CHAPTER ONE

THE RELATIONAL SELF: OTHER LIVES AS TROPES OF IMAGINED SUBJECTIVITY

"One isn't born one's self. One is born with a mass of expectations, a mass of other people's ideas—and you have to work through it all" (Naipaul 3).

The nature of the self in autobiography has been a question of debate since time immemorial. The development of the self or individual in an autobiography is predominantly supposed to be a growth of the personality of the author—his or her identity formation. An existentialist reading of self-narratives however, offers a completely renewed stance on the nature of the autobiographical self. It makes one doubt the absolute and individualized notion of self identity. The drastically changing concepts of the autobiographical self over the last many decades also make it necessary to examine Indian English self-narratives from a poststructural lens. Worth mentioning is Bart-Moore Gilbert's essay "Relational Selves" which analyses certain autobiographies where selfhood is constructed through an exposure to other groups of people, as in case of C.L. R. James' *Beyond a Boundary* (1963). As he observes in the case of Sally Morgan, "Equally, Morgan increasingly decentres herself to make room for other first-person family voices, which comprise nearly a third of *My Place*, thereby shifting it away from individual towards collective auto/biography" (Moore Gilbert 17). Robert Elbaz also locates the autobiographical selfhood to be essentially historically and culturally determined—he argues autobiography to be a beholder of group consciousness in his celebrated work *The Changing Nature of Self: A Critical Study of Autobiographical Discourses* (1987).

Paul John Eakin was one of the first theorists to discover and study at length the relational nature of autobiographical self. His varied scholarships on auto/biography studies provide critical insights that illuminate many facets of the same. The works *Touching the World: Reference in Autobiography* (1992) and *How Our Lives Become Stories: Making Selves* (1999) are particularly relevant in the context of this study. The former book establishes autobiography as a referential art while the latter talks about the relational self. Eakin suggests a "direct, organic connection between narrative structure in autobiography and the world of reference it represents" (193).

Life narrations by Indian writers have always witnessed a collective consciousness rather than a singularity of expression owing to the inevitable intermingling of the self and society. David Arnold aptly agrees upon the culture

specific nature of personal accounts by Indian writers. He asserts, "Indians present individual lives within a network of other lives and that they define themselves in relation to larger frames of reference, especially those of family, kin, caste, religion and gender" (Arnold 19). In *Telling Lives in India*, he and Blackburn locate India as a ground for constant interaction between collectivity and individuality. Jawaharlal Nehru, for instance, hardly writes about his own life in his autobiography than about other lives or socio-political landmarks that affected him. Arnold and Blackburn declare in the "Introduction" to their book that the life histories presented in *Telling Lives* depict a negotiating ground between the individualistic self and the collective self. The basic argument of Arnold and Blackburn in their book has been that Indian life histories are inseparably rooted in social experiences:

> Life histories are often constituted, too, in relation to other people and things. This might most obviously be in relation to a set of traditions or social expectations that prescribe certain ways of writing about one's self and others. Lives can be lived, and hence represented, through the recollections of esteemed and revered others—the guru or acarya, the husband and patriarch, the Gandhi-like charismatic political and social leader—rather than as accounts of individual achievement and emancipation. (Arnold 14)

The primary objective of this chapter is to argue that the autobiographical selves in the select Indian English autobiographies may come into existence only through other lives. It will attempt to deduce how the existence and experience of the autobiographical self cannot help being relational rather than being self-introspective. Taking into consideration Paul de Man's explanation that autobiography is but a figure of reading and understanding, it shall strive to argue that the Indian English autobiographers imaginatively construct their autobiographical subjectivities through the trope of other lives or figures and addressivity. The fact that the technicalities in these self-narratives inevitably demand a frame of the other lives, hence rendering it a polyphonic work of art will be the major hypothesis.

The primary texts selected for analysis in this chapter are Cornelia Sorabji's *India Calling* (1934), Jawaharlal Nehru's *An Autobiography* (1936), Mulk Raj Anand's *Apology for Heroism: An Autobiography of Ideas* (1946) and *Conversations in*

Bloomsbury (1981), N.C. Chaudhuri's *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* (1951) and *Thy Hand, Great Anarch*! (1987), Dom Moraes' *My Son's Father* (1968) and *Never at Home* (1992), Kamala Das' *My Story* (1977) and Khushwant Singh's *Truth, Love and a Little Malice* (2002).

Relevant Theoretical Frame

John Eakin in *How Our Lives Become Stories* studies selves as plural and dynamic by dissecting the myth of autonomy. "Identity is always negotiated interpersonally, relationally," he writes (42). As the reviewer Thomas R. Smith opines in a review of this book, "He invents the category of relational autobiography, narratives in which relational identity is clearly in play, suggesting as he goes along that all autobiography can be re understood in relational terms" (535). Defying the traditional feminist criticism of only women's autobiographies being relational, Eakin, through a number of examples argues how all identity is relational. A similar structure is very much visible in case of N. C. Chaudhuri's autobiographies as well.

The fact that autobiographical self or subjectivity gets formulated in relation to other lives or factors shall be the major argument of this chapter. According to Emannuel Levinas in *Otherwise than Being* (1974), the "face of the other" instils a sense of responsibility in the self, thus rendering it altered and non-essential. Emanuel Levinas conceptualised a phenomenological theory of ethical responsibility of subjects towards each other stemming from face-to-face encounter. The translator of *Otherwise than Being Or Beyond Essence*, Alphonso Lingis very lucidly explains Levinas' idea of the face, responsibility and subjectivity when he writes: "For Levinas, responsibility is the response to the imperative addressed in the concrete act of facing. Responsibility is in fact a relationship with the other, in his very alterity. Then a relationship with alterity as such is constitutive of subjectivity" (xiii). According to Levinas, the responsibility towards the other arises from a kind of passivity which later leads to individuality. Thus, responsibility precedes individuality or freedom as he theorizes:

> The recurrence of the self in responsibility for others, a persecuting obsession, goes against intentionality, such that responsibility for others could never mean altruistic will, instinct of "natural benevolence," or love. It is in the passivity of obsession, or incarnated passivity, that an identity individuates itself as unique,

without recourse to any system of references,… (Levinas 112)

Responsibility for the other, this way of answering without a commitment, is human fraternity itself and it is prior to freedom. The face of the other in proximity, which is more than representation, is an unrepresentable trace, the way of the infinite. (Levinas 116)

Referring to Levinas' concept, Butler theorizes her idea of the Other in her essay "Giving an Account of Oneself", "It is a way of being constituted by an Other which precedes the formation of the sphere of the mine itself" (Butler 36). Other lives make the autobiographical self relational and erode the traditional idea of the same of being singular and introspective. Butler comes up with the concept that we submit and get subjected to a set of norms of recognition when we recognize the Other. Telling one's story "is an action in the direction of an Other, but also an action that requires an Other, for which an Other is presupposed" (Butler 37). She draws from Cavarero the inevitability of the autobiographical "I" to be in relation to "you" or the Other:

> For subjects whose very capacity to recognize and become recognized is occasioned by a norm which has a temporality other than that of a first person perspective, a vector of temporality that disorients one's own, it follows that one can only give and take recognition on the condition that one becomes disoriented from oneself by something which is not oneself, that one undergoes a decentering and "fails" to achieve self-identity. (Butler 28)

Butler thus talks about an impossibility of self-identity and of giving an account of oneself. She further emphasizes on the pre-existence of a context of address whenever one gives an account of oneself to another. The narrator of an autobiography is thus, according to her, a puppet under the structure of address and addressivity which nullifies the possibility of any agentiality of the self. Butler also locates the death of the autobiographical subject as a result of the forced imposition of organic structure in the same narrative. "Other" in this chapter would refer to Judith Butler's usage of the term in the context of addressivity and referentiality.

Bakhtin's dictum of dialogism and polyphony replaced the unitary "I" with multiple dialogic voices. The autobiographical "I" also speaks in language that is part and parcel of an ideologically saturated world with a multitude of opinions and belief

systems. The autobiographical self can never be rendered monologic as multiple other lives and voices account for the constitution of the dialogical self. The autobiographer can never escape the existing social discourse which predominate the world outside. Bakhtin further elaborates on the inevitable answerability of every utterance. To quote from *The Dialogic Imagination*: "Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intention: it is populated—overpopulated–with the intentions of others" (Bakhtin 294).

The ideas of responsibility in the context of "face of the other" by Levinas or the concept of addressivity through the Other as highlighted by Butler find relevance in Bakhtin as well. His essay "The Problem of Speech and Genres" details how every utterance is directed towards an addressee. The self narrator in an autobiography might thus be analysed from Bakhtin's dictum of the "authorial surplus" whereby the author occupies a God-like position and constructs his own self through a dialogical relation with others. As Holquist has pointed out, in dialogism, the very capacity to have consciousness is based on otherness (Holquist 18). He further notes that "being" for Bakhtin is not just an event, but an event that is shared. Being is simultaneity; it is always co-being (Holquist 25). He asserts the fact that in order to see ourselves, we must appropriate the vision of the others. Bakhtin thus helps one realize how the self is created from others. To quote Holquist:

> Restated in its crudest version, the Bakhtinian just-so story of subjectivity is the tale of how I get my self from the other: it is only the other's categories that will let me be an object for my own perception. I see my self as I conceive others might see it. In order to forge a self, I must do so from outside. (Holquist 28)

Bakhtin thus paved the way for addressivity, answerability of the self by defying any kind of agentiality. Following Hubert Hermans' essay "The Dialogical Self" (2010), imagination turns out to be something crucial for the functioning of a dialogical self, particularly the development of the other-in-the-self. Thus, Levinas' dictum of "face of the other", Bakhtin's concept of dialogism, Judith Butler's idea of the self and the Other shall form the basic theoretical framework for this chapter. Paul John Eakin's theories on relationality and referentiality will also serve as significant yardsticks to

analyse the relational nature of the self in the Indian English autobiographies chosen.

Critical Analysis of the Tropes of Relationality, Addressivity and Polyphony

The earliest primary text in this thesis, Cornelia Sorabji's memoir *India Calling* (1934) is in no way an autonomous account of her life and self development. The "purdahnashins" are the Others to whom Sorabji addresses almost the whole of her self-narrative. Her selfhood gets constructed through her address to them. Her memoir probably would not have existed had she not related herself to the life and ways of the "purdahnashins". To quote Chandani Lokuge from her "Introduction" to *India Calling*:

> Cornelia Sorabji's life was her career, and her career, a vocation. In *India Calling,* Sorabji remembers a substantial slice of it from early childhood when she was first inspired to dedicate her life to the amelioration of the Hindu purdahnashin's legal and personal status, to the 1930s, well after she had gained the distinguished position of India's first woman barrister. (Introduction xiii)

In line with Cavarero, Sorabji's "I" in her autobiography would have been impossible without the "you" of the numerous Hindu upper class women whose cause she took up. *India Calling* is not just her story, but the stories of numerous other women in the then contemporary social scenario of India. In terms of Levinas, the face of the "purdahnashins" instilled within Sorabji a sense of moral responsibility, thus making her act in the way she did. The retrospective reflection of her experiences with them was what created her narration. She perceived herself to be answerable to them and so took up the cause. While in one case she saved a woman from the cruel hands of her drunkard husband, in another, she rescued another woman sacrificed in "sati".

Apart from this, many of her acquaintances in Oxford played a vital role in creating her persona. Una Artevelde Taylor, the daughter of the author Sir Henry Taylor deserves special mention in this respect as her life and ways became instrumental in constructing the social worker side of her character. As Sorabji herself says, "She was Irish and loved to find parallels in custom, superstition and folklore between India and Ireland. My deliberate pursuit of these things in India in later years was due to her inspiration" (Sorabji 38).

Through Sorabji's narrative one can overhear the voices of many

"purdahnashins"–the upper class Hindu wives restricted within an enclosed space, or those women troubled by husband or reproductive issues. Cases of many women like those of Rukhmabai who was imprisoned for revolting against her husband's patriarchy post her child marriage are the dialogical relationships Sorabji is found engaging with. So her identity got shaped as a result of her dialogues with all these different polyphonic voices in the then socio-economic condition. It was a calling from the "purdahnashins" which made her write her autobiography. They served as the ultimate frame of reference for her in order to strive for her own self fulfilment. *India Calling* thus captures a plurality of consciousness typical of Indian autobiographies.

Published almost around the same time in the 1930s, Jawaharlal Nehru's *An Autobiography* (1936) undoubtedly stands foremost and dominant alongside Gandhi's autobiography in an examination of the relational and polyphonic self in Indian English autobiography. Regarding the relational self, Nehru himself acknowledges in his "Preface" to the 1962 edition:

> Essentially, an autobiography is a personal document and therefore it reflects personal views and reactions. But the person who wrote it became merged, to a large extent, in the larger movement and therefore represents, in a large measure, the feelings of many others. (Nehru Preface)

Sunil Khilnani through a critical lens further aptly opines in his "Introduction" to Nehru's *An Autobiography*:

> Nehru shows how, apart from decisive events, he was also inspired and shaped by his encounters with India's rich diversity of human characters and its social life. Early on he encountered political leaders like the liberal Gopalkrishna Gokhale, the theosophist and educationist Annie Besant and the Bengal Congressman C. R. Das... Later, Nehru delved into the experiences of the kisans, or peasantry, in the rural hinterlands of the United Province, their livelihoods squeezed by the greedy landlords. And he befriended some of the prisoners with whom he shared daily life during his jail sentences. (Introduction xiv)

The relentless quest of an autobiographer to re-construct a satisfactory version of his

own self through his/her writing is well confessed by Nehru when he says, “The quest is still the same, in prison or outside, and I write down my past feelings and experiences in the hope that this may bring me some peace and psychic satisfaction” (Nehru 219). The battle of ideas, desires within him as if found a definite shape and outlet through his writing self. Moreover, the development of Nehru’s worldview and the creation of his patriotic self owes itself almost completely to his dialogical relationship with his father Motilal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi. Nehru discovered his self through arguments, doubts, agreements, disagreements with these two figures. The contrasts between their characters as if generated a spark within Nehru.

The influence of the necessary others in moulding and creating his self can be seen prominent since his childhood. While a boy, Nehru personally liked the English, but the discourse of nationalism among his cousins marked the source of Nehru’s resentment against the foreign rulers. The opinions of the male members of his family moulded his views on religion as he asserts, “Of religion I had very hazy notions. It seemed to be a woman’s affair. Father and my older cousins treated the question humorously and refused to take it seriously” (Nehru 9). Moreover, the theosophist Ferdinand T. Brooks who tutored Nehru since age eleven influenced the latter in numerous ways. He was in fact one of the founding pillars of Nehru’s nature and character: “He was a keen theosophist who had been recommended to my father by Mrs Annie Besant. For nearly three years he was with me and in many ways he influenced me greatly” (15).

In this context, mention must also be made of Mahatma Gandhi's autobiography *The Story of my Experiments with Truth* (1927) which stands testimony to his relational selfhood where the “others” in various ways account for his existence and being. The very title of this text implies the constitution of Gandhi's selfhood in a dialogic relationship with his numerous experiments, as asserted in the “Introduction”:

> I hope and pray that no one will regard the advice interspersed in the following chapters as authoritative. The experiments narrated should be regarded as illustrations, in the light of which everyone may carry his own experiments according to his own inclinations and capacity. (Gandhi Introduction)

Towards the initial chapters we learn how Gandhi held his parents responsible for his

child marriage at the age of thirteen. He was rendered just a mere puppet at the hands of the traditional norms practised by his parents. His agentiality as a self got crushed under the veil of accountability to his family. His actions thus conformed to the socio-historical consciousness and as a response to the same. His relational self further got manifested when he decided to abstain from meat-eating or visiting the brothel, keeping in mind his deception to his parents. His accountability to his parents ceased his essentialist selfhood as he mentions:

> Therefore I said to myself: though it is essential to eat meat, and also essential to take up food 'reform' in the country, yet deceiving and lying to one's father and mother is worse than not eating meat. In their lifetime, therefore, meat-eating must be out of question. When they are no more and I have found my freedom, I will eat meat openly, but until that moment arrives I will abstain from it. (Gandhi 32)

Nehru's self inclined towards reading, writing, poetry and science owed its culmination to Mr. Brooks. Brooks' ideas, thoughts and ways of living get reflected through Nehru who developed a strong base of theosophy through his dialogues and interactions with the same:

> Apart from my studies, F. T. Brooks brought a new influence to bear upon me which affected me powerfully for a while. This was Theosophy. He used to have weekly meetings of theosophists in his rooms and I attended them and gradually imbibed theosophical phraseology and ideas... For the first time I began to think, consciously and deliberately of religion and other worlds. (Nehru 16)

He in fact became a member of the Theosophical society only at the age of thirteen under the overwhelming influence of the famous British socialist and theosophist Mrs Annie Besant whose powerful oration moved him in many ways. Sarojini Naidu too was instrumental in constituting his patriotic self. In Nehru's own words:

> I remember being moved also, in those days after the Lucknow Congress, by a number of eloquent speeches delivered by Sarojini Naidu in Allahabad. It was all nationalism and patriotism and I was a pure nationalist, my vague socialist ideas of college days having sunk into the background. (Nehru 38)

Gandhi's Sanskrit teacher in school Krishnashankar Pandya was instrumental in developing his interest for this language which led to his opinion that Sanskrit should be a part and parcel of Indian curriculum. The learned Brahman Mavji Dave who was their family advisor assumed a highly influential role in moulding Gandhi and his family about sending him to England for higher studies by rather undermining his own will to join the medical profession. The larger discourse of being a Vaishnava too came into the way of his free will, clearly exemplifying the social construction of his self:

> Could I not be sent to qualify for the medical profession?
>
> My brother interrupted me: 'Father never liked it. He had you in mind when he said that we Vaishnavas should have nothing to do with dissection of dead bodies. Father intended you to the bar.' (Gandhi 44)

One of his uncles even considered his going to England as an irreligious act. The very fact that he was allowed to travel to England only after he vowed not to touch woman or wine even reflects the inevitable domain of answerability and existential crisis within which he was bounded. The poet Raychandbhai whom Gandhi came across through a mutual friend in Bombay hugely constituted the spiritual side of his self. Many of his religious perceptions and worldview got internalized through his conversations with Raychandbhai who turned out to be his guide cum teacher cum friend. Besides, his inspiration for the attainment of the "brahmacharya" came entirely from Raychandbhai. Gandhi's worldview on the layers of conjugal relationship and the nature of wife's devotion to her husband was moulded completely by Raychandbhai during a conversation about Mrs. Gladstone's service towards her husband. As Gandhi concludes post their conversation:

> Raychandbhai was himself married. I had an impression that at that moment his words seemed harsh, but they gripped me irresistibly. The devotion of a servant was, I felt, a thousand times more praiseworthy than that of a wife to her husband... But it required a special effort to cultivate equal devotion between master and servant. The poet's point of view began gradually to grow upon me. (Gandhi 193)

Nehru's personality was, undoubtedly, to a large extent a mixture of the traits of his

father Motilal Nehru on the one hand and the leader Mahatma Gandhi on the other. Motilal Nehru was a moderate in his approach towards the British empire. Although Nehru never complied with his father's political stance, he provides a detailed justification of the same. He mentions of instances when he had serious debates with his father stemming from their serious ideological differences. While the clash of opinion with his father ignited the spark of extremist nationalism in him, the uprising of Gandhi's actions converted the same into a full-fledged flame. He credits Gandhi for filling him up with enthusiasm towards a fight against the foreigners. A big part of *An Autobiography* deals at length with the ideas, philosophies and way of life of Mahatma Gandhi and Motilal Nehru vis-a-vis their impact on the construction of Nehru's self. The strange friendship of Gandhi and Motilal comprising two completely contrasting natures fascinated Nehru every now and then. This is reflected in his thoughts and personality which are but a unique mixture of those two figures. Nehru in the chapter entitled "My Father and Gandhiji" highlights the uneven yet perfect match between Gandhi with a tremendous reserve of power and Motilal with his splendid strength—both of which seeped into his consciousness.

The case in the big firm of South Africa where Gandhi travelled in 1893 made him aware of the multiple voices from different registers of the society from within the same nationality. The indentured and free labourers in Natal from different religious backgrounds and communities presented to Gandhi an altogether chaotic and distorted picture of India in a foreign land and it led to an interrogation of his own identity. The opinions of the Hindu, Muslim and Christian "girmitiya" labourers from India can be heard through their conversation with Gandhi. The incident regarding the wearing of the Indian turban in South Africa by going against the English norm of wearing a hat is evident of the social construction of Gandhi's self. Besides, the train incident on racial discrimination whereby Gandhi got insulted because of his skin colour despite his first class ticket makes the readers overhear the petty and oppressive voices of the white colonizers for the first time in this book. It was one of the foundation stones that illumined the spark of a freedom fighter in him: "Only we can live in a land like this because, for making money, we do not mind pocketing insults, and here we are. With this he narrated to me the hardships of Indians in South Africa" (Gandhi 115).

One thus listens to the conflicting voices from different sections of Indians

staying in South Africa. This assigns the autobiography a plurality of consciousness. An altogether distinguished voice arises with the attorney of Pretoria, Mr. A.W. Baker. He represents the good Englishman bereft of any prejudices for the colonized ones, thus voicing an alternative history of the colonizers. Again, staunch Christians like the Quaker Mr. Coates stood for the dominating, orthodox whites. His dialogue with Gandhi over Hinduism-Christianity strife and the superiority of Christianity bring to light the utter condescending attitude of Coates. Through a conflicting dialogue over religion, Gandhi in fact gained more confidence and affirmation of his own faith in Hinduism through his defence of the same. An elaborate description of Mr. Coates' stance became important in order to redefine Gandhi's take on religious beliefs.

The constitution of Gandhi's nationalistic self can be traced from his experiences with the Indians in the then Orange Free State or Transvaal. He gives the readers a glimpse of how the Indians there were deprived of all rights and treated as mere puppets by the British rule. He further discovered the lawyer side of his consciousness in relation to the case assigned to him by Dada Abdullah in Pretoria. Abdulla Seth's contribution as an Other is immense in shaping Gandhi's fighter self. He and the other Indians settled in South Africa bring to light the issue of Indian Franchise Bill to Gandhi. That Bill snatched the right to vote from Indians living in Natal. Seth along with many other Indians there persuaded Gandhi to stay back in Natal for a while and fight for their cause. Thus, Gandhi's actions in South Africa were nothing but an amalgamation of the multiple voices of protest and uprisings there. His joining as a lawyer in Natal Supreme Court and the subsequent formation of the Natal Indian Congress on 22nd May, 1894 justify the stance. The creation of his relational and dialogic self in South Africa therefore laid the foundation of his later day Satyagraha mission in India.

As in case of Gandhi, Nehru too perceived a sense of answerability towards the then suffering peasant class who confronted Nehru with an otherwise latent side of his self. The massive uprising of Partabgarh peasants seeking their rights in June 1920 in Allahabad presented the picture of a harsh reality to Nehru. The "face of the other"—in this case the miserable peasants, created a sense of responsibility in him thus contributing towards the construction of his self:

> Looking at them and their misery and overflowing gratitude, I was filled with shame and sorrow, shame at my own easy going and comfortable life and our petty politics of the city which ignored this vast multitude of semi-naked sons and daughters of India, sorrow at the degradation and overwhelming poverty of India. A new picture of India seemed to rise before me, naked, striving, crushed, and utterly miserable. And their faith in us, casual visitors from the distant city, embarrassed me and filled me with a new responsibility that frightened me. (Nehru 57)

The peasants thus compelled Nehru to reconsider his own identity and perceive his country in an all new way. Their consciousness as if merged into his consciousness thereby accounting for his plurality of consciousness. He also relates how the peasants taught him to speak in public, of which he was very shy earlier. Moreover, his autobiography, like that of Gandhi's, became a ground for encompassing the multiplicity of struggling voices of the peasants like Ramchandra crushed under the feudal system. In this context, mention must be made of Partha Chatterjee's essay "The Moment of Arrival: Nehru and the Passive revolution" that forms an integral part of his book *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World* (1986) where he critically analyses the role of mass peasantry in creating the sense of responsibility necessary to construct the attitude of the new nationalist state leadership that Nehru was striving for:

> It was 'responsibility' that was the feeling which determined the attitude of the new nationalist state leadership towards the peasantry. This feeling of responsibility was not self-consciously paternalistic, for that was the attitude condescending and inherently insulting, of the hated British administrator... The masses had to be 'represented'; the leaders must therefore learn to 'act on their behalf' and 'in their true interests'. (Chatterjee 148)

> It was this concept of 'responsibility' as mature and self-conscious political representation which shaped Nehru's ideas on the place of the peasantry in the national movement and, by extension, in the new nation state. (Chatterjee 148)

The mass Indian population played a significant role in constructing the image of Nehru as a national hero. Their faces craving for freedom moved him both emotionally and mentally. His self got created through those others who, although seemed

incomprehensible individually, collectively became one with Nehru's consciousness. The hero-worship simply made his individuality melt away as he himself relates:

> Neither way brought satisfaction, but, on the whole the crowd had filled some inner need of mine. The notion that I could influence them and move them to action gave me a sense of authority over their minds and hearts; and this satisfied to some extent my will to power. On their part they exercised a subtle tyranny over me, for their confidence and affection moved inner depths within me and evoked emotional responses. Individualist as I was, sometimes, the barriers of individuality seemed to melt away, and I felt that it would be better to be accursed with these unhappy people than to be saved alone. (Nehru 217)

Nehru mentions time and again as to how he was forcefully dragged against his will to take active positions in the All India Congress in the mid 1920s. His agentiality was thus controlled by the fellow members like Mohamad Ali to whom he had to be inevitably accountable. Nehru thus sought for validation of his self to Ali. His religious dialogues and discussions with Ali also led to the creation of his secular mindset:

> Mohamad Ali induced me, much against my will, to accept the All India Congress secretaryship for his year of presidentship. I had no desire to accept executive responsibility, when I was not clear about future policy. But I could not resist Mohamad Ali... He had strong likes and dislikes, and I was fortunate enough to be included in his "likes". (Nehru 125)

Nehru's autobiography serves as a vindication of Gandhi's thoughts and actions in many ways. He portrays Gandhi as the peasant man of India, the voice of the masses. Whether Gandhiji is a democrat or not, he does represent the peasant mass of India; he is the quintessence of the conscious and subconscious will of those millions" (Nehru 266). In Gandhi Nehru perceived a reflection of the ancient Indian mythical figures overflowing with spirituality and an inherent power. It was ultimately that specific gaze of Gandhi which motivated them all, as Nehru confesses:

> These myths have often come to my mind when I have watched the amazing energy and inner power of Gandhiji, coming out of some inexhaustible spiritual reservoir. He was obviously not of the world's ordinary coinage; he was minted of a different and rare variety, and often the unknown stared at us through his

eyes. (Nehru 267)

Apart from the construction of a leader, the cleanliness dimension of Gandhi's self owes to the terrible break out of plague in Bombay in 1896. Besides listening to the trouble ridden voices of the victims suffering from a lack of proper sanitation, the readers discover the creation of a new aspect of Gandhi's consciousness through his dialogues and interaction with these people who make him reconsider himself as a flag bearer of social justice and cleanliness. While in Bombay after his return from South Africa on a vacation, Gandhi's patriotic self meant to serve only his motherland got formed in relation to his friend Mr. Pestonji Padshah. As Gandhi relates, Padshah's insistence on the former to stay in India and work for it strengthened his resolve to take a stand for his motherland all the more. To quote a slice of their conversation:

> "Let us win self-government here, and we shall automatically help our countrymen there. I know I cannot prevail upon you, but I will now encourage anyone of your type to throw in his lot with you."
>
> I did not like this advice, but it increased my regard for Mr. Pestonji Padshah. I was struck with his love for the country and for mother tongue... But far from giving up my work in South Africa, I became firmer in my resolve. A Patriot cannot afford to ignore any branch of service to the motherland. (Gandhi 170)

Nehru, however, often felt like an outsider when it came to his approach and sense of belonging towards India as his motherland. He somehow had a feeling of homelessness in India. To quote him from *An Autobiography*: "I felt lonely and homeless, and India to whom I had given my love and for whom I had laboured, seemed a strange and bewildering land to me. Was it my fault that I could not enter into the spirit and ways of thinking of my countrymen?" (Nehru 390) A more overt expression in *The Discovery of India* (1946) makes his identity and existential crisis all the more prominent, "I was eager and anxious to change her outlook and appearance and give her the garb of modernity. And yet doubts arose within me. Did I know India? I who presumed to scrap much of her past heritage?" (Nehru 41)

Exercise, vegetarianism, light food diet maintenance are some qualities of Nehru that straightway reflect the impact of Gandhi and his way of life. Nehru even took up the responsibility to defend Gandhi's position by countering the then Indian liberals in

every possible way. He makes scathing attacks on some people who spread rumour about the conspiracy regarding the removal of Gandhi from the Congress in 1931. He also counters the many foreign writers or correspondents who misinterpreted Gandhi's intentions and actions thereby. Nehru retorts the accusation on Gandhi of being "muddle-headed" like:

> Whether Gandhiji is "muddle-headed" or not we can leave to our Liberal friends to decide. It is undoubtedly true that his politics are sometimes very metaphysical and difficult to understand. But he had shown himself a man of action, a man of wonderful courage and a man who could often deliver the goods; and if "muddle-headedness" yields such practical results perhaps it compares not unfavourably with the 'practical politics' that begin and end in the study and in select circles. (Nehru 302)

A considerable part of *An Autobiography* thus often reads more like Gandhi's biography than Nehru's own self-narrative. But Nehru however, leaves no stone unturned in criticizing many of Gandhi's traditional beliefs like that of the khadi and spinning franchise or orthodox thoughts on untouchability which he regards as too primitive for a modern society. In all those activities of Gandhi, Nehru rather visualized a glorification of poverty. He critiques Gandhi's worldview on sin, sex, peasantry and non-violence. He counters Gandhi on several grounds from the latter's excessive inclination for personal salvation to his utopian concept of a past golden age. Nehru in a way strove to develop a revised version of Gandhi's convictions. Time and again he endeavoured to revise and reconsider Gandhi's worldview. To quote an instance:

> Personally I dislike the praise of poverty and suffering. I do not think they are at all desirable, and they ought to be abolished. Nor do I appreciate the ascetic life as a social ideal, though it may suit individuals. I understand and appreciate simplicity, equality, self-control but not the mortification of the flesh. (Nehru 528)

Nehru's stubbornness to join the Satyagraha movement along with Gandhi and other leaders despite his father's dissent implies the great extent to which Gandhi shaped his agentiality or political insight in this case. As Nehru confesses, his former ignorance and indifference towards poverty and labour conditions of his country got altered

through Gandhi's striving for the cause in the form of agrarian movements. Many ideas of Gandhi like that of Ram Rajya, however sounded very vague and abstract to Nehru. But the all pervasive and overwhelming influence of Gandhi on Nehru made the latter reconcile with his disagreements:

> Even some of Gandhiji's phrases sometimes jarred upon me—thus his frequent reference to Rama Raj as a golden age which was to return. But I was powerless to intervene, and I consoled myself with the thought that Gandhiji used the words because they were well known and understood by the masses. (Nehru 79)

Gandhi's presence and worldview got so much entangled with Nehru that the latter could not help ultimately comply with the former's opinion only, despite disagreements. Although Nehru's socialist bent of mind never supported the metaphysical democracy of Gandhi, yet he submitted to him somewhat like:

> But Congress at present meant Gandhiji. What would he do? Ideologically he was sometimes amazingly backward, and yet in action he had been the greatest revolutionary of recent times in India. He was a unique personality and it was impossible to judge him by the usual standards, or even to apply the ordinary canons of logic to him. (Nehru 381)

He also spends pages in explaining Gandhi's perception of religion which was, however, quite opposed to his own view of the same. He was also irked by Gandhi's Harijan movement which disrupted the Civil Disobedience movement in many ways. Moreover, Gandhi's defence of the Zamindari system troubled Nehru a lot as the latter considered it as a major hindrance in the path of the nation's economic progress. Nehru's preoccupation with Gandhi and his worldview reaches its zenith in the chapter called "Paradoxes" where he dissects the extraordinarily paradoxical nature of Gandhi. Taking up Gandhi's opposing views on socialism, capitalism and modernization, Nehru justifies his own vision of industrialization:

> The khadi movement, hand-spinning and hand-weaving, which is Gandhiji's special favourite, is an intensification of individualism in production, and is thus a throwback to the pre-industrial age. As a solution of any vital present day's problem it cannot be taken seriously, and it produces a mentality which

may become an obstacle to growth in the right direction. (Nehru 540)

It becomes very pertinent to understand Gandhi's outlook in each and every issue of the then India in order to grasp Nehru's own view of the same. Nehru's identity therefore can never be gauged in isolation to that of Gandhi's. Despite Nehru's complete dislike of the utopian Gandhian philosophies, he could never help ignore the overwhelming connection Gandhi had with the masses. As Partha Chatterjee aptly observes, Nehru always realized the necessary intervention of Gandhi in building the relationship between the peasants on one side and the bourgeois leaders like him on the other: "His economic and social ideas were obsolete, often idiosyncratic, and in general 'reactionary'. 'But the fact remains that this "reactionary" knows India, understands India, almost is peasant India, and has shaken up India as no so called revolutionary has done'" (Chatterjee 150).

Moreover, Gandhi's autobiography brings to the forefront the views and opinions of some of the most influential figures of the then pre-independent India like that of Lokamanya Tilak and Gopal Krishna Gokhale. Their worldview played a pertinent role in creating the patriotic self of Gandhi. Their validation to Gandhi regarding his nationalistic endeavour in South Africa contributed in further enhancing his duty towards India. Apart from the others influencing the self, this text also bears instances of the self influencing the others. Professor Bhandarkar whom Tilak recommended as the appropriate person to become the President of the first public meeting of Congress in Bombay was made to change his stance after being highly moved by Gandhi's words, "After he had heard me out he said, 'Anyone will tell you that I do not take part in politics. But I cannot refuse you. Your case is so strong and your industry is so admirable that I cannot decline to take part in your meeting'" (Gandhi 171).

Also, Gandhi's narration further reveals the dialogic formation of his social service centric self through the Boer war duty in 1899 whereby he along with many other Indians nursed many sick and injured masses in the reliefs. This incident was highly instrumental in making Gandhi realize the urgency to serve his own nation. Later, he had to return to India only under a condition placed by the Natal Indians that he should return to them anytime the community desired. This very fact highlights

the relational nature of his self where his agentiality was constructed by the people. In Gandhi's words, "The voice of the people is the voice of God, and here the voice of friends was too real to be rejected. I accepted the condition and got the permission to go" (Gandhi 206).

The political leader Gopal Krishna Gokhale's life and influence in re-constructing Gandhi's private as well as public persona deserves special mention in order to comprehend the latter's relational nature of self. Spending a month with Gokhale gave Gandhi a scope to exchange his thoughts and activities with the former thereby acquiring the necessary validation and approval for most of his future endeavours be it perseverance or simplicity or selfless service to the country. Gandhi's practical service towards the Congress in fact stemmed from Gokhale's insistence in Calcutta, "He discovered my reserve and said: 'Gandhi, you have to stay in the country, and this sort of reserve will not do. You must get in touch with as many people as possible. I want you to do Congress work" (Gandhi 215). Gandhi was in fact able to create a public face in Calcutta only under Gokhale's supervision. His dialogic interaction with Dr. Ray, Sister Nibedita and the Brahmo Samaj unveils the voice of Bengal with its different aspects. Moreover, Gandhi decided to take a third class tour from Calcutta to Rajkot only after Gokhale approved of the same. This is implicative of Gandhi's accountability towards the Other, without which the formation of his identity becomes nearly impossible. He even took a vow under Gokhale that he would only travel India for a year without expressing any opinion on public question. This is evident of how the self is often rendered as a puppet under addressivity towards the Other in Butler's concept.

Gandhi's self developed to a great extent in relation to some grand narratives like Hinduism intertwined with the *Bhagwat Gita*. His identity formation is largely rooted in an appropriation of this book and the Hindu philosophy. *The Ramayana*, *The Bhagwat Gita* created his typical Hindu bent of mind to the extent that he began hating Christianity despite an initial tolerant attitude towards the same. The multiple socio-political and ideological voices thus seeped into his persona. He reveals how the fact that a well-known Hindu got converted to the beef-eating and liquor-drinking Christian intensified his intolerance for the latter. When his Theosophist friends invited him for discussions in 1903, Gandhi experienced the lessons of the *Gita* from a closer quarter

and thereby made his mind to shape his life accordingly. The qualities of non-possession and equability stem in him from the teachings of this sacred book as he narrates his experience in the context of reading the book:

> It became clear to me as daylight that non-possession and equability presupposed a change of heart, a change of attitude. I then wrote to Revashankarbhai to allow the insurance policy to lapse and get whatever could be recovered, or else to regard the premiums already paid as lost, for I had become convinced that God, who created my wife and children as well as myself, would take care of them. (Gandhi 245-246)

Gandhi also tried to make the voice of the untouchables heard through his autobiography, although very little of it, especially in the context of how his ashram in Gujrat accumulated many untouchables, defying all social prejudices. Besides, Gandhi's striving along with Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya in 1916 to abolish indentured emigration from India shows the construction of his self in terms of the labourers. Moreover, the case of the indigo cultivators is an example of Gandhi's social consciousness being the result of the plural consciousness of the suffering indigo farmers, their spokesperson being the agriculturalist Rajkumar Shukla. Thus, a number of other lives and a plurality of voices account for the construction of Gandhi's identity and relational self. Nehru offers a foil to Gandhi's version of non-violence by adhering considerable importance to violence as necessary for the modern nation state:

> Violence is the very life-blood of the modern state and social system. Without the coercive apparatus of the State, taxes would not be realized, landlords would not get their lands and private property would disappear. (Nehru 558)

> Gandhiji's non-violence, it is true, is certainly not a purely negative affair. It is not non-resistance. It is non-violent resistance, which is a very different thing, a positive and dynamic method of action. (Nehru 558)

The gaps in Gandhi's worldview are as if compensated by Nehru through his autobiography. Gandhi was but a necessary Other for Nehru. His worldview, although incomprehensible, was essential in making Nehru's dream of uniting the masses come true. Strange how Nehru himself once remarks of effacing all Gandhian ideals once

freedom is obtained:

> He was a very difficult person to understand, sometimes his language was almost incomprehensible to an average modern. But we felt that we knew him well enough to realize he was a great and unique man. And a glorious leader, and having put our faith in him we gave him an almost blank cheque for the time being at least. Often we discussed his fads and peculiarities among ourselves and said half-humorously, that when Swaraj came these fads must not be encouraged. (Nehru 79)

Interestingly, Partha Chatterjee offers a very explicit explanation of this particular above mentioned passage by Nehru. In Chatterjee's critical comprehension:

> The argument, in other words, is that whereas our very knowledge of society tells us that 'we' are powerless, Gandhi's unique and incomprehensible knack of reaching the people makes him powerful; however, for that very reason, our knowledge of the consequences of Gandhi's power enables us to let him act on our behalf for the time being but to resume our own control afterwards. (Chatterjee 152)

He chose this medium of self-narrative to create grounds to dialogically relate to the former's life and identity. Khilnani in his "Introduction" to *The Discovery of India* very aptly notes the creation of Nehru's self in terms of Gandhi: "Nehru's *An Autobiography* was in many respects a series of arguments with his political colleagues—with Indian liberals, with socialists, with Subhash Chandra Bose, and above all with Gandhi—through which he sought to define his political self" (qtd. in Nehru Introduction). The dialogical nature of his self further manifests when he contemplates his perception as a response to the perceptions of some of his contemporaries. As a response to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's lecture on socialism on January 3, 1935 Nehru wrote: "Some Congress leaders are frightened of industrialization, and imagine that the present day troubles of the industrial countries are due to mass production. That is a strange misreading of the situation. If the masses lack anything, is it bad to produce it in sufficient quantities for them?" (Nehru 544) All those personalities or groups of people thus became the tropes or metaphors through which Nehru comprehended his identity and subjectivity in a relational manner.

Along with Nehru and Gandhi, Nirad C. Chaudhuri's autobiographies *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* and *Thy Hand, Great Anarch*! are replete with stories of other lives, numerous polyphonic voices and a plurality of consciousness which together contribute in the making of his relational self. Chaudhuri in fact calls his autobiography a "descriptive ethnology", thus shifting the focus from his own self to several other voices and issues without which his self can never be imagined. The Book I and Book II of his first autobiography encompassing his childhood in the ancestral villages of Bengal stand testimony to the formation of his self though his ancestral spirit, folk poetry, folk music and so on. The peasant life of his mother's village with all their simplicity and native folklores seeped into the lives and ways of his family. Chaudhuri writes in this context:

> I am trying to define my ideas on the subject because it was on the foundation of this very simple morality that my mother built up her later and much more complex morality derived from Brahmoism. Both were imbibed by me unconsciously through a large number of folk songs and more developed devotional songs, which she was in the habit of singing or intoning… (Chaudhuri 99)

A recurrence of some personalities whose faces led to the creation of the writerly self of Chaudhuri indicates the impossibility of his identity in isolation with the account of the others. His Uncle Anukul and teacher Mr. Mohitlal Mazumdar shaped the writer out of Chaudhuri, as he himself acknowledges, "...for as Mr. Mohitlal Mazumdar, the distinguished contemporary poet and critic, he exerted a very strong and beneficial influence on my later life. He introduced me to the literary society of Calcutta and made a writer of me almost by main force" (Chaudhuri 317). Chaudhuri's life and vocation got closely intertwined with that of the Bengali writer cum critic Mohitlal Mazumdar. It was Mohitlal who served as a saviour to Chaudhuri by offering the job for a magazine when the latter had left his government job. Mohitlal was thus instrumental in developing the writerly knack of Chaudhuri which had long been dormant. Eunice De Souza also observes, "Chaudhuri's first article in English was the outcome of the encouragement of Mohitlal Mazumdar, Chaudhuri's English teacher at school who ''made a writer out of me almost by main force" (De Souza in Mehrotra 244). Mohit Babu's take on the contemporary literary situation contributed a lot in creating

Chaudhuri's attitude towards the same. Chaudhuri came to believe that Bengali literature was heading towards exhaustion only through Mohitlal's reaction to the young writers like Tagore and Sarat Chandra. Nirad's antipathy for writers like Kazi Nazrul Islam got further fueled through the validation he received from his mentor Mohit Babu. Apart from this, Bankim Chandra's worldview on the imitation of the English by the Bengali life and culture was another vital point Chaudhuri completely took after. The old Bengali poet Bharat Chandra Ray was also pertinent in constituting his writerly self. Chaudhuri's first publication was but a literary criticism on Bharat Chandra. Moreover, Chaudhuri himself acknowledges the overwhelming influence of some of the contemporary young prose writers on his initial writings:

> I had fallen under the influence of some the younger prose writers of the day, e.g. Lytton Strachey, of course; but also Aldous Huxley, Percy Lubbock, C.E. Montague, Middleton Murry, and so on. The long first articles in the T.L.S. also cast their anonymous spell on me. To these writers I added Lionel Johnson from the previous epoch. (Chaudhuri 137)

Chaudhuri credits Lord Ronaldshay for developing his inclination towards cultural questions instead of literature in the strict sense through his review of Ronaldshay's 1925 book *The Heart of Aryavarta* (1825). Chaudhuri's taste for art, literature and foreign languages was created to a great extent by his brother's considerable influence on him since 1922. His brother's interest in French and Eastern painting dragged Chaudhuri also towards them, thus opening new intellectual dimensions for him. Glimpses of Chaudhuri's character can be obtained from his details at length of the life and activities of the famous Bengali author Bibhuti Bhushan Banerji. The two however shared both likes and dislikes of each other. The depiction of Banerji reveals qualities of Chaudhuri like those that the latter never smoked or drank nor ever seduced any woman unlike the former. Again, the life and ideas of the other writer Sarat Chandra Chatterji undergoes severe criticism through Chaudhuri's writing. The renowned Indian journalist Ramananda Chatterji was instrumental in fashioning the journalistic side of Chaudhuri's character although both of them had many contesting thoughts and ideas. Chaudhuri offers a biographical sketch of Chatterji's life intertwining his relation with the same. The identity of N.C. Chaudhuri as a writer and journalist can never be imagined in isolation with all these litterateurs whom he depicts at length in his

autobiography. Moreover, the two biographies he wrote, *Scholar Extraordinary*: *The Life of Professor the Rt. Hon. Friedrich Max Muller* (1974) and *Clive of India* (1975) reflect the influence of these two personalities on him. As Eunice De Souza aptly notes:

> If they are essentially sympathetic biographies, it is perhaps because in both figures Chaudhuri finds aspects of himself. Max Muller idealised the Aryans, as Chaudhuri does, and Clive, frequently compared to Napoleon, is the self-assertive hero that Chaudhuri admires. (qtd. in Mehrotra 242)

Chaudhuri's utter detestation for Gandhi appears through his severe critique of the latter and his philosophies. He held Gandhi's life and activities as the base for dialogically imagining his own ideas on freedom and nationalism. Chaudhuri dedicates many pages of *Thy Hand, Great Anarch!* to discussions centring around the Gandhian movements and their effects. For instance, his take on the Non-Cooperation movement engulfs the 1921 speech by Lord Reading regarding his meeting with Gandhi besides the comments of the noted Bengali publicist Mr. Ramananda Chatterjee. Chaudhuri further gives a detailed justification of his dislike for the movement, which he believed to be nothing but a consequence of the new pan-Islamic feeling. He deals in detail with the British attitude to Gandhi in order to further emphasize his own viewpoint. Winston Churchill's contempt for Gandhi and *The Times'* criticism of Gandhi are what Chaudhuri attempts to put forward in exact terms in order to strengthen his argument. Regarding Churchill's take on Gandhi Chaudhuri writes:

> He regarded Gandhi as the enemy of the British Empire and therefore with undisguised hatred. He did not try to be merely loftily disdainful. Two months before Reading's appointment to the Viceroyalty was announced, Churchill ragged Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, at a dinner, and said that Gandhi 'ought to be laid, bound hand and foot, at the gates of Delhi and then trampled on by an enormous elephant with the new Viceroy seated on its back'. Churchill was then the Secretary of State for War in the British Government. He later described Gandhi, in a phrase which became famous, as a half-naked Fakir. (Chaudhuri 23)

Similarly, he quotes an extract from *The Times* that criticized Gandhi:

> Its correspondent wrote after the events of 17 November 1921: 'One must realize

> that Gandhi has long realized his waning influence and the hopelessness of his cause. There was a time when, in the full bloom of sainthood, he might have gone to the mountains, to return at some moment with serious, very serious results. He has missed the market. Not only has his sainthood been tarnished, both by his failures and the disreputable character of some of his followers, influential associates like Patel and Barucha, but even his reputation as a successful politician has been badly impaired.' (Chaudhuri 24)

Tagore's dislike for Gandhi's actions inevitably find mention in Nirad's recollection. Drawing on Tagore's article entitled "The Call of Truth" published in *The Modern Review* for October 1921 alongside Mahatma Gandhi's reaction in *Young India* (1919), Chaudhuri initiates dialogues again and again in his autobiography thus covering his own self under the veil of all these polyphonic voices. He further makes the voices of many British rulers like the administrator Sir John Strachey and the Law Member Sir James Fitzjames Stephen heard in order to strengthen his arguments about Gandhian mass movement which he believed could turn violent at any step. Gandhi however had only been subject to Chaudhuri's harsh criticism and extreme hatred. From his mass protest in South Africa to his concept of Ram Rajya to his views on Hinduism besides his adherence to traditional and primitive ways—all go through rigorous criticism in Chaudhuri's second autobiography. He condemns Gandhi for considering the then Indian situation to be a replica of the South African condition. Even Gandhi's mingling of politics and religion did not get spared from Chaudhuri's condemnation:

> It is thought that he brought religion into politics in order to raise it to a higher plane. On the contrary, the truth was that Mahatma Gandhi took politics into religion in order to become a new kind of religious prophet. He felt at home only in religion, and throughout his life showed no interest in politics qua politics, i.e. when it presented only secular political problems. (Chaudhuri 47)

> Both in his religious life and in his political life Gandhi showed himself to be relentless in seeking power. There was no contradiction between the two aspects of his personality. (Chaudhuri 48)

Similar to Jawaharlal Nehru's *Autobiography*, N. C. Chaudhuri's self-narrative reads to a considerable extent like a biography of Gandhi with sketches from all spheres of his

life and actions, thus making it relational. Gandhi, according to him, aroused political passion which was unnecessary; his religion had the strange capability to generate hatred among the people and the British as he analysed. Accounts of Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose also occupy a large part of Chaudhuri's self-narrative thus implying that a narration of the self is impossible without an account of the others through which the self is visualized. Although Chaudhuri often seems to be self obsessed, his autobiography hardly engages with his own self development. It is rather addressed to a number of other lives whose development often occupies the forefront in his description and relationally creates Chaudhuri's self. He severely criticizes Nehru, blaming him for his attempt at exploiting the agrarian grievances of the UP during the suspension of the Civil Disobedience movement:

> Jawaharlal Nehru, who had bitterly resented the suspension wanted to do so even before Gandhi's return so as to face him with a fait accompli. He wanted to exploit the agrarian grievances of the U.O. That showed how little understanding he had of the peasants and of the nationalist movement. (Chaudhuri 284)

He also elaborates on the revolutionary movement prior to the Civil Disobedience movement which stirred his mind in many ways. As a result, one can hear polyphonic voices of revolutionaries inherent within his descriptions—the gap between Gandhian nationalism and Bengali nationalism. The Chittagong raid and such other outrages centred round the uprising of extremist leaders like Surya Sen and Gopal Das. The voices and biographical information of the two eminent political figures of Bengal Sarat Chandra Bose and Subhas Chandra Bose recur almost throughout *Thy Hand, Great Anarch*! Sarat Bose was a renowned barrister of the Calcutta High Court to whom Nirad Chaudhuri became secretary in 1936. Although having close terms with Sarat Bose, Chaudhuri was irked by Subhas Bose's military uprising.

The face of the Gandhian movements, its emotional and political upheavals ushered in Chaudhuri a new intellectual spirit, thereby letting his private thoughts take a shape through his public writings. The spark of a writer lit in him by his mentor Mohit Babu reached its mature form through his encounters with the socio-political issues that merged through his consciousness, thus making a full-fledged writer out of

him:

> It was the emotional excitement produced in me by the personality and crusading spirit of Mohit Babu which had made me write with such verve in the Sanibarer Chithi, and the disillusionment with the campaign would certainly have led me to literary sterility if a new emotional impetus had not been provided by the Gandhian movement. It made me emerge as a writer on public affairs. (Chaudhuri 319)

Although Chaudhuri disregarded all philosophies and ideals of Gandhi, the latter's face, however, left an altogether overwhelming effect on his mind. This inevitably reminds one of the Levinasian "face of the other". To quote Chaudhuri:

> For the first time in my life I was seeing Gandhi face to face, and the impression was quite unlike anything I had expected. I had seen numberless pictures of him, and was quite prepared to see a man of insignificant frame and plain looks. All that, of course, was there, but unnoticed by me. What struck me was the expression on his face, which diverted all attention away from his features or figure. It was one of extraordinary innocence and benignity, with two soft beams streaming out of his eyes.
>
> There was not a trace on his face of the repulsive arrogance which disfigures the face of every Hindu holy man. I must say that I looked on spellbound inspite of my dislike for Gandhi's ideas. (Chaudhuri 437)

During the communal conflicts in Bengal in pre-independent India, the probable Muslim domination of East Bengal in near future developed in him a kind of fear or rather existential crisis. The thought of the socio-cultural overpowering by them shook his stance as he imagined his self in relation to them:

> It was not that I was opposed to the Muslims getting a dominant position in East Bengal. They had the right to have it because they were a majority. What repelled me was the idea of living under Muslim social and cultural domination. I knew that they would re-shape even the Bengali language. (Chaudhuri 330)

Sarat Chandra Bose was one of the personalities who played a vital role in Chaudhuri's identity formation. A close encounter with Sarat from 1937-41 greatly altered

Chaudhuri's worldview who then began to imagine his views in relation to the former. His work for Bose also helped him gain insights into the nationalist politics. To quote his own words, "Next, my work with Sarat Bose made me a different man by changing my behaviour, although it did not affect my character. On that score it was like the breaking out of a moth from its pupa... Working for Sarat Bose, I became an extrovert so far as I could do so" (Chaudhuri 413). Sarat Babu's life at length in *Thy Hand, Great Anarch*! presents yet another biographical sketch of one of the important political leaders in Bengal. Chaudhuri endeavours to glorify the life and character of the relatively latent figure of Sarat Bose as against his younger brother Subhas Bose. A large part of Chaudhuri's self narration encompasses the whereabouts of the workers of the Congress Working Committee as he observed in person in the meetings at Sarat Babu's house. In his account he remains preoccupied with their appearances and expression and what affect those had on him.

Whereas Chaudhuri portrays a glorifying picture of Sarat Bose, his biographical analysis of Subhas Bose is rather very critical with some scathing attacks on Bose's patriotism and leadership. The political exchanges of Gandhi and Bose or Nehru and Bose through a number of letters also find detailed mention in his autobiography especially in the chapter entitled "Gandhi-Bose Feud". The voices of J.B. Kripalini and Vallab Bhai Patel are often heard amidst such heated exchanges. Their initial intimacy in the Congress and later day strife—all these issues are what Nirad draws his attention to. Moreover, he alludes frequently to the paradoxical nature of relationship between Gandhi and Nehru which often stirred his mind. He even goes to the extent of giving hints about Gandhi as a power monger being involved in the planning of Bose's murder:

> In like manner, Gandhi had Bose put into a sack and thrown into a river. Bose succeeded in breaking out of the sack but his swimming strength was insufficient for him to attain either bank of India's river of politics. He was carried downstream, out to sea, eventually to reach foreign shores only to die. Trotsky was murdered in Mexico, Bose was killed in an air crash on Formosa. Their modes of death were different but the end was the same: a necessity in both cases for the man in power. (Chaudhuri 528)

Chaudhuri's narrative in *Thy Hand, Great Anarch!* therefore occurs under a structure of addressivity in the words of Butler. It is constantly addressed to the readers as well as to the personalities whose accounts shadow down Chaudhuri's identity as the narrator of his own life. The chapter entitled "Tagore: The Lost Great Man of India" is yet again a biographical account of Rabindranath Tagore in the form of an appraisement. Chaudhuri is both critical and appreciative of various aspects of Tagore's life from nationalism to poetry to his use of language. He perceived it as his responsibility to address it on behalf of all the Bengalis of his generation, thus accounting to a plurality of his consciousness and an impossibility of identity without the Other:

> I have described the death of Tagore, but I also wish to offer an appraisement of his life, because he was a part of the life of all Bengalis of my generation... He is virtually forgotten in the West, and even in Bengal he is remembered in the most wrong manner imaginable. There is not even an adequate biography of him in English, and the long biography in Bengali is only a compilation of information. (Chaudhuri 595)

The later part of the autobiography offers justifications for Nirad's innocence regarding the arrest of Sarat Chandra Bose. He mentions of a series of articles that he had penned, challenging the grounds of Bose's arrest. The section called "Reception to the Autobiography" depicts Chaudhuri's reaction towards the hostile reviews his autobiography had to go through from a number of Indian personalities. Those are but instances of his answerability and accountability to other lives in the process of his own relational identity construction.

Again, the celebrated Indian English writer Mulk Raj Anand's self as revealed in his autobiographical narratives is predominantly interrelated with the downtrodden or unprivileged sections of the society. True to his faith of art as a means of social service, *Apology for Heroism: An Autobiography of Ideas* (1946) captures his autobiographical ideas or vision that are formed as a prelude to a humanitarian society. It is less a confession of his actions and achievements and more a treatise on his philosophy pertaining to humanism and civilization at large. To quote him from his "Preface" to the first edition:

> I have allowed this book to go to press, because, I feel that it may perhaps be

> useful as a statement of belief by a contemporary Indian and as a very tentative introduction to the humanism which I have been evolving for myself through the jig-saw puzzle of my Indian upbringing and my Eur-Asian experience. (Anand 8)

Selfhood in his autobiography is created as a dialogue with existing ideologies of caste, religion in contemporary India. From the very beginning of this book, he critiques caste system in Hinduism. Anand's teacher at Amritsar named L.R. Puri constructed his perception about religion. The poor section of the society forms an important necessary Other around which Anand's self grows in Butler's term. The face of the poor people instilled within him a sense of answerability and responsibility. This led to his worldview of art and literature where the creator had to be a socialist, social worker and revolutionary at the same time. His concept of the ideal writer in fact developed from his awareness of a collective consciousness in Indian society. Through his self-narrative Anand attempts to create the image of an ideal, socialist revolutionary writer who would turn out to be a messiah for the society. However, even the ideal society he talks about where the multifarious people would come together from all over the world is utterly utopian and imaginative in nature.

While considering Anand's selfhood, it becomes indispensable to analyse his confessional text *Conversations in Bloomsbury* which throws enough light on a significant phase of his life. Along with *Apology for Heroism*, this narrative serves as a gateway to grasping Anand's literary, social, political and philosophical faiths. The wide-ranging dialogic conversations with the members of the Bloomsbury group like Forster, Huxley, Eliot, Leonard and Virginia Woolf, Clive Bell and others led to the creation of Anand's relational self. With all his insecurities and feelings of inferiorities at being a naive poet from India, Anand in *Conversations in Bloomsbury* constantly tried to negotiate with Western thought, art, culture and so on. The face of all the "others" made him answerable at every step. As an amateur writer he underwent terrible existential crisis during his London days. His consciousness was largely shaped by the recognition, assertion he received from all the great intellectuals he came across.

Bonamy Dobree contributed a lot in demolishing Anand's sense of inferiority. Moreover, the latter's apprehensions surrounding novel writing found solution through

Dobree's assurance and validation. To quote their conversation:

> 'I have been writing some letters to a friend from my self-imposed exile', I said. 'Can I make them the beginning of my novel?'
>
> 'My dear fellow, anything can make a novel—provided one brings imagination to it.', Bonamy Dobree assured me. 'There is no reason why reminiscence and epiphany may not make a novel. Jean Jacques Rousseau wrote a whole novel in letters.' (Anand 30)

In another instance, Aldous Huxley helped Anand realize the subtle relation between a personal diary and a novel which inspired the latter to have faith in his crude works. Anand's faith and responsibility as a writer thus came up as a result of his interaction with such members of the Bloomsbury group whose opinions mostly framed his stance. Amidst the scholarly gatherings of the group, Anand, however, also often felt vulnerable and suffered from a terrible identity crisis:

> Suddenly I felt that there was an uncanny gap between me and the other people, as though I was inferior and the others were superior. I realized that all of them being older than me and part of a metropolitan world, had been privileged to take part in a living culture, where apart from two Shakespeare plays and Thackeray's Henry Esmond, my reading had mostly been confined to books of poetry which professor Harvey used to lend me at Kalsa College, Amritsar... And inside me was the longing to be free, to expand my consciousness, to live and to be on equal terms with the men of learning like those Professor Dobree was familiar with. (Anand 34)

Moreover, orientalist discourses on different subject matters among the members often rendered Anand nervous, anxious and existentially shaken at the English circle. Even the simple matter of having food involved the presence of the Other that influenced him in every way. While dinning with Eliot, Anand forcibly tried to be self conscious in order to overcome his Indian style of eating. Thus the clash of discourses too resulted in Anand's perception of selfhood in certain ways.

Anand's conversations undoubtedly create a ground for different polyphonic voices to come together. Those presents the thoughts, opinions and philosophy of some

greatest personalities alive. It thus no longer remains a monologic self-introspection but rather a dialogic or polyphonic consciousness at large. Interestingly, Mulk Raj Anand himself had the conviction of a relational nature of self, which he exposes twice in that book. As he writes, "The self is nothing without the body. And it has no meaning apart from my existence in the universe. That is to say, I only speak of myself in relation to things and other people. And my thoughts are not apart from them" (Anand 81).

Mr. Laurence Binyon and Arthur Waley played a significant role in shaping his outlook towards art and painting in an all new way with a fresh perspective. His discussions with T.S. Eliot on art, poetry, philosophy, God initiate a perennial dialogue. The readers get a clear glimpse of Eliot's mind and thought process through their conversations. Eliot was instrumental to a great extent in constructing Anand's bent of mind. Further, Anand's perception on Indian dance in fact got created as consequences of his interaction with other lives like those of Beryl De Zoete. Subjectivity and identity of Anand therefore owe largely to his plural imagination as a result of his dialogic relation with numerous other lives or communities. On a similar tone, *My Dateless Diary* (1960) relates how after drafting his first novel *Swami and Friends* (1935) Narayan sought for validation of his manuscript. Finding no one interested to read it, he finally gave it to a young college fellow of his who showed interest in reading the same. It was only after the latter certified it as readable that Narayan felt worthy of publishing it. His writerly self therefore owed itself to the junior in Chicago whom he names Chamu. The writer in him got relationally formed through Chamu's opinions, reactions about Narayan: "...whenever I saw him I discussed with him the subject I had in mind for a new novel, and through his reaction I always got an objective view of anything I might plan to write" (70). Chamu thus had a significant role as a critic and advisor in the dialogical creation of Narayan as a writer.

My Days (1974) also puts forth how most of Narayan's books got published under the recommendation and approval of Graham Greene. Greene recommended the novel *Swami and Friends* to Hamish Hamilton who accepted it instantly. After repeated failures he acquired his self worth back after the acceptance of his manuscript for his first novel. "I saw myself in a new role as a novelist," writes Narayan (128). Again, *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937) got published by Nelson under the reference of Greene. Similarly, remarkable is his novel *The Dark Room* (1938): "*The Dark Room*,

once again read and approved by Graham Greene, was published by Macmillan in 1938" (Narayan 132). Referentiality and addressivity thus take a forefront in his depiction of himself.

While Mulk Raj Anand as a writer considered himself to be answerable and responsible towards the poor sections of the society, the poet Kamala Das perceived her self to be relational in terms of her readers. The autobiography *My Story* (1977) stands out as a very unique creation in the corpus of Indian English autobiography as it is a merging of two different genres—prose and poetry. The relational selfhood in her context can be examined through a close reading of how she creates herself as a writer. When it comes to considering *My Story* as a polyphonic text, K. Satchidanandan's observation in his essay "Relocating *My Story*" at the beginning of the autobiography is indeed apt:

> Like all women's autobiographies, Kamala's too is a polyphonic text and the reader has to listen closely to hear its different voices and discern the diverse layers of its meaning. Here is a wife, mother, sister, daughter, lover and writer, a middle-class woman seeking freedom from the bourgeois definitions of women's intellectual and imaginative abilities, and a public woman defying patriarchal descriptions to open new avenues of personal and professional experiences for women. (qtd. in Das x)

A multiplicity of selves—Kamala, Madhavikutty, Amy led to the formation of Das' identity depending on her accountability to her family, society and her readers. Satchidanandan in yet another essay "Redefining the Genre: Kamala Das" (2009) explains at length how these multiple facets contributed to the realization of her as a writer. Besides, her readers have always been the significant Other in her life whose response and appreciation imbibed in her the moral responsibility to create more and more literary pieces. She relates in *My Story* the inspiration, validation she drew from the letters she received from her readers:

> When the *Mathrubhumi* published my stories, I began to get letters from my readers in Bombay who expressed their admiration. Each letter gave me such a thrill. I had then evolved a technique of following each of my characters for the duration of an hour and writing down his or her thoughts. (Das 120)

Das therefore imagined and constructed her writerly self through a constant dialogue with her readers who in a sense completed her. She looked at herself through the spectacle of her readers. She perceived that her selfhood would remain incomplete without their presence.

> I had learnt from my life and I wanted my readers to know of it. I had realized by then that the writer has none to love but the readers.
>
> I have wished to take myself apart and stick all the bits, the hearts, the intestines, the livers, the reproductive organs, the skin, the hair and all the rest on a large canvas to form a canvas to form a collage which could then be donated to my readers. (Das 201)

She looked forward to them for validation at every step as a writer. Her existential crisis got overcome through her sense of being one with her readers, who, according to her, followed her everywhere, "Each time I have wept, the readers have wept with me. Each time I walked to my lovers' houses dressed like a bride, my readers have walked with me. I have felt their eyes on me right from my adolescence when I published my first story and was called controversial" (Das 202).

The predominance of polyphony can also be traced in both the construction of the writerly selves and the journalistic ventures in the self-narratives of two of the most prolific Indian English writers Dom Moraes and Khushwant Singh. The very title of Dom Moraes' autobiography *My Son's Father* (1968) is suggestive of the relational nature of the author's self. He from the very beginning imagines his self in terms of his son, addresses it to his son, as he specifically mentions in the "Foreword":

> The epilogue tells the reader that the very young man with whom the book deals has become the father of a son. The event takes on a symbolic importance, bringing the story full circle. The main character, the writer ceases to be his father's son and emerges into adulthood as the bearer of a tradition, his own son's father. (Moraes Foreword)

Moraes basically expresses two reasons behind writing this autobiography—one, to make his son aware of his father, and the other, to create an outlet for his traumatic experiences of childhood and adolescence. The fact that he was dissatisfied with his

father's autobiography and so took to writing his own implies the predominance of the "face of the other" (here in the form of his father) behind the construction of his own autobiographical self. In terms of Levinas, the "face of the other" in the form of his father imposed the responsibility on him to narrate himself. On publication of his first story, Moraes embraced his poetic self only as a result of the appraisals he received from renowned authors like G. V. Desani and Mulk Raj Anand. This implies how the self is accountable to the Other for recognition and justification in order to imagine itself as a complete whole. Moraes even began to imitate their ways henceforth:

> The soft, husky voices of Anand and Desani, their large, vague eyes, long fingers, and high foreheads awed me. They had published books and had met writers who were myths to me. It was necessary, I thought, to look like them if one was to be a writer. I brushed my hair upward a dozen times a day in an attempt to broaden my brow, constantly pulled at my fingers, to make them longer. (Moraes 76)

Besides, it was Stephen Spender's words that made him imagine and recognize himself as a poet. It is inevitable to mention those lines which form a part of one of his initial conversations with Spender:

> At last I blurted out the words, "I want to be a poet". Spender began to laugh, then stopped and said gently, "Perhaps you are one". This innocent remark intoxicated me: in it I saw a recognition of one poet by another, transcending all barriers, and under this gratifying illusion doubled my output of verse. (Moraes 76)

A similar instance relates Ezekiel's acceptance of Moraes' first poem which had a drastic influence on Moraes. As Sartre had theorized, the overwhelming existence of the Other becomes the reason for the organization of one's own experiences. Moraes' depictions clarify his appropriation of gestures, expressions, acts and conducts as constituted by the other poets. The face of other lives provided a new dimension to his self which imaginatively constructed him in an all new way. Nissim Ezekiel, Verrier Elwin too shaped his poetic self to a great extent as revealed by Moraes in *My Son's Father*. All of Moraes' thoughts, utterances and expressions thus entered into a dialogical world where other lives completed his version of each of those. His

understanding of himself came to fruition only through the response of the others. Moreover, Moraes' self was also created in relation to many American poets and great painters. T. S. Eliot was one such figure who participated in the construction of Moraes' self. Besides, even in a time of crisis in his poetic vocation, W. H. Auden's presence redefined his faith and responsibilities. As Moraes relates,

> In a youthful violence of emotion, I seemed to myself at this time finished as a poet, dead wood in which nobody could trust. To me, therefore, Auden's willingness to rely on my taste seemed a declaration of faith in me. It probably wasn't, but it comforted me at a trying time. (Moraes 192)

Moraes' poetic self also developed in relation to the poet cum priest Peter Levi during his Oxford days. Peter's extraordinary sense of peace and stability made Moraes rethink his own stance and crave for similar qualities within himself, "... though I knew Peter so well, the fact of his being a priest influenced me. His peace and fixity of purpose were attributes of the poet as well as the priest. I hoped for them now in myself, and took power from Peter as we paced the moors above the school" (Moraes 219). Ved Mehta's advice and suggestions played a vital role in moulding Moraes' diasporic stance and his decision to stay in England for good. Dom could see in Ved a reflection of his own self which suffered from terrible identity crisis in India. Moraes relates one of the instances where a conversation with Mehta confirmed his decision of staying in England. Moraes saw his poetry through the intellectually critical lens of Allan Tate. As he once expresses, "So I longed to satisfy his clean scrupulous intellect, and worked hard on my progress" (Moraes 212). Tate's gestures and constructive criticisms constituted a sense of responsibility in Moraes to rethink and restructure his poetic venture, thus echoing Levinas' dictum of how subjection to the "other" heightens responsibility.

While the above necessary others in Moraes' life made up for his existential crisis through a dialogical relationship and thereby helped him construct his creative and responsible self, his troublesome relation with his psychologically challenged mother often threatened his existence and creativity. The terrible gesture of his mother along with their physical conflict even led to the construction of his traumatic self—a kind of broken selfhood which made him difficult to confront himself. The detachment

from his mother caused him identity crisis: "It could all have been solved quite simply, I imagine, if I had been willing to humour her: but I saw in her possessiveness an attempt to withdraw me into herself, to deprive me of the identity I had found" (Moraes 161). Another similar kind of relationship with an elderly woman "K" haunted Moraes' subjectivity and made him suffer from immense identity crisis. Moraes, however, never reveals the actual identity of this woman. Her peculiar personality and inordinate demands simply shook his existence at one point of time in Oxford. Her naked hostile behaviour reminded him of his mother at every step, adversely affecting their relationship. Thus, his mother's all pervasive image always intruded Moraes' relationship with women—her face, to a large extent, moulded that dimension of his selfhood.

Moraes' second autobiography *Never at Home* (1992) written at a later age basically surrounds his diasporic self, and hence attains this title. His existential crisis arose from his homelessness to the extent that he called his wife Leela "a wandering home for me" (ix). The relational nature of his self constantly guided by the "face of the other" and seeking validation comes up even more clearly in this book. A reading of the very "Preface" of *Never at Home* unveils the considerable impact of Moraes' agent Peter Grose's worldview on the former. The meeting with Peter turned out to be a kind of mirror which made him visualize his own reality. This validates the dialogical nature of his self where the validation and approval of the Other rules the most. At another instance when Moraes interviewed Nehru, the latter's opinion of the former completely shook Moraes' grounding and self confidence thereby making him rethink his whole sense of responsibility towards his native country:

> 'Why don't you come back to India?', he asked. 'We need people like you here.' I did not feel complimented; indeed I felt slightly insulted. It was indicative of my attitudes at that time. I said I was a writer in English; what would I do in India? Coming back would be a terrible sacrifice. He looked at me, an awesomely sad look, and said, 'When I came back from England, don't you think I made a sacrifice?' I felt very ashamed of myself. (Moraes 9)

During the uprising of the Goans for an independent nation in India in 1961, Moraes through his writing made certain comments against Nehru and Indian government on its

decision of imposing Indian identity on the Goans. That resulted in the creation of a troubled image of Moraes as he took up the responsibility of speaking on behalf of his ancestral community. The predetermined set of expectations and the sense of responsibility from the Portuguese community led to the construction of this version of his selfhood. He had to undergo existential crisis in India despite being an Indian himself. Moraes could relate his failed poetic self to that of David Gascoyne's whom he met in Paris, "Long after this, when I could not write poetry, I thought of Gascoyne's terminal silence, and felt not only pity, for I could then understand how he must have felt, but awe that he had not let his silence kill him" (Moraes 57).

Besides, David Archer's utter downfall in career and transformation urged Moraes to inculcate patience within him. Dom Moraes asserts in his autobiography the role of dialogues, conversations and the perceptions of the Other in the construction of his poetic self and in particular his poems. As he expresses in the context of the publication of his book of verse in 1965: "We can perceive people through the conversations they engage in, whatever they may be conversing about; and perceptions of people are perceptions of reality. This reality manifested itself in these new poems" (Moraes 62). Moraes had always considered the great French poet Rimbaud as his ultimate Muse to the extent that he even related his failed poetic self to that of Rimbaud's:

> But, as someone pointed out to me years later, the same thing happened to Rimbaud. He lost, or deliberately ceased to use, the ability to write poetry... I am not attempting to compare myself to Rimbaud, but it is true that, once he no longer wrote poetry, he developed a desperate desire to travel, and to become financially stable. I had developed both, though my loss wasn't as considerable as his. (Moraes 187)

The unnatural deaths of Indira Gandhi, Sanjay Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi led to the creation of his nihilistic and vulnerable self. "Soon Rajiv, like his mother, was to be murdered. I felt my own mortality, and more sharply that of Leela's. In my mind's third eye, images formed of destitution and desolation" (Moraes 335). His dialogical relationship with some of his cricketer friends like Sir Learie Constantine also contributed in shaping up his selfhood. Interactions with some famous black

personalities like D'Oliveira, Todd Matchekisa made him reconsider his orientation as an Indian. To quote one instance with Matchekisa:

> He once said to me, 'When I first met you brother, I thought you must be a racialist. In South Africa the Indians are more racialist than the whites are. That's because they are frightened of their own colour.' I wondered how far the last sentence applied to me. Perhaps what I didn't know was the colour of my mind. (Moraes 70)

His agreement with BBC about covering a series on the Asian immigrants in England reflects one of his attempts to perceive his own immigrated self. On his visit to Goa many years later along with Judith and Francis Moraes in a way found the much needed validation of his identity when the Goans regarded him as their hero.

Both the self-narratives of Moraes thus take the form of a polyphonic text as they accumulate the voices of different registers of society which create and complete Moraes' autobiographical self. The voice of the Goan people, the black African friends of Moraes, the voice of the King of Bhutan or the troubled voices of the Naxalites and the then princes of Rajasthan render *Never at Home* a multi-faceted work rather than a monologic recounting of the self of the author. Being a writer cum journalist, Moraes aptly fits the multiple voices within his autobiographical narrative through a recounting of interviews or recollections. His interview with the King of Bhutan, for instance makes the readers aware of the fear and insecurity faced by the then Bhutan of 1960s against the invasion of China or the dominance of India. Yet another assignment of Moraes concerning the Indian princes brings to the light the fact that Indira Gandhi deprived them of their formerly promised income and title. Such contemporary issues therefore sip through Moraes' self portrayal, thus initiating a social and cultural dialogue. Moreover, his coverage on the cyclone in East Pakistan further upholds the suppressed voices of the masses in the then East Pakistan, Asif Currimbhoy being the most prominent:

> 'All our poems were in Bengali', Asif said. 'We are Bengali. Our great poet, Rabindranath Tagore, was born in this part of Bengal. But West Pakistan makes no provision for us. There they speak Urdu. It's the national language. How can any of us be recognized?' (Moraes 178)

> ‘You are not a Hindu nor an Indian’, Asif said,‘ so we can speak frankly to you. All of us hate hate the West Pakistanis, yes, but to tell you the truth, we hate the Hindus even more.’ (Moraes 178)

His visits to Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines, Japan, Hong Kong, Vietnam and the subsequent interviews with the people or the Presidents illuminate various socio-political or geographical upheavals like that of the flood problem in Philippines. The famous journalist Tarzie Vittachi was greatly instrumental in making Moraes author a book on world population under UNFPA. That project further broadened and constructed Moraes’ worldview—the interactions with a variety of diverse population moulded his consciousness as well as thinking. Interestingly enough, Moraes refers to a masked identity time and again in his autobiography. His claim thus predominantly makes his autobiographical self an object of de-facement, in the words of Paul de Man. Paul de Man theorizes that autobiography veils a defacement of the mind. It confers a mask through figurative language. Similarly, for Moraes his actual identity is masked by an apparent figurative face that veils his identity. Moraes distinguishes between mask and identity—thus initiating the “I” and the “me” or subjectivity-objectivity debate:

> Everyone wears some kind of mask, which is expressed in the face he or she presents to the world... For example, my mask was that of a rather casual person, unperturbed by what was happening around me, known as a poet, experience in the world, a veteran war correspondent. I could respond to the demands of my mask, and offer its smile, with some confidence to others. Behind this mask, I thought, lay my identity, which was not to be exposed. It was by keeping the identity, not the mask, that I remained alive... A great part of my identity lay in my ability to write poetry, and also in knowing exactly what world I belonged to. (Moraes 310)

Such remarks of Moraes render his whole life narrative a masked depiction deceiving his true self which lies within. The mask shows his outwardly constructed self that guards his true identity which otherwise suffers from existential crisis. Similar to the case with Moraes, the title of Khushwant Singh’s autobiography *Truth, Love and a Little Malice* (2002) bears the implication of a number of other lives to which it has

been addressed apart from an account of Singh's self development. The word "malice" especially captures his criticisms of people in his life.

In the very initial years of his life, the poet Moulvi Shaffiuddin Nayyar created in him the knack for Urdu poetry. "The love of Urdu poetry was instilled in me by Moulvi Shaffiuddin Nayyar" (Singh 23), Singh writes. However, Singh in his college days attempted to enter into an Urdu circle associated with his professor A. S. Bokhari. He sought for validation of his poetic self from many of the eminent Urdu poets like Imtiaz Ali Taj, Mohammed Tahseer and Faiz Ahmed Faiz, although he failed to do so. Their faces, their influence attracted him to the enticing circle of Urdu and Persian poetry. In Singh's words, "Theirs was a very close circle, consisting entirely of men who were well into Urdu and Persian poetry. Much as I tried, I failed to gain admittance into this charmed circle" (Singh 42).

Khushwant Singh's selfhood as a person and also as a writer got constructed to a considerable extent by the numerous women personalities he encountered in his life like Roma Biswas, Lilian, the Muslim girl Ghayoor and Marie. They are the ones who led to the creation of his libido centric self besides fashioning his identity and way of thinking. However, the celebrated painter Amrita Shergil also became a subject of utter malice in Singh's autobiography. He gives an account of their meeting at home, her nature and her eventual death. Her "face", however made him feel very inferior and shook his stance. To quote Singh, "I could not look her in the face too long because she had that bold, brazen kind of look which makes timid men like me turn their gaze downwards" (Singh 97).

His sister's Muslim friend Ghayoorunissa Hafeez deserves special mention as she was someone he fell madly in love with during his college days. She was that significant Other who made Khushwant whole-heartedly embrace the entire Muslim community. Her role in influencing his liberal perception gets evident when Singh writes, "It was Ghayoor's affection for me that made me an ardent lover of Muslims. For me an Indian Muslim could do no wrong. I came to the conclusion that all you have to do is to fall in love with one person to love his or her community" (Singh 37). Alongside Ghayoor he had built up strong friendships with many other Muslim friends while being a lawyer in Lahore. Manzur Quadir was one such closest Muslim friend of

Singh. Manzur's honesty and love for literature, especially Urdu poetry was shared by him. This Muslim-Sikh bond became the source of many of Khushwant's fictional instances.

The voices of many Muslim as well as Sikh victims seep through the narrative of this autobiography at the backdrop of partition. Singh had a first-hand experience of the charged atmosphere of partition, both in court and in the social scenario at large. His consciousness and identity can never be comprehended in isolation with these overwhelming social events of the then India. The need of the hour even compelled Singh to support some Sikhs in Lahore although they were actually scoundrels. As he relates his feelings about one such case: "I had little doubt in my mind that the three men I had got off scot free were guilty of robbery and murder. This is the sort of thing that nauseates me about the legal profession: it has very little to do with justice" (Singh 111).

That was how his community began dictating his life and actions thereby ceasing his agentiality. The existential crisis he had to go through during India's partition knew no bounds. He had to leave his home and well settled job in Lahore and come back to Punjab with a crisis in mind, as he recounts: "what was I to do now to make my living? We could not go back to Lahore in the aftermath of the hatred accompanying Independence and Partition" (Singh 115). However, the partition of India resulted in another drastic change in his life, which was his much desired for detachment from the legal profession.

Typical of a journalist, Khushwant Singh discovered a significant part of his self through a tour around India while being engaged with the weekly journal "Yojana" under UNESCO. Likewise, many other distinctive voices can also be heard through his journalistic ventures. For instance, Singh recounts his interview with General Tikka Khan at the backdrop of the separation of East Pakistan which brought to limelight Khan's version of the war. Despite being a Sikh, Singh considered it as his duty to also uphold the cause of the Muslims, who, according to him were discriminated every time there were Hindu-Muslim riots. His autobiography, like his novels, took a positive stand on Islam and Islamic history. Addressing the Muslims, he writes,

They had virtually no forum to ventilate their grievances, except Urdu

> newspapers which had small circulations restricted to their own community. I made *The Illustrated Weekly* a forum for Indian Muslim opinion. Whenever there was a Hindu-Muslim riot, since most of the loss of life and property was Muslim, I adopted a distinctly pro-Muslim stance. (Singh 255)

The chapter entitled "With the Gandhis and the Anands" depicts more of the familial relationships among the Gandhis—Indira, Sanjay, Rajiv and Maneka than that of Singh's own self development. However, his friendship with Sanjay took up a significant role there apart from the troubled relation between Indira and Maneka. The censorship of articles in "The Weekly" on Indira Gandhi's order and his subsequent taking up of the editorship of "The National Herald" elaborate the influence the Gandhis exerted on one chapter of his life. Singh seems to uphold all these issues in order to justify his own stance besides offering his thanksgiving to Sanjay who was instrumental in helping Singh grab a seat in the Rajya Sabha. Moreover, Singh also placed himself alongside the contemporary Indian English writers like N. C. Chaudhuri, Ruth Pawar Jhabvala, Malgaonkar, Anita Desai, Kamala Das, Vikram Seth, V.S. Naipaul, thus throwing light upon the dialogical relationship he shared with all of them in some way or the other.

The overall detailed analysis thus confirms the hypothesis that Indian English self narrators understand themselves through the specular medium of other lives and dominant socio-political voices. It can be said that the many other lives or figures are like metaphorical tropes through which the autobiographers try to comprehend their own identities. Their accounts are impossible without the dominance of the accounts of the Other to which they address their selves. It is never an essentialist self. In other words, the autobiographical subjectivity of the Indian English writers is broadly constructed alongside the relational axis. Collective consciousness stands to be foremost, whereas the individuality is hardly to be found. The plurality of consciousness results as a bi-product of relationality, accountability and answerability. Uday Kumar is indeed apt in studying self-articulation in Kerela from a similar perspective as found in his critical text *Writing the First Person:* "The experiences of being affected by ourselves—where we are simultaneously active and passive—is a necessary condition for self representation. This convergence of agency and passivity is possibly intrinsic to the modern conception of the subject" (Kumar 15). This kind of modern subjectivity

which Kumar points out in contemporary Malayalam self-narratives is also very much evident in Indian English self-narratives at large. Along with the trope of other lives that fashion the modern subjectivity, the rhetoric of colonial self-fashioning also plays a major role in the framing of Indian English autobiographies and memoirs. The next chapter will therefore deal with an examination of English self-fashioning in the primary texts.