

## ABSTRACT

The thesis aims at studying the poetic and imaginative nature of Indian English autobiographies and memoirs—how it is an amalgamation of tropological details that make the self construction possible. It interrogates the monologic agentiality and non-fictional nature of the select self-narratives. Exploration of the blurring of the boundaries between autobiography and fiction is one of the major preoccupations in this thesis. The self and the historical setting are analysed from different angles to grasp the creative dimension and to understand how the autobiographical project creates life. The thesis uses different literary and cultural theories as yardsticks for scrutiny with Paul de Man’s deconstructive arguments in “Autobiography as De-facement” (1979) as the major point of reference. It argues that the primary texts by eight autobiographers from 1930s till 2012 manifest the poststructural orientation of Indian English self-narratives through an examination of different metaphorical tropes, rhetorical and fictional rearrangements.

Chapter 1 examines the tropes of addressivity, answerability, accountability and referentiality in order to theorize the relational autobiographical self recurring through all the selected Indian English autobiographies and memoirs. It shows how a plurality of consciousness turns the agential/polyphonic binary fluid. Chapter 2 theorizes the nature of colonial self-fashioning through an analysis of the predominance of English education and culture in the primary texts undertaken. While some writers manifest the rhetoric of colonial schizophrenia, some others adhere to a hybrid, ambivalent self-fashioning in the autobiographical context. Chapter 3 offers a new historical interpretation of the texts to negotiate the poetic and subjective dimension of history narration that further deconstructs the binary of history/metahistory. Chapter 4 studies the inherent fissures in the psychoanalytic aspect of the self-narratives through an examination of the rhetoric of trauma, sexuality and varied psychological instincts that render the autobiographical subjectivity illusory. Chapter 5 deals with the problematics of fictional time and space in the self-narratives chosen to infer how metaphorical tropes of topography, exile and heterotopias contribute to imagined subjectivities.

**Keywords:** metaphorical tropes, agentiality, addressivity, self-fashioning, colonial schizophrenia, metahistory, heterotopias.