

INTRODUCTION

The dissertation focuses on how metaphorical tropes and technicalities construct the autobiographical narratives or create life in select Indian English autobiographies and memoirs through a poststructural lens. To examine the varied rhetorical figures or tropes that problematize the difference between fiction and autobiography will be one of its major objectives. The thesis will explore the role of other lives as tropes of relationality. It shall also strive to uncover the literary, poetic and metahistorical dimension in the autobiographies and memoirs. Besides, the research will critically analyse the role of imagined place and space in the creation of subjectivities. It proposes to identify the uncertainty and undecidability of binaries like fact/fiction, truth/imagination, agency/relationality and such others in select self-narratives. The boundaries of autobiography as a genre in the Indian English context will be put to question in this thesis. The term “self-narratives” in this thesis refers to both autobiographies and memoirs. The usage of the umbrella term has been specifically derived from Uday Kumar’s critical text *Writing the First Person: Literature, History, and Autobiography in Modern Kerala* (2016) where he regards a narrative about one’s own life as a “self-narrative”.

The Enlightenment idea of subjectivity, identity and agency has undoubtedly been decentred by modern interventions. Existentialist, Marxist, psychoanalytic and poststructuralist theories in the first half of the twentieth century shattered the concept of the subject as being unified. Self-discovery and self-knowledge of an autonomous autobiographical self subsequently became contested concepts. In the Enlightenment age, the Scottish philosopher David Hume theorized that human thought and ethics are based on experiences and sense perceptions rather than reasons. Hume in *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739) argues that the human self is an illusion and the mind is a fictional construction. Later, the nineteenth century philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche interrogated the fundamental basis of human existence through his ideas of nihilism in the works like *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883) and *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* (1886). Nietzsche completely nullified the existence of a concrete, agency self. As Barresi and Martin note in their essay “History as Prologue: Western Theories of Self” (2011), “Nietzsche claimed that, rather than unity of consciousness, we have “only a semblance of Unity” (44). They further say that, to explain this semblance, rather than a single subject, we could do as well by postulating “a multiplicity of subjects, whose interaction and struggle is the basis of our thought

and our consciousness in general” (44). Hume’s and Nietzsche’s ideas of selfhood can be witnessed in the critical studies on autobiographical subjectivity in twentieth century too. Again, Judith Butler in “Giving an Account of Oneself” (2001) relates a person’s self account to a predominant structure of addressing the Others (Butler 37).

In the words of Linda Anderson from *Autobiography* (1986), “Autobiography has also been recognized since the late eighteenth century as a distinct literary genre and, as such, an important testing ground for critical controversies about a range of ideas including authorship, selfhood, representation and the division between fact and fiction” (Anderson Introduction). Traditional critics of autobiography like Gusdorf, Georg Misch, Roy Pascal, Philippe Lejeune perceived the autobiographical subjectivity to be a form of self-introspection and agentiality. Again, as Sidonie Smith and Watson rightly point out in *Reading Autobiography* (2001), “While the Enlightenment or liberal-humanist notion of selfhood understood the “I” as the universal, transcendent marker of “man”, radical challenges to the notion of a unified selfhood in the early decades of the twentieth century eroded certainty in both a coherent ‘self’ and the ‘truth’ of self narrating” (Smith and Watson 123). Hence there was a mixed approach towards autobiographical subjectivity in the beginning and middle of twentieth century.

The tradition of narrating the self began quite late in India as compared to the Western counterpart. *Ardhakathanaka* by Banarasidas is supposed to be the first Indian autobiography composed in Hindi in 1641. That was followed by many other such autobiographies, mostly by men as women were open to free education much later. In the Islamic tradition of course, there were some life narratives like that of *Tuzuk-i-Baburi* (1589) by the Mughal king Babur. Indian autobiography has manifold shades just like the country itself with numerous languages, caste, creed and religions. This diversity sometimes leads to complexity while studying Indian autobiography. Raj Kumar in *Dalit Personal Narratives* (2010) traces how the dominant Hindu metaphysics and the Hindu social structure placed very little importance on individuality, leading to the delay in the eruption of Indian autobiographies in the literary scenario. He also observes how the tradition of biography writing in India is quite old unlike its autobiographical counterpart.

Though a recent body of writing, Indian English literature now has a

distinguished tradition of life writing, especially in the autobiographical mode. However, not much critical work has been done in the area of Indian English autobiographies. The origin and development of the practice of writing Indian autobiographies in English started at quite a later date as compared to the dominant Western practice, probably because of several pre-existing factors like caste, religion, gender and other philosophical considerations in the Indian context. The advent of English in the Indian educational scenario brought in by the British rule contributed a lot to the production of Indian English autobiographies owing to the development of individuality in contrast to the supposedly typical Hindu philosophy of the universal soul. The Indian English autobiographers appropriated the Western style of self-narration and thus came up with a new body of life writing through a renewed approach.

The Travels of Dean Mahomet (1794) can be considered to be the first Indian autobiography in English, although it is mostly regarded as a travel writing in the form of letters. *Autobiography of Lutfullah* (1857) was probably the first full-length autobiography in English by an Indian. M.K. Gandhi's *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (1940), Cornelia Sorabji's *India Calling* (1934), Jawaharlal Nehru's *An Autobiography* (1936), N.C. Chaudhuri's *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* (1951), Salman Rushdie's *Joseph Anton* (2012), Kamala Das' *My Story* (1977), Dom Moraes' *My Son's Father* (1968), Khushwant Singh's *Truth, Love and a Little Malice* (2002) are some of the influential mainstream Indian English autobiographies. Although these writers individually represent different worldviews, socio-culturally they belong to the same common category which is privileged to have an audience worldwide. Most of the Indian English autobiographies serve as both personal narratives and historical or social documents. They delineate a panoramic picture of contemporary social and political histories which are inevitably intertwined with their personal lives. Besides, a more recent phenomenon in this domain of self-narratives is the Dalit autobiography. Such personal narratives have an altogether different theoretical and social base that challenges the dominant tradition. Those autobiographies are mostly translated works initially written in regional languages. Apart from these, twenty-first century India has also witnessed the emergence of some bestselling sports memoirs. Indian English autobiographies thus encompass different

sets of personalities like authors, academicians, politicians, sports persons, journalists, civil servants and so on.

Indian women got the privilege of education at a later date as compared to Indian men, which is why upper caste Indian women began writing autobiographies or memoirs only from late nineteenth century. Most women were doubly marginalized owing to the patriarchal Indian society. The earliest Indian women's autobiographies can be found in Bengali and Marathi languages. Rassundari Devi's two-part autobiography *Amar Jiban* (Bengali, 1868 and 1897), Ramabai Ranade's *Amchya Ayushatil Kahi Athavani* (Marathi, 1910), Binodini Dasi's two-part autobiography i.e., *Amar Katha* (Bengali, 1912), and *Amar Abhinetri Jiban* (Bengali, 1924-25), Lakshmibai Tilak's *Smriti Chitre* (Marathi, 1934-37), are important among the early autobiographies. Being born in a privileged Parsee family with extreme British influence, Cornelia Sorabji, India's first woman barrister wrote her memoirs *India Calling* (1934) and *India Recalled* (1936) in English. Nayantara Sahgal's *Prison and Chocolate Cake* (1954) is a short childhood memoir by her and has been referred to as a secondary text in this thesis.

It was not before the mid-seventies of the twentieth century that the modern phase of the feminist movement began making its strong influence felt in India. Kamala Das' *My Story* (1977) also got framed during that phase. Amrita Pritam's *Rasidi Tikit (The Revenue Stamp: An Autobiography, 1977)*; Durgabai Deshmukh's *Chintamani and I* (1980); Ramadevi Choudhuri's *Jiwan Pathe (Into the Sun:1984)*; Indira Goswami's *An Unfinished Autobiography* (1990) are some of the important autobiographies of the late twentieth century written in regional languages. As this thesis focuses on Indian English self-narratives written originally in English, the works of Kamala Das and Cornelia Sorabji stand dominant and hence, these two have been taken as primary sources here alongside male autobiographies. *My Story* has been analysed in all the chapters except the chapter on metahistory as Das hardly talks about history in her autobiography. Again, *India Calling* has been analysed in all the chapters except the chapter on psychoanalysis as that theme runs little in the memoir.

The thesis focuses on the autobiographies and memoirs of eight notable Indian English writers. This study shall focus on throwing new light on the representation of

self and history in such select Indian English autobiographies and memoirs. It shall attempt to theorize the fictive and imaginative nature of self-narratives by rethinking form and testimony in autobiographical discourses. It will also look forward to comprehending the poetics of time and space in such memoirs and autobiographies in order to perceive the imaginative aspect of self-narration in a more comprehending way.

The vital questions that this research shall raise and address are: Does life determine self narration or is it the play of tropes that overpower the same? How do the tropes of relationality and addressivity subvert agentiality in Indian English autobiographies? To what extent do English language, literature, culture and law frame the colonial self-fashioning of the writers taken? Is history narration objective or subjective with ideological moulds and poetic imaginations? How do the tropes of psychoanalysis and trauma determine the autobiographical imagination? Can a transformation of the self take place without spatial transformation? Can alternative realities be imagined in creative spaces?

Relevance of the Primary Texts

The corpus for this research shall be a selection of the major autobiographies from each decade that flourished between 1930s till 2012. The earliest text taken up here, *India Calling* (1934) is a memoir by India's first woman barrister Cornelia Sorabji. Besides her path-breaking personal journey in becoming a barrister, this text unfolds her experience with the Hindu purdahnashins (women who observed complete aloofness because of Hindu customs) and her ceaseless strivings to advocate for their rights and freedom in every way. This is also the first English self-narrative by an Indian woman which makes it very important for this study. Moreover, Sorabji's pro-British feelings and her orientalist take on Indian culture, history, society and the then political scenario render it a fertile critical ground for exploration in this thesis.

The second primary text is *An Autobiography* (1936) by Jawaharlal Nehru which was composed during his prison days. He initially wished to title it as *In and Out of Prison*. The book is replete with his first-hand experiences during India's freedom struggle, his idea of nationalism and his extensive analysis of Gandhian movements and philosophies. The socio-political canvas of Indian history and the unique prison life

portrayal make it important in this research work. Also relevant are Nehru's approach and criticisms of English language, life, literature and law that influenced his life as well as his autobiography extensively.

The next text, *Apology for Heroism: A Brief Autobiography of Ideas* (1946) is a philosophical self-narrative by Mulk Raj Anand. This book gives a glimpse of his perception of a writer's role in social reform. This text is very vital in grasping his philosophical bent of mind as an author who always stood for the cause of the downtrodden. His attitude towards the colonial rule and Indian history is evident from this memoir.

Besides the above autobiography, yet another memoir by Mulk Raj Anand *Seven Summers* (1951) forms an important part of the thesis. The prolific Indian English writer in this memoir pens down the first seven years of his life which he regards as "half unconscious and half conscious childhood". A typical Indian portrayal of life, his childhood libido and his experiences with nature become significant points of study for the thesis which aims to interpret tropes of psychoanalysis, relationality and eco-autobiography among others.

Nirad C. Chaudhuri's *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* (1951) is a highly acclaimed critical text which has elaborate depictions of his ancestral villages giving the readers a glimpse of Bengal in undivided India. The autobiography traces his intellectual growth in Calcutta and provides comprehensive information on the history of India, particularly the Hindu civilization. His idea of decadence manifests an entirely different perspective on history narration. It is a seminal Indian autobiography in English that explicitly presents his inclination and expertise towards English language and literature. Any study in Indian English self narration would be incomplete without this treatise.

The next primary text *My Son's Father* (1968) is a memoir of childhood and college days towards an intellectual growth as a poet by the prominent Indian English author Dom Moraes. The first thirty years of his life are covered in this book. The text voices his emotionally troubled childhood as a result of his neurotic mother. This particular aspect in the book is very instrumental in understanding his lack of belongingness in India. The scholarly experiences in Oxford and Cambridge with some

great poets and writers like Stephen Spender show his relational self formation as a poet whereas the narratives on trauma and exile turn this memoir into a very ripe ground for autobiographical criticism.

Along with Cornelia Sorabji, Kamala Das is the other Indian English woman writer chosen for this work. *My Story* (1977) is the English version of the Malayalam text *Ente Katha* published in 1973. It is the bold and candid self-portrayal of the revolutionary Indian English poetess Kamala Das. Though an autobiography, the text is replete with poetry and fictional depictions which problematize its generic orientation. *My Story* manifests Das' obsessive feminine desire for a true and forever lover besides sketching her emotional and intellectual journey in becoming a poet in an otherwise hostile environment. Written in English during an era when it was next to impossible, this autobiography definitely stands tall and unconventional in the lineage of Indian English self-narratives.

Apart from *Seven Summers* and *Apology for Heroism*, *Conversations in Bloomsbury* (1981) is a major read to comprehend Mulk Raj Anand's strong views on Indian art, religion, literature, culture and freedom struggle. The memoir is a canvas of his multiple conversations on numerous topics with the members of the Bloomsbury group like Aldous Huxley, E. M. Forster, T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, Bonamee Dobree etc during the pre-independence era. The main ideas inside the minds of Anand and the great English philosophers or writers get manifested through the interactions in each chapter of the book. Through the conversations Anand constantly attempts to shatter orientalist myths deep seated within the Bloomsbury members. It is a major contribution to Indian English life writing which gives many counter narratives on Indian history and colonialism through Anand's postcolonial and modernist lens.

Thy Hand, Great Anarch! (1987) is yet another vital primary text which is a sequel to Nirad C. Chaudhuri's first self-narrative *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*. This becomes a very pertinent book to perceive Chaudhuri's creation of an altogether different notion of nation, history and his take on the then Indian socio-political or religious affairs. It covers the Indian political scenario from 1920s till independence. The writer's pro-British attitude appears more prominently in this autobiography as compared to the earlier one. The book also details Chaudhuri's

journey of different careers in India finally ending up as a writer. Moreover, it holds some of the stark criticisms of political personalities too like that of Subhash Chandra Bose besides extensive appraisals of some other great literary figures like Rabindranath Tagore. A study of Indian English autobiographies would remain incomplete without analysing this extremely substantial text.

The second memoir by Dom Moraes after *My Son's Father, Never at Home* (1992) is a more mature and deeper text on Moraes' travels all over the world and his exilic experiences in India. True to the title of the book, it upholds his constant attempt to feel at home in India and abroad, only to feel more uprooted in many ways. Moraes' problematic identity construction, English self-fashioning and diasporic self offer strong grounds for considering this text as an indispensable part of this thesis.

The last but one primary text, *Truth, Love and a Little Malice* (2002) portrays a panoramic view of the celebrated Indian English writer Khushwant Singh's commentary on India's partition, communal conflicts, Sikh religion, history and a picture of the political rule by the Gandhi family seen from close quarters. His libido centric self bound for multiple women of varied age groups too occupy a considerable part of the autobiography. In addition, Singh's journey as a lawyer and then as a writer, journalist and columnist find expression through this narrative.

The last primary text *Joseph Anton* (2012) is a unique memoir written in third person narrative by Salman Rushdie who here retells his difficult experiences during his fatwa. His extreme perceptions on history, terrorism, religion and literature get expressed through this narrative. The text is in fact a kind of vindication of his innocence regarding the fatwa. It traces the growth of his writerly self and he also devotes pages to justify his intentions behind the composition of *The Satanic Verses* (1988). The blurring of fact and fiction is the trickiest part in the memoir which makes it very fertile for critical interpretation. *Joseph Anton* is a perfect example of postmodern memoir writing in contemporary India.

Review of Literature

The literature review is basically divided into three broad categories: i) Overall Studies on Indian Autobiographies ii) Studies on the Selected Indian English autobiographers and iii) Critical Works on Autobiographical theory.

The following section details the literature which deals with overall studies on Indian autobiographies.

Telling Lives in India (2004) by David Arnold and Stuart Blackburn serves as a significant contribution to a new perspective on Indian life histories from biographies, autobiographies, diaries to oral stories. Through the essays in this book, Arnold tries to support as well as counter the viewpoint that the typical Indian self is culture specific and collective in nature. Arnold considers the prison narratives of Gandhi, Nehru in the twentieth century as the most individualistic and introspective expression of the self. It opens up new ways of thinking and writing about India. As Arnold concludes in his book, a study of the Bengali autobiography of Sibnath Sastri by Kaviraj in “The Invention of Private Life: A Reading of Sibnath Sastri’s *Autobiography*” and the reticent poetic self of Mahadevi Varma by Orsini in the essay “The Reticent Autobiographer Mahadevi Varma’s Writings” represent the emergence of a modern, authorial selfhood. This book undoubtedly forms a significant part of the review of literature for this particular research work I have undertaken. Besides gaining insight from Arnold, this thesis shall also critique many of his views as it aims to challenge the autonomous, introspective nature of autobiographical selves in Indian English self-narratives.

Dalit personal Narratives (2011) is a significant contribution to the study of Indian autobiographies. Raj Kumar in this work traces the beginning and growth of Indian autobiographies, both in English and the translated ones. He analyses how factors like caste, culture, religion, gender play significant roles in shaping the same. Besides, he draws a comparison of the nuances in the writing style of both the upper caste and the lower caste writers. It then deals at length with the life narratives from the subaltern class—that of the Dalits. Kumar analyses both male and female Dalit writers from different perspectives thereby discovering the typically political nature of such narratives. It traces how Dalit autobiographies serve as tools of resistance by illuminating the cause of identity crisis and terrible marginality, thus enlightening one on this recent development in the sphere of Indian autobiographies.

The book *The Indian Autobiographies in English* (2013) forms a major part of a thesis by R. C. P. Sinha. Here he makes a general survey and analysis of Indian

autobiographies written in English. Sinha gives considerable credit to British education and the literary renaissance brought in by them for the development of such self-narratives. Initially he traces the growth of autobiographies through ancient and medieval India since the Vedas. He then classifies the autobiographies according to “mission” or “calling” of individual authors owing to the difficulty of classifying the same by motive. Sinha however attributes the future of Indian English autobiography to the future of English education in India. The relevance of this book lies in the fact that it serves as an existing body of knowledge on Indian English autobiography and thus shall serve as an indispensable part of the review of literature for my research.

Uday Kumar in the work *Writing the First Person: Literature, History, and Autobiography in Modern Kerala* (2016) critically examines the emergence, growth and history of autobiographical writings in Kerala owing to several socio-political and religious changes in the twentieth century. Although all the sections of this book are not directly relevant for my study, yet the theoretical framework and the analytical perspective Kumar uses for interpreting the self-narratives of Kerala suffice as important points of reference. Self-narrative reveals only the truth of deception according to him. Kumar identifies how the development of self-narratives began against the backdrop of Protestant Christian missionary activity, thereby testifying to experiences of religious conversion. He discovers how factors like physical body and caste play a significant role in determining individual identity and articulating self relation. He draws upon the theories of Butler and Cavarero which provide further insight to a study of self-narratives. Kumar’s survey of self-narratives in Kerala thus serves as a role model to contemplate the bigger Indian picture as well from similar historical and conceptual lens.

The next section of literature review takes into consideration works on the individual writers undertaken for this thesis.

Colonialism, Tradition and Reform: An Analysis of Gandhi's Political Discourse (1989) by Bhikhu Parekh studies the numerous facets of Gandhi’s life and personality vis-à-vis his autobiography. He seeks to contemplate Gandhi’s position between tradition and modernity through the latter’s preoccupation with Hinduism, non-violence, sex, politics and untouchability. Besides focusing on the Indianization of

autobiography in general, Parekh critically analyses the contesting discourses on Gandhian ideals in particular, which makes it of pertinent relevance for this dissertation.

Edited by Swapan Dasgupta, *Nirad C. Chaudhuri: the First Hundred Years* (1997) is a collection of scholarly essays on the life and works of N.C. Chaudhuri. The essays uphold the numerous dimensions of Chaudhuri's personality and his take on Indian history. Those give the readers a glimpse of how he was a mix of English traditionalism and Bengali conservatism. In the very "Introduction" to the book, Swapan Dasgupta makes some critical observations on the nature of history, nationalism in *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* and *Thy Hand, Great Anarch!* The essay "The World's Last Englishman" by Ian Jack draws on Chaudhuri's obsession and advocacy for Western culture, music and the utter influence of his books on the Western publishers. Meenakshi Mukherjee in "We say Desh" identifies the paradoxes and ambivalences in Chaudhuri's language and writings which led to his contradictory perspectives. Again, in the essay "N.C. Chaudhuri: Scholar and Iconoclast" K. Natwar Singh critiques Chaudhuri's dark vision of life, history, society especially in *A Passage to England* (1959). A comparison between Naipaul and Chaudhuri is chalked by Keki N. Daruwalla in "The Wounded Continent, Nirad Babu and Naipaul". Especially significant for the chapter on metahistory has been the essay "Mejokaka" by Krishna Bose where she comments that it would be inappropriate to call Chaudhuri a historian due to a serious lack of archival research. She also attempts to decipher his misinterpretations of Subhash Chandra Bose and the INA soldiers. Srabani Basu's "An Austen Afternoon" reveals Jane Austen's influence on Chaudhuri. In "A Scholar Extraordinary" Khushwant Singh justifies Chaudhuri's pro-Indian narration in his first autobiography, his defense of Hinduism and Indianness as opposed to the orientalist presuppositions where the East was largely misinterpreted by the Western world in art, literature and cultural studies.

Moreover, some scholarly journals have also been reviewed to negotiate the various interpretations on the works of the selected writers. The article "Nehru as a Writer" (1990) by Vinay Lal discusses the overwhelming presence of Gandhi in Nehru's life as well as literature. It also deals with Nehru's historical imagination and simple prose style in three of his greatest works including his autobiography. Again,

Balkrishna Gokhale in “Nehru and History” (1978) traces the nature of history narration by Nehru in his autobiography. He calls Nehru a romantic historian because of his fascination for “man”. He further interprets the twofold evolution of Indian history as per Nehru through an amalgamation of the West and the East. This essay is very vital in gauging history narration by Nehru and is relevant for the chapter on metahistorical self narration by Indian English autobiographers.

Geetanjali Gangoli in the essay “One of a Kind: A Review of Sorabji’s *India Calling*” (2002) talks about Sorabji’s complicated history narration and the marginalization of the same by the historians. According to the author, Sorabji’s descriptions concentrate on the recreation of the orientalist ‘other’. The presence of class distinction through an absence of Indian working-class women in Sorabji’s memoir has also been identified by Gangoli besides a dissection of Sorabji’s attitude of patronizing charity. All such insights and interpretations greatly inform this thesis as a relevant piece of literature.

Antoinette Burton’s critical chapter “Tourism in the Archives: Colonial Modernity and Zenana in Cornelia Sorabji’s Memoirs” from the text *Dwelling in the Archive* (2003) is very important for this dissertation. It theorizes Sorabji’s idea of modernity for upper caste Indian women in the backdrop of colonialism. The author highlights how Sorabji had become an authority and guiding light for them and considered herself as a zenana (a part of a house for seclusion of Hindu purdahnashins) expert with an omnipotent take on that. Burton also talks at length about Sorabji’s antinationalist traits and the controversies surrounding her besides throwing light on her family, life and career. According to her, “Sorabji turned the zenana into a museum” and tried to act as its “authoritative tour guide” (69). Taking instances from *India Calling*, Burton unveils Sorabji’s story telling skills. She recounts how the zenana archived in Sorabji’s reports bear imprints of her self-interest besides her political and professional interests. Burton also infers how Sorabji imagined the Hindu women in their setting through her ideological stance and rhetorical maneuvers in *India Calling*. The secluded zenana setting was turned into a tourist site by her. Towards the end of the chapter Burton also deciphers the patronizing nature of narratives on purdahnashins in *India Recalled* (1936). Moreover, she draws how Sorabji scripted herself in terms of the “others” in the face of colonialism and

modernity.

The essay “Imagined individuals: National Autobiography and Post Colonial Self-fashioning” (2003) by Philip Holden brings up the role of autobiographies in creating a social imaginary. Taking the instances of Nehru, Nkrumah and Sukarno, he emphasizes how an individual’s life is unfolded in the process of a nation’s self-discovery and independence. According to him, through a social imaginary, the nation and the individual become one entity with the postcolonial state attaining autonomy. Also remarkable is his inference that the social imaginary in the autobiographies of these writers is gendered. Moreover, Holden asserts that there is a celebration of heroic masculinity among these writers as reflected in their approach towards their nations and towards their female partners. He observes that in *An Autobiography*, Nehru’s realization of the nation is paralleled with that of his relationship with his wife Kamala (4). Holden remarks that Kamala stands as “a representative for Nehru of a paradox central to *An Autobiography*”. (5) The essay thus functions as an important body of knowledge on Nehru’s self-narrative.

In “A Nice Man to know: Interview with Khushwant Singh” (2006), Sheela Reddy and Ira Pandey make an extensive survey on the life and writing practices of Singh in this article. Singh’s opinions on partition, Sikh riots, Gandhism find place in this essay. He relates how he too was targeted for criticizing Indira Gandhi’s Blue Star Operation. He felt existential crisis in India during the 1984 Sikh riot. His support for the Muslims and their culture also get expressed in the interview. Besides, the reason behind Singh’s inclination towards writing in English finds expression in this essay. As related by him, he drew the sense of malice from Aldous Huxley. A picture of Singh’s worldview in this essay greatly informs the study on his autobiography.

A Postcolonial Critique of N. C. Chaudhuri’s Writings (2010) is yet another critical work on Chaudhuri’s texts. It is an elaborate thesis on some critical postcolonial aspects in his non-fictional works like that of contrapuntal readings, ambivalence, hybridity and mimicry by Tamal Guha. Guha’s theorization of how colonial thoughts get developed through colonial language has been of specific importance for the chapter on English self-fashioning in this thesis. The interpretations of Chaudhuri’s ambivalent attitude towards culture, war and so on inform the study of hybridity and

colonial mimicry. Guha calls Chaudhuri an atypical comprador by problematizing his approach to decadence in his writings.

The book *Salman Rushdie* (2010) by Andrew Teverson offers a critical study of the social, cultural, biographical, intellectual and philosophical contexts from which Salman Rushdie's writings emerge. He also justifies from a postcolonial viewpoint Rushdie's attempt to write back to the empire and decolonize the mind through a predominant use of the English language as the medium of writing. Moreover, Teverson argues on the intertextual, dialogical and postmodern nature of Rushdie's creations. This critical research on Rushdie shall thus help in understanding the latter's memoir as well which is equally replete with all the issues taken up by Teverson.

Devindra Kohli's elaborate "Introduction" to Kamala Das' *Selected Poems* (2014) lends significant insights on her poetry as well as prose. Kohli mentions how Kamala Das tried to diminish all division between poetry and ordinary speech. He also observes how Das claimed her postcolonial space and national space in multilingual India by asserting her freedom to write in English and how through her use of English she also subverted the traditional male paradigm (Kohli xxi). He points out the paradox of how Das considered her poems to be a real portraiture of her life rather than her prose. According to him *My Story* owes much to Das' poetic instinct. Genre-crossing is very much evident in her autobiography which often reads like her search for a poetic form. Kohli's essay thus raises some very vital issues relevant for this thesis, especially in the study of English self-fashioning. Also notable in this respect is the article "Of Masks and Memoirs: An Interview with Kamala Das" (1993) by P. Raveendran where Das talks about an imaginary world and split personality of a writer. The essay is thus of special relevance for the chapter on psychoanalysis.

Coming to works on prison narratives, *Great Books Written in Prison: Essays on Classic Works from Plato to Martin Luther King, Jr.* (2015) by J. Ward Regan examines critical works written behind the bars by great personalities who changed the course of history. Thoreau, Gandhi, Nehru, Thomas Paine, Plato, Bertrand Russell, Hitler, Martin Luther King, Jr. are some of the writers discussed here. Essays like "Jawaharlal Nehru's *Discovery of India*: The Writing of History, Fighting for Freedom in Ahmandnager Jail" by Tilottoma Tharoor become relevant points of references for

this thesis.

The third and last section of the review of literature includes some critical works on autobiographical theory.

Design and Truth in Autobiography (1960) by Roy Pascal attempts to analyse the frame of truth in self-narratives. Beginning with a definition and history of autobiography, Pascal studies the design that shapes truth in the same. Of special importance are chapters like “The Elusiveness of Truth” and “The Structure of Truth in Autobiography” which show how the autobiographer both discovers and creates a deeper design transcending historical and factual truth. In the former, he emphasizes on how the autobiographer has the right to elude certain historical happenings, depending on the situation. He also mentions of underwriting and overwriting in an autobiography which serve to determine its truthfulness. In “Man in the truth of Nature” Pascal stresses on the necessity of the representation of the “whole man” in modern autobiographies so that the weakening relationship between the personal and social beings gets strengthened. Towards the end he tries to identify what sort of self-knowledge the autobiographer seeks. Pascal’s findings on the nature of personal and historical truth in self-narratives shall be of particular importance in the context of historical representation in this research.

Jean Starobinski in the essay “The Style of Autobiography” (1971) deals with the different kinds of styles that can be found under the big umbrella of autobiography. By style he refers to the mode of an individual’s act of making his past the subject matter of writing. He points out how style sometimes becomes an obstacle in the path of realistic self narration. He also throws light on discourse-history in autobiography and highlights the problematics of addressivity as in case of Augustine’s *Confessions* which summons God but is again indirectly addressed to the readers. He comprehends the presence of a pronominal constancy as one of the vital characteristics of an autobiography whereby the present reflection and the multiplicity of past states co-exist. The essay is thus an important point of reference for the chapter on relational, referential autobiographical self in this thesis.

Metaphors of Self (1972) by James Olney explores how the desire to create determines the nature and form of autobiography. He lays emphasis on creative impulse

and vitality and man's desire for order as the driving force behind self narration. According to him, the self is always "becoming" until death—a oneness, integrity and harmony holds together the self's multiplicity and transformations (6). It is a very structuralist take on autobiographical theory and criticism. As Olney writes in the section "A Theory of Autobiography", "In the most intense instress relationship, we share our form and our life with the perceived objects: we become, in our creative act, all the objects we behold, and, more importantly, the order of those objects" (33). He infers that the lonely subjective consciousness gives itself order through metaphors: "The self expresses itself by the metaphors it creates and projects, and we know it by those metaphors; but it did not exist as it now does and as it now is before creating its metaphors" (Olney 34). For him, poetry, imagination, metaphors, creativity give meaning to autobiography. He traces this autobiographical impulse in Montaigne, Jung, George Fox, Darwin, Newman, Mills, and Eliot.

The Ear of the Other (1982) edited by Christie V. McDonald is a collection of Derrida's lectures and discussions on autobiography and translation. The first section of this book entitled "Otobiographies: The Teaching of Nietzsche and the Politics of the Proper Name" is of particular significance as Derrida here undertakes a deconstructionist reading of Nietzsche's autobiography *Ecce Homo* (1908). Derrida here strives to discover how the very proper name or autograph in an autobiography deconstructs itself. He argues that the readings of Nietzsche's text are not finished, as no text can be reduced to a single meaning. Derrida lays stress on the ear of the receiver or the reader who could perceive Nietzsche's text only after his death—Nietzsche's life and proper name being indebted to others. The second section called "Roundtable on Autobiography" covers Derrida's meetings with different scholars who critique on the nature and boundaries of autobiography as a genre. This work is therefore of great theoretical significance for this particular dissertation as it embodies Derrida's poststructural approach to autobiography.

In the essay "Autobiography, Ideology and Genre Theory" (1983) Robert Elbaz makes a strong argument that autobiography can only be a fiction owing to its linguistic uncertainty and a lack of proper completion. He shows how a self-narrative develops otherness and a receptive, group consciousness that leads to a kind of ideological arrangement. He refers to speech-act theory which, according to him, adds a new

dimension to autobiography. Elbaz interrogates whether truth is discovered or created within a social whole. According to him, as language is predominantly charged with the voice of the other, so there exists no difference between autobiography and fiction. He brings in Louis A. Renza's arguments in "The Veto of Imagination: A Theory of Autobiography" (1997) and attempts to offer a counter to the same. He asserts that every realistic discourse is but a metaphoric reality and that genre is only an ideological grid. The article therefore stands relevant as it interrogates autobiography as a non-fictional genre similar to this thesis which attempts to problematize dichotomies of fact-fiction and metaphorical dimension in Indian English self-narratives.

The Changing Nature of Self: A Critical Study of Autobiographical Discourses (1987) by Robert Elbaz basically assumes that selfhood in autobiography is historically and culturally determined. He attempts to show how the discourse of modernism in autobiography has its origin from within the medieval configuration. He aims to argue that through the process of meditation by linguistic reality and suspension, autobiography can only be a fiction. Considering Augustine's *Confessions* for instance, Elbaz concludes how biographical data and historical truth get converted to figurative language and a metaphysical treatise. As a result, Elbaz's theoretical and analytical framework for this book has a great relevance for any study on autobiography as it explicates the concepts of ideology and genre theory.

The critical volume *Technologies of the Self* (1988) has its source in a seminar with Michel Foucault and also includes some of the revised presentations by members of the seminar edited by Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman and Patrick H. Hutton. Foucault in his six seminar presentations comprehends the ways of historical self-formation from the early Greeks to the Christian age through an examination of classical texts. By "technologies of the self" Foucault means the history of how an individual acts upon himself—the ways of individual domination. This book is thus of considerable theoretical significance for this dissertation as it would contribute in critically studying the nature of self-creation and self-fashioning in the self-narratives through a poststructuralist lens.

Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives (2001) by Julia Watson and Sidonie Smith is an important and helpful guide for interpreting self-

narratives. Very lucidly and systematically it traces the components of autobiography and the history of autobiography criticism from Gusdorf to Olney to Derrida. Besides, it elaborates the necessary paradigms for critiquing autobiographical narratives through the “tool kit”. This text is especially remarkable for this dissertation as it helps to perceive the evolution of autobiographical criticism in a very comprehensive manner.

Edited by Jens Brockmeier and Donal Carbaugh, *Narrative and Identity: Studies in Autobiography, Self and Culture* (2001) predominantly deals with the process of autobiographical identity construction—the way we construct our selves as cultural beings. The varied essays here show that the focus on narrative proves to be supremely productive for the exploration of autobiographical memory and identity. Jerome Bruner, for instance, in the essay “Self-Making and World Making” challenges the perception that autobiographical writing is about an essential self. He stresses on the role of the interpretations of the “others” in self-making and the intersubjective nature of the self. Many of the essays in this book shall therefore be of vital importance to understand the dialogical, relational and existential nature of the self in Indian English autobiographies.

Postcolonial Life-writing: Culture, Politics and Self-Representation (2009) by Bart-Moore Gilbert delineates the nature of the self in postcolonial life-writings as cultural or racial constructs. Through a parallel study of postcolonial theory and autobiographical narratives, Gilbert identifies the postcolonial self to be of four kinds—relational, embodied, located and centred-decentred. Gilbert’s corpus engulfs a variety of life writings like Indian, Egyptian, African and Canadian. He also tries to identify the political self-representation and the non-western narrative resources in postcolonial life writing, be it in the case of Soyinka or Gandhi or Saadawi. Gilbert’s book is of considerable relevance for this research as Indian English autobiography is also a typically postcolonial phenomenon.

Linda Anderson’s *Autobiography* (2010) provides an overview of the changing practice of autobiographical criticism in the West. She theorizes the idea of self-realization, self-representation, authorship in the context of autobiographies and memoirs since Augustine’s time till the poststructural era. Drawing from the early historians of the self, Anderson strives to comprehend autobiographical subjectivity in

terms of the modern theories of Freud, Barthes and Derrida. In the section called “Other Subjects”, she problematizes the issue of gender and autobiography. Besides, *Autobiography* throws light on hybridity and homelessness as the problematic areas of postcolonial subjectivity. Anderson ends her book with an analysis of memoirs, diaries and the role of trauma and testimony in shaping the same. This book serves as a perfect introduction to the study of self-narratives. It also lays bare the possible yardsticks required for a poststructural interpretation of memoirs and autobiographies which can form an important reference point for this research.

In *The Oxford Handbook of the Self* (2011) Shaun Gallagher brings together essays centring the changing perspectives on selfhood--personal identity, subjectivity, mind-body dualism etc. over the centuries in different areas of research or philosophy. The essays by a diversity of writers rethink the concept of selfhood from cognitive, poststructuralist, postmodern, feminist, Buddhist, socio-cultural, psychological and neuro-scientific points of view. Of particular relevance are essays like “The Narrative Self” by Marya Schechtman, “The Social Construction of Self” by Kenneth J. Gergen, “The Dialogical Self: A Process of Positioning in Space and Time” by Hubert J. M. Hermans and so on. All these essays throw light on the social construction of self—its agentiality and its relational nature. All these concepts and theories will serve as important yardsticks for interpreting and arguing the nature of self and subjectivity in self-narratives chosen for this dissertation, being especially relevant to my chapters concerning the relational self and self-fashioning in Indian English autobiographies.

The Cambridge Companion to Autobiography (2014) by Maria DiBattista, Emily O. Wittman offers a panoramic overview of the development and kinds of Western autobiographies as a genre. Along with an instructive introduction, this book consists of sixteen significant essays arranged chronologically. Those explore the varied styles, forms and motives of life writings. Towards the end, this book throws light on the modern trends of experimentation with the autobiographical subject. True to its title, this book serves as a perfect companion in perceiving the nature of autobiographical narratives in the West.

Edited by Eveline Kilian and Hope Wolf, *Life Writing and Space* (2016) 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). The physical, material journey often corresponds to an inward, metaphorical journey of the self. Many essays throw light on how space is experienced and imagined, which is of particular relevance in this thesis as it wishes to analyse how space is imagined in autobiographies. Foucault's "heterotopia", Lefebvre's notion of the social production of space, Edward Soja's concept of "third space", 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 thesis also plans to explore the same to examine how lives are imagined differently through life writing. Imaginary spaces/places are relevant to Rushdie's, Anand's self-narratives whereas spaces of desire can be found evident in the memoirs of Kamala Das and Dom Moraes.

The book is divided into four sections, investigating different aspects of the spatial dimension of life writing. The section "Relocating and Reimagining the Self" analyses how relocation leads to reimagining of the self and how space becomes a way of limiting the passing of time. The chapter "Multiple Occupancy: Residency and

Retrospection in Trollope's *Orley Farm* and *An Autobiography*" by Matthew Ingleby shows how nostalgia shares an integral connection with spatiality. In the context of relocation, nostalgia becomes an important theme in this work—nostalgia for irreplaceably lost cities or houses. With Svetlana Boym's *The Future of Nostalgia* (2001) as the main theoretical base, the chapter interprets how the retrospective yearning for a home that no longer exists creates an imagined space which either challenges the progression of time or functions as a means for authors to overcome their pasts. In a similar line, the next chapter "Lost Cities and Found Lives: The 'Geographical Emotions' of Bryher and Walter Benjamin" points out the role played by remembered spaces in the creation of our identities. Both Bryher and Benjamin's memoirs encircling Berlin explicate how changes are registered in the autobiographical self through geographical locations stored as unchanging in our memories. As Andrew Thacker observes about *The Heart to Artemis* (1962), "In writing about her inner self, Bryher is recalling the exterior space of her 'lost city', a city whose cultural geography in the late 1920s was partly responsible for how she 'found', we might say, her own self" (44). Walter Benjamin's *Berlin Childhood* (2006) challenges the idea of linear unfolding of time in life writing. His narrative is characterized by spatial distance as he strives to forget the city through his writing. Such "geographical emotions" can be found in the autobiographies of N C Chaudhuri, Moraes and Salman Rushdie which this thesis intends to explore. Many perspectives on space and life writing used in this thesis (Chapter 5) have been drawn from this text by Kilian and Wolf and hence it is of great importance here.

An essay of crucial importance to this thesis, "Autobiography and Psychoanalysis" by Laura Marcus forms a part of her book *Autobiography: A Very Short Introduction* (2018). In this essay she emphasizes on the importance of psychoanalysis while interpreting life narratives. She studies the role of the unconscious mind and dreams in the autobiographies of Rousseau, Augustine, Wordsworth and De Quincey. She also discusses dream as a form of autobiography. Then she goes on to throw light on the recent rise in memoir writing as a refuge from traumatic experiences. Drawing from Sigmund Freud's ideas of the constructed nature of memories in "Screen Memories", Marcus reveals how Freud analysed the childhood self and sibling rivalry in his autobiography. All such insights shall be a major review to the third chapter in

this thesis on psychoanalysis and the Indian English autobiographies.

Overall Theoretical Framework

The poststructural theorist Jacques Derrida makes some extreme observations on how the autobiographical genre deconstructs itself in the edited volume *The Ear of the Other* (1982). The most pertinent essay of the volume is titled “Otobiographies: The Teaching of Nietzsche and the Politics of the Proper Name”. Derrida here makes a deconstructive reading of Nietzsche’s *Ecce Homo* (1908). According to Derrida, the “I” in autobiography actually does not exist as it is all about the past life that cannot be obtained at the present. He draws some extreme conclusions, like, one cannot call one’s autobiography to be one’s own and cannot sign on it as the author until one is dead. An autobiography can only be complete after one’s death, according to him. Such radical interpretations of autobiography by Derrida paved the way for further future poststructural readings of self-narratives. Likewise, the existing fissures in the binary oppositions like fact/fiction, truth/imagination, etc. will be interpreted in the primary Indian English texts chosen here. As a mode of literary criticism, deconstruction refers to a kind of reading that aims to shatter the supposed coherence or watertight boundaries created by language. According to the prominent deconstructionist J. Hillis Miller, deconstruction brings about the play of contradictory and undecidable meanings in any literary text. As he explains in *Theory Now and Then* (1991):

The deconstruction, rather, annihilates the ground on which the building stands by showing that the text has already annihilated the ground, knowingly or unknowingly. Deconstruction is not a dismantling of the structure of a text but a demonstration that it has already dismantled itself. (Miller 126)

Paul de Man is one of the most important critics who used deconstruction to interpret literary texts. He applies Derrida’s deconstruction to the reading of autobiographies in his influential treatise *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (1983) where he offers his poststructuralist take on allegory, rhetoric and autobiography. In his critical essay “Autobiography as De-facement” (1979) de Man argues how the autobiographical project determines the author’s life, rather than the other way round. By the autobiographical project he means a tropological structure that overpowers the textual system of the autobiography. As he writes:

The interest of autobiography, then, is not that it reveals reliable self-knowledge-it does not-but that it demonstrates in a striking way the impossibility of closure and of totalization (that is the impossibility of coming into being) of all textual systems made up of tropological substitutions. (de Man 922)

He calls autobiography a figure of reading that occurs in every text. Autobiography, according to him, cannot help being inclusive of certain metaphorical tropes like that of prosopopoeia. “Prosopopoeia is the trope of autobiography, by which one's name, as in the Milton poem, is made as intelligible and memorable as a face” (de Man 926).

According to de Man, all reading is rhetorical or tropological, autobiography being no exception. Figurative language or tropes become very important when it comes to deconstruction. Jonathan Culler in *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction* (1981) observes, “... the figurative is the name we give to effects of language that exceed, deform, or deviate from the code ...” (233). Tropes refer to a figurative use of words as opposed to the usual literal use. Figurative language or tropes tend to make meaning undecidable and arbitrary by multiplying the possibility of significations. *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (2015) defines “trope” as:

A figure of speech, especially one that uses words in senses beyond their literal meanings. The major figures that are agreed upon as being tropes are metaphor, simile, metonymy, synecdoche, irony, personification, and hyperbole; litotes and periphrasis are also sometimes called tropes. The figurative sense of a word is sometimes called its tropological sense, tropology being the study of tropes. (459)

According to de Man, it is “the technical demands of self-portraiture” (920) that determine the life that is created. He elaborates his point through an analysis of Wordsworth's *Essays upon Epitaphs*. He claims that autobiographical discourse is a discourse of self- restoration. He interprets autobiography as both the cause and mask of disfiguration of the mind. Paul de Man thus throws considerable light on the tropes which help to identify the blurred differences between fiction and autobiography. “For de Man, rhetoric is not a distinct object suitable for literary analysis but is the figurative dimension of language which implies the persistent threat of misreading” (18), writes Martin McQuillan in his critical work *Paul de Man* (2001). In this thesis, relationality,

colonial self-fashioning, psychoanalysis, metahistory and spatiality will be explained as tropes and then the tropological structure will be analysed in the five chapters that follow through an incorporation of a variety of theoretical tools in order to make a de Manian reading of the select primary texts.

Catering to the demand and structure of the thesis, different sets of theories have been employed in each chapter in order to make the analysis relevant and critical. In order to justify the master argument of Paul de Man, theories on relationality, postcolonialism, metahistory, psychoanalysis and spatiality have informed the five chapters respectively.

Paul John Eakin's theoretical formulation on the relational nature of self in *Touching the World: Reference in Autobiography* (1992) and *How Our Lives Become Stories: Making Selves* (1999) throw light on the referential narrative in autobiographies. He observes how the characteristics in an autobiography relate to a world of reference they represent through which the autobiographical self gets constructed. The chapter "Relational Selves, Relational Lives: Autobiography and the Myth of Autonomy" in *How Our Lives Become Stories* puts the identity of the first person narrative into question.

Eakin's theorization of the dynamic of recognition by the "Other" is pretty similar to Judith Butler's model of addressivity and responsibility as propounded in her book *Giving an Account of Oneself* (2003). Drawing from Adriana Cavarero, Butler establishes the importance of the Other's recognition in giving an account of oneself, thus bringing out the idea of addressivity in self-narratives. She shows how the possibility of narrating the self in autobiography by oneself is fractured and deconstructed due to the structure of addressivity.

Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of dialogism is also equally vital in comprehending the relational nature of the self, for relationality and dialogism are inevitably interconnected. Although Bakhtin applied and discovered his idea of dialogism mainly in novels, Indian English autobiographies too provide a fertile ground for comprehending dialogism through the relational self, as shall be analysed in the first chapter. To quote Bakhtin from *The Dialogic Imagination*, "Understanding and response are dialectically merged and mutually condition each other: one is impossible

without the other” (282). He insists that the intention of the speaker is overpowered by the intention of many other voices. Besides Eakin, Butler and Bakhtin, Emanuel Levinas’ concept of “face of the other” will also be vital to interpreting the role of ethical responsibility as a metaphor in moulding the autobiographical self.

Three schools of thought seem prominent while analyzing the different facets of English self-fashioning and colonial identity formation. The first among these is that of the theorists like Edward Said and Gauri Vishwanathan who perceived colonialism and English literature as ideological weapons used by the British for imperial expansion. The second school includes theorists like Leela Gandhi, Homi Bhabha and even Salman Rushdie who reflected on the hybrid, ambivalent nature of English influence and the significance of appropriation. The third school comprises the Marxist critics like Aijaz Ahmed and Tabish Khair who viewed English influence, language and literature in India as a mark of alienation. Meenakshi Mukherjee also falls into the third category to a large extent as she defies any possibility of hybridity in the context of Indian English writers staying abroad.

Both Freudian and Lacanian modes of psychoanalysis stand integral in understanding the nature of Indian English autobiographies and memoirs. Among many of his seminal works, Sigmund Freud’s *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899), *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905) and *The Ego and the Id* (1923) provide insights to some of his core ideas. His dictum of dreams as fulfillment of the wishes in the unconscious plays a vital role in understanding the psychoanalytic construction of the self. Notable works like *Ecrits* (1966), *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book XI* (1973) contain Lacan’s formulation of the mirror stage, discourse of the “Other”, “desire of the Other”, alienation and “lack” which stand particularly pertinent for contemplating the subjectivity of the autobiographers from a psychoanalytic viewpoint.

When it comes to the analysis of history narrated by the select Indian English writers, Hayden White’s propositions on metahistory in *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-century Europe* (1973) stand relevant. In the treatise, White theorizes important modes of emplotment, modes of argumentative explanation and modes of ideological implication in history narration following his analysis of some

great historians like Ranke and Tocqueville among others. His new historical proposition will be used as the framework to discover the imaginative and tropological nature of history narration.

In the exploration of spatiality in the select texts, Gaston Bachelard's theorization of home and imagination in *Poetics of Space* (1957) and Michel Foucault's ideas of heterotopias in "Of Other Spaces" (1986) stand relevant. Also, changes are often made in the self by means of geographical locations kept as unchanging in our memories. Peter Perreten's theory of eco-autobiography in "Eco-Autobiography: Portrait of Place/Self-Portrait" (2014) is vital in this context as he talks of a symbiotic relationship between the natural setting and the self.

So, within a poststructural lens, combined tools of Bakhtinian theory, psychoanalysis, metahistory, postcolonial theory and space theories will be employed to analyse the variety of tropes employed by the Indian English self narrators in constructing their identity through a close reading of the texts.

Chapter Plan

Apart from the "Introduction" and the "Conclusion", this thesis is divided into five chapters.

Chapter 1 entitled "The Relational Self: Other lives as tropes of Imagined Subjectivity" aims to bring out the relational nature of Indian English autobiographies. The chapter will interrogate the agentiality of the autobiographical self with Judith Butler's account in "Giving an account of Oneself" (2001), Paul John Eakin's theorizations on the relational self, Bakhtin's ideas of dialogism and Levinas' concept of "face of the other" as the main theoretical framework. The inevitable technical demands of the other lives that function as polyphonic voices to deconstruct the monologic self perception will mainly be studied here. The role of the tropes of referentiality and addressivity in creating the imagined subjectivity is its major hypothesis.

Chapter 2 entitled "The Rhetoric of English Self-fashioning" attempts to study the presence of English language, colonial literature and law as tropes or metaphors in the Indian English self-narratives leading to the postcolonial as well as poststructural

subjectivity. Concepts by varied postcolonial theorists like Edward Said, Gauri Vishwanathan, Aijaz Ahmed, Leela Gandhi, Homi Bhabha, Tabish Khair and Meenakshi Mukherjee will be used to understand the ambivalent nature of colonial influence on the autobiographical selves. Hybrid, ambivalent self-fashioning will be informed by Bhabha's theorizations of hybridity while the elements of "Babu fiction" will be analysed through the lens of Tabish Khair and Aijaz Ahmed respectively. Gauri Viswanathan's take on law as a colonial tool will help in understanding this trope.

Chapter 3 entitled "Metahistory: Negotiating the Imaginative Self in History Narration" proposes to problematize the nature of history narration by the Indian English self narrators. It strives to question the supposed objective history portrayals by using Hayden White's tools of metahistory. The chapter will try to bring out the subjective, literary and imaginative nature of history narration by interpreting the modes of emplotment, the historical arguments and the ideological implications replete in them. Understanding the tropological and metaphorical use of history to comprehend the de-facing of the autobiographical self one step further is the main aim of this chapter.

Chapter 4 entitled "Inner Worlds: Psychoanalysis and Autobiographical Subjectivity" aims to interpret the role of the psychoanalytic tropes of libido, dreams, death instinct and trauma in metaphorizing the autobiographical subjectivity. The theoretical notions of Sigmund Freud, Cathy Caruth and Jacques Lacan will be relevant for this chapter. Freud's dictum on libido, dreams and death instinct, Lacan's theories on "objet petit a", mirror stage and split personality and Caruth's formulations on trauma and subjectivity will help in the understanding of the fragmented, illusory nature of the autobiographical self.

Chapter 5 entitled "The Rhetoric of Spatiality and Temporality in Self-narration" seeks to identify the function of space and place as metaphorical tropes in the autobiographical imagination in Indian English writers. The spacing of the self in a poetic manner through ecological emotions, images of houses or cities will be interpreted here to comprehend the construction of subjectivity. Gaston Bachelard's idea of the home and imagination in *Poetics of Space* (1957), Aijaz Ahmed's theorization of "the rhetoric of exile", Foucault's "Of Other Spaces" (1957), and Peter

Perreten's formulation of eco-autobiography in "Eco-Autobiography: Portrait of Place/Self-Portrait" (2014) will serve as the major tools of analysis for this chapter. Mention must also be made of Kilian and Wolf's *Life Writing and Space* (2016) which will be a very relevant point of reference for this particular chapterization.

The Introduction will be followed by the first chapter of the thesis on relational self and imagined subjectivity.