)

Moraes suffered from rootlessness and a sense of belonging nowhere. He felt out of place in almost all the countries he stayed. As he writes, "For several years I was an international nomad" (Moraes viii). As Sayan Chattopadhyay writes in his critical essay "Return as a Stranger: Dom Moraes and the Ambiguity of Homecoming" (2014): "Moraes himself was unable to sever ties with his country of birth and all of his many autobiographies and travel writings remain woven around themes of departure from and anxiety-ridden arrival to the country that signified for him both a land of exile and a

childhood home" (313).

A Portuguese by origin, Dom Moraes always felt like a stranger in India. Being completely anglicized, Moraes always spoke in English and he hardly had any attachment with Indian culture or language. The contemporary English authors had a great influence on him. The writerly self of Moraes in fact developed in relation to the significant English poets and authors he came across every now and then. Eliot, Auden, Spender, Allen Tate, Yeats played significant roles in creating and shaping the poetic self of Moraes. Despite being an Indian, he never preferred writing about India, as he never felt at home. Although he had spent his childhood and later his middle age in India itself, the issues of this country hardly find mention in his writings. The rhetoric of exile through which he creates himself is best evident when he says:

> Kipling had lived in India, and had written about it. I lived in England, and had written about it. I didn't see that either of us had betrayed ourselves as writers.
>
> I was in no way qualified to write about India, except as a foreigner. I did not speak any of its languages; I had not travelled very widely in it; from a fairly early age I had resolved to leave it as soon as possible. (Moraes 65-66)

Moraes and Rushdie thus left their birthplace on their own or their family's accord. But then they imagined an extreme diasporic self, especially through whatever they write. When at some point in England a policeman doubted Moraes as an outsider by seeing his colour, Moraes felt all the more disoriented as an immigrant: "England was my home. Was I to be treated like an immigrant? Then it occurred to me that I was an immigrant, and that I knew very little about how other immigrants lived" (Moraes 94). Even the film that he was once asked to do for a BBC series was on Pakistani and Asian immigrants. His poetry writing on England gave him an English identity which he himself began to question when he stopped writing poetry: "Now that I didn't write poetry, I no longer knew which world I belonged to. This had never been my problem before. I had belonged to England, to the West; my sensibility belonged to it. Did I now?" (Moraes 310)

Poetry for him defined his national sensibility. He writes in *My Son's Father*, "England for me was where the poets were. I had no real consciousness of a nationality, for I did not speak the languages of my countrymen, and therefore had no soil for roots"

(Moraes 100). Dom Moraes' memoirs explicate shades of colonial schizophrenia in the sense that Moraes disbelieved in the Indian reality around and he always longed for an English or colonial counterpart. While Rushdie was diasporic for his birthplace India, Moraes longed for everything English during his stay in India. An analysis of Moraes' self-narratives reveal how mimicking the English ways, writers and so on were what gave him fulfilment. While Meenakshi Mukherjee in "The Anxiety of Indianness" from *The Perishable Empire* (2000) views the expatriate, diasporic Indian English writers as having an anxiety of Indianness owing to the artificial burden they carry, Rushdie in *Imaginary Homelands* advocates the stance of the Indian writers staying in England by asserting that such writers could have an objective view of India through a "double perspective" (Rushdie 19).

Moraes brings in numerous different worlds together in his memoir, from the different corners of India to Nepal, Bhutan, Malaysia, Israel, London, Scotland. He tried to locate his identity in Goa when the Goans hero-worshipped him for speaking up for them. But he again ended up feeling "never at home" in India. He always found India very hostile. Calcutta was the most horrible city according to him, the reason being overpopulation and poverty. For him India was a space filled with filth. Locating Moraes' identity in any place or space becomes very problematic throughout the memoir. While he went to East Pakistan to cover the story of a terrible cyclone, the poet Asif Currimbhoy addressed Moraes as neither a Hindu nor an Indian: "'You are not a Hindu nor an Indian," Asif said, "so we can speak frankly to you. All of us hate the West Pakistanis, yes, but to tell you the truth, we hate the Hindus even more" (Moraes 179). He found life in the subcontinent interesting but still he preferred to travel or settle in England.

For Rushdie, moving to Pakistan was a great blunder by his parents which deprived him of his home in India. He perceived it as a "country insufficiently imagined, conceived of the misjudged notion that a religion could bind together peoples" (Rushdie 60). While Rushdie felt multi-rooted, Moraes felt uprooted everywhere. Geographical emotions were very different for the two of them. Rushdie wished to reclaim his Indian identity anyhow. Saleem Sinai from *Midnight's Children* for instance, becomes a metaphor for his self longing for his roots in India. Born exactly during India's independence, Saleem's identity later got entangled in different

kinds of crisis and helpless longings for the country.

Rushdie felt doubly exiled after his fatwa. His fatwa is a perfect example of Foucault's "heterotopia of deviation" as it made him feel like an outcast in the society. The space of protection given to him post fatwa made him feel like a captive in jail. He was trapped in a space where he felt haunted and socially unaccepted. There was no line of difference between his public life and private life once he became all surrounded by security guards after the fatwa. Even he could not pick up the daily newspaper or go for a brisk walk without the guards. The trope of heterotopia of deviation thus plays a vital role behind the crafting of his memoir *Joseph Anton*.

Temporal rearrangements in the self-narratives

This section attempts to establish the argument that the autobiographical self cannot always be spatio-temporally continuous, linear or structured. Time is often restructured in self-narratives through the teleological construction of linear time. Brockmeier in his essay "From End to the Beginning: Retrospective Teleology in Autobiography" (2001) regards the nature of autobiographical narrative to be time-sensitive. In his words, "This is exactly what I mean by retrospective teleology: an order of lived time and narrated time in which the present emerges from the past like the famous flux of time" (Brockmeier 253). Retrospective teleology is a central feature of self narration as pointed out by him. The self is also located in past time through the present perspective. The projection of past onto the present and vice versa appears prominently in Augustine's *Confessions*. It is a self -narrative by Augustine of Hippo, consisting of 13 books written in Latin between AD 397 and 400. The work outlines Augustine's sinful youth and his conversion to Christianity.

The linearity of time is hardly maintained in all the self-narratives undertaken for this study. Some chapters in the narratives also compress many years together. For instance, the chapter "Harrow and Cambridge" in Nehru's *An Autobiography* covers snippets from seven long years of his life from 1905 to 1912. The epilogue in Moraes' *My Son's Father* skips eight years of his life. Dom Moraes gives a lot of importance to time in changing him completely as a person. This aspect even makes him declare that his memoir was written by a doppelganger two decades back. The "Foreword" of *My Son's Father* which was written twenty years later depicts how he considered himself

distanced from the author with the advent of many years: “I cannot see this person very clearly. He is both distant and close, like a friend remembered from the past, unmet from many years” (Foreword). He visualized his past in terms of his present. Thus the connotation of the past happenings get drastically altered when viewed from the present space or time. In his fifties, Moraes found his memoir a completely distant entity.

My Son’s Father technically ends in the twelfth chapter with the celebration of his 21st birthday with his mother following their reunion. But the addition of the thirteenth chapter after the epilogue marks a huge shift in time as it narrates a part of his life with Judith when he was around thirty years of age. That one chapter summarises his meeting with Judith and then the birth of his son. The back and forth narration is also constantly on throughout the memoir. As Moraes writes in the “Preface”: “I have tried to produce a narrative which has the same relationship to chronology as the memory has: that is, not much. I have jumped various stages of my life and cut back and forth in time” (Moraes Preface).

Huge jumps in time can be witnessed in the memoirs of Mulk Raj Anand also. *Conversations in Bloomsbury* begins in medias res and it never really has any mention of a particular date. Different patches of Anand’s memory are recollected and put together in the text which functions as a true complement to his *An Apology for Heroism*. The complete shunning of dates or linear order of time naturally brings in the question of imaginative reproduction. A conscious doing away with dates can also be found in R. K. Narayan’s *My Dateless Diary* where events irrespective of date and time are put together in a canvas.

N. C. Chaudhuri definitely gives more emphasis on space and place rather than time in his first autobiography. The linear flow of time hardly appears in his descriptions of the three villages Banagram, Kishoreganj and Kalikutch. He tries to give an idea of his time through the descriptions of the villages, Calcutta and imagined portrayals of England, Shillong. He relates how past times were brought back to him through anecdotes narrated by his grandmother and father. Many years of his personal life are skipped whereas Indian renaissance, nationalist movements take the forefront in the autobiographical narrative.

Chaudhuri attempts to restructure time in his autobiography through historical

events. He holds the cause of Indian history and nationalist movements as prior to his own personal development. The changing times of the country take the front seat whereas the changing shades of his life take a backseat. In the very "Introduction" of his second autobiography *Thy Hand Great Anarch!* Chaudhuri admits the absence of thirty- two long years of his life in the book: "This book falls short of even that by thirty-two years, for it only covers my 'working life', which began in 1921 and came to a close at the end of 1952" (xiii). In that book he prioritizes the time of the fall of British Empire and the Bengali culture over the tale of his own life.

The fictional rearrangement of time is very much present in Salman Rushdie's *Joseph Anton* also. It is a back and forth tale surrounding his fatwa, love life and marriages. It begins in medias res and hardly adheres to the bildungsroman pattern. The time of his fatwa becomes the focal point of the entire book with very less reference to the different phases of his life. His past was completely overshadowed by the accusation. "How easy it was to erase a man's past and to construct a new version of him, an overwhelming version, against which it seemed impossible to fight", (5) writes Rushdie emphasizing the power of time in shaping his life. The story of his childhood and his parents begin only in the second chapter entitled "A Faustian Contract in Reverse". All his narratives on his past achievements again come down to a connection with the fatwa incident. At one instance, he relates how leaving India made him feel replete with numerous ideas, images, arguments and love. But the next moment he mentions that unknowingly it was his last visit to India as a long exile would follow post the banning of *The Satanic Verses*.

The above critical analysis therefore infers that space and place create the self in a variety of different ways in Indian English autobiographies and memoirs. Spatial movement, imagination, remembrance, heterotopias, nostalgia, ecology are vital to the formation of the autobiographical self. The autobiographies are shaped by such spaces and in turn the narratives contribute to the ways in which such spaces are imagined. The above analysis reveals the spacing of the self in a poetic manner through a retrospective teleology which nullifies the binaries like real space/imagined space, linear time/non-linear time when it comes to the select autobiographies and memoirs.