

CHAPTER THREE:

**METAHISTORY: NEGOTIATING THE
IMAGINATIVE SELF IN HISTORY NARRATION**

“By its very nature, history is always a one-sided account” (Brown 340).

Almost all the autobiographies and memoirs chosen for this thesis are replete with historical depictions of their contemporary times by the authors. A study of historical representation is crucial to understanding the nature of poetic and imaginative construction of Indian English self-narratives. Traditionally, personal narratives were looked down upon by historians. But recently there has been a surge in the critical analysis of life writings by historians. Jeremy D. Popkin in his 2005 book *History, Historians and Autobiography* attempts to make an elaborate study on the life stories written by historians and how they complement their otherwise objective historical narratives. As he observes, “Few historians have fully endorsed Dilthey’s claim that autobiography provides greater insight into human experience than history, but in recent years some have taken a more positive view of what historians can learn from autobiographical material” (Popkin 19). All such literatures are based on new historical study which strives to understand history through literature and cultural contexts. A similar lens can be applied to Indian English autobiographies too.

This chapter is based on the hypothesis that history narrated by the Indian English self narrators is not always a set of objective facts but rather a kind of literary and poetic narration with subjective moulds, preferences, ideologies and arguments. In Clifford Geertz’ terms, the chapter shall identify “thick descriptions” or subjective interpretations as inherent in historical narratives. The anthropologist Geertz highlighted the concept of “thick description” in his critical work *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973):

The point for now is only that ethnography is thick description. What the ethnographer is in fact faced with except when (as, of course, he must do) he is pursuing the more automatized routines of data collection-is a multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and inexplicit, and which he must contrive somehow first to grasp and then to render. (10)

It will basically be a new historical study of select Indian English self-narratives in order to negotiate the poetic nature of historical depictions. In doing so, Hayden White’s *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-century Europe* (1973)

undoubtedly stands as the best theoretical treatise. White observed that history always had a metahistorical element—a deep poetic structure apart from its usual archival core.

The primary texts selected for 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' *Never at Home* (1992), Khushwant Singh's *Truth, Love and a Little Malice* (2002) and Salman Rushdie's *Joseph Anton* (2012).

Relevant Theoretical Frame

At the very outset, Hayden White observes that certain modes, arguments and tropes are used by historians to organize and shape history into an organic story. He categorizes those ways as—i) explanation by emplotment, ii) explanation by argument and iii) explanation by ideological implication. Explanation by emplotment refers to understanding the plot structure behind history narration. The kind of story told—tragic, comic, romantic, satiric is to be identified in order to understand its meaning. Drawing upon Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) White formulated these four modes of emplotment in history. Identifying this helps one to grasp the underlying poetic structure in the historical narration. The romantic mode of emplotment entails a historical narrative where the hero is victorious over all existing evil circumstances. It is usually identified with the Grail legend or Christ's resurrection. History depicted in the romantic theme sees the triumph of the hero's transcendence over the initial downfall. The theme of satire, on the other hand, relates the historical story as an inevitable fall of the hero implying the victimization and captivity of man under death. The satirical plot presumes the human will to be subordinate to dark forces. In the comic mode of emplotment, the hero reconciles in a positive way with the existing social or natural forces in the world. Historical narration as tragedy again characterizes the helpless reconciliation of the protagonist with the fall or the tragic conditions in the world. According to White, these four archetypal story forms provide us with a means of characterizing the different kind of explanatory effects a historian can strive for on the level of narrative emplotment (10).

Moreover, following the analysis of Stephen C. Pepper in his *World*

Hypotheses: A Study in Evidence (1942) White divides four types of arguments or paradigms used in historical explanation as—Organicist, Mechanistic, Formist and Contextualist. While the Formist theory refers to the identification of unique features of varied objects in the historical field, the Organicist adheres to the paradigm of microcosm-macrocosm relationship. To quote White, “When the historian has established the uniqueness of the particular objects in the field or the variety of the types of phenomena which the field manifests, he has provided a Formist explanation of the field as such” (White 14). He identifies this mode of argument in historians like Carlyle, Michelet, Trevelyan. White observes that Organicist argument is mostly manifested in the narratives of nationalistic historians like Ranke. Mechanistic approach again draws very pessimistic and reductive conclusions on history as it aims at identifying the laws that govern the operation of the same. History writings by Marx, Tocqueville fall under this category as White interprets. Contextualism is all about a structuralist way of representation where the context of the historical event is more dominant. Thirdly, based on Karl Mannheim’s *Ideology and Utopia* (1929), White lists four basic ideological positions in historical imagination—Anarchism, Conservatism, Radicalism and Liberalism. When a historian uses the Anarchistic implication, he tends to idealize a remote past from which men have fallen into the current corrupt social state. Conservatives, again, repel change considering the current social structure as the ideal utopia. For Liberals, the ideal utopian condition in society is one that may be located in remote future. Contrary to this, the Radical position firmly believes the utopian condition as imminent, thus opting for a revolutionary approach. All these tropes theorized by White shall be used as tools to negotiate the poetic, imaginative and ideological nature of historiography, if any, in these autobiographies.

History as Tragic Realism in the self-narratives in Sorabji and Chaudhuri

Geetanjali Gangoli in her review of *India Calling* notes, “It is perhaps this problematic relationship with Indian nationalism and feminism that may have led to her marginalization by the historians” (Gangoli 549). Cornelia Sorabji has always been considered a problematic figure by historians due to her radical views and pro-British opinions. Same is the case with N. C. Chaudhuri as well.

The mode of emplotment used by Cornelia Sorabji to depict history in her

memoir *India Calling* is that of tragedy. The structure and future of the then India which she portrays is shaken as a result of the leadership of “inappropriate leaders” like Mahatma Gandhi. She makes a scathing criticism of Gandhian policies like that of the Swadeshi movement. The boycott of English goods led to nothing fruitful, according to her. “Although Cornelia was on the wrong side of history, failing to recognize the greatness of Gandhi and of the Congress movement, her approach to welfare has seemed to me very relevant to modern India”, opines Sorabji’s nephew “Richard” in the “Afterword” of her memoir. Both Chaudhuri and Sorabji narrate their versions of history in such a way that the tragic historical situation in India is rendered eternally unchanging. As Hayden White observes, these writers too resign under the tragic history they perceive. They were very pessimistic and apprehensive about the freedom struggle, the Gandhian movement. The British government was the only government they wished to persist in India.

The mode of argument used by Sorabji to narrate history is that of Mechanistic. It is reductive in nature and also draws very pessimistic conclusions regarding the contemporary history. Her ideas of modernism and industrialization were in complete opposition to Gandhi’s khadi campaigns. She recounts voices of purdahnashins, clerks against Gandhian ideals. White in *Metahistory* recounts Kenneth Burke who regarded a Mechanist as one who identifies the prevalent structures, laws in history and their subsequent effects. Sorabji is seen trying to shatter the mythical concept of the Mahatma, accusing it as a mere play of dirty politics in the name of religion. She tries to bring into light how according to her many poor, illiterate, orthodox Indians were fooled and used under Gandhian principles. She comprehended this structure as deceptive and disruptive. “Poor Gandhi! His truths were built upon deceptions, his loyalties upon verbiage” (Sorabji 193). Gandhi is clearly the antagonist in Cornelia Sorabji’s version of history. She even shaped Gandhi as the villain who deceived the untouchables in the name of liberating them. Being a hardcore Orientalist, she always favoured the British rule and considered it as the best.

The ideological implication predominant in Nirad C. Chaudhuri’s autobiographies is undoubtedly Anarchism. This ideological implication which Hayden White draws from Karl Manheim’s *Ideology and Utopia* implies idealizing a remote past of genuine humanity from which man has degraded into the current corrupt

situation. Chaudhuri in his Mechanistic portrayal of contemporary Indian history presents a bleak picture of the same with implications of the society quickly heading towards its doom in opposition to its innocent past. The chapter “An Essay on the Course of Indian History” from *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* is particularly significant to grasp Chaudhuri’s ideological stance. In the beginning of this essay, he states that his autobiography is meant to elaborate a view on the course of Indian history, this chapter being its conclusion. He perceived an inevitable decay of the then Indian social order and the Hindu civilization with the fall of the British empire in the pre-independent era. “Then gradually and slowly I woke up to the fact that I was witnessing the decay of a social order. The symptoms indicated, not simply the decline of the British empire in India but the civilization of modern India...”, writes Chaudhuri (516). He even regards the civilization as sick and dying.

He refers time and again to a rich past from which his countrymen have miserably fallen. Glorifying a remote past of human innocence falls under the ideological position of Anarchism in Hayden White’s postulate. According to White, “Anarchists are inclined to idealize a remote past of human innocence from which men have fallen into the corrupt “social” state in which they currently find themselves” (White 25). Chaudhuri always believed Indian literature, culture, civilization and history to be a bi-product of foreign invasions, be it Islamic or British. To quote his words, “...there has never been any civilization in India which has not had a foreign origin, has not had foreign inspiration behind it, and has not been created substantially by incoming foreign ethnic elements” (Chaudhuri 527). As a result of this, he was always against the end of British rule in India, which, according to him, marked the beginning of an era of decadence. According to him, the concept of nationalism in the freedom struggle worked against the concept of synthesis of Eastern and Western cultures which has long been prevailing in India. The linguistic and literary tradition of India is also, for Nirad, the consequence of the assimilation with foreign counterparts. He even points out how great men of India like Tagore, Vivekananda got recognition and validation only after their encounters with the West. He also credits the Muslim conquerors for bringing the first political order in India. Thus, being one with such foreign cultures meant an era of absolute growth and prosperity. The ideal, glorious past under the imperial rule ensured the best time for him from which his countrymen

have now fallen into the decadent phase of independence. The tone of decadence is recurrent all throughout his autobiographies. "...we shall never again achieve anything like the greatness and individuality of the Hindu civilization. That civilization is dead forever...", laments Chaudhuri (562). The ideological stance of an Anarchist made him perceive that an abolition rather than propagation of the decaying civilization would be the only way for regeneration of society.

Chaudhuri shows decadence on two broad levels—the Indian nationalism and the Bengali life culture. In his second autobiography *Thy Hand, Great Anarch!* Chaudhuri regards the imminent decadence as "putrid decay". In the "Introduction" to this book he calls his version of historical narrative to be the only true history on India's freedom struggle, "I have now come to the conclusion that no true history of the disappearance of the British empire in India will ever be written" (Chaudhuri xvi). He in fact discards the Indian history written by other historians as inadequate and incomplete. He finds the unreliability of records as problematic. Again, contrary to his belief, the unreliability of Chaudhuri's own narrative appears when he writes lines like, "During the years 1927 and 1928 my personal troubles were too acute for me to be able to take continuous notice of political developments in India" (Chaudhuri 252). He asserts that his personal issues kept him away from Indian history and politics. Despite this, his calling himself the most truthful, objective historian on India's freedom struggle indeed seems apprehensive.

Chaudhuri's personal likes and dislikes often play a significant role in his historical narration. His utter disdain for Gandhi and Shubhash Chandra Bose gets reflected time and again in his tragic emplotment. This only reveals the ideological position he had taken. Chaudhuri views Gandhian principle of hand weaving and such other primitive practices as a sure sign of fall into an era of doom. He rather compares such moves to committing mass suicide. The intrusion of Chaudhuri's personal opinion and ideologies into the objective depiction of Indian history is witnessed quite often. Personally, he hated the growing pan-Islamic feelings in the form of Khilafat movement, which resulted in his dislike of the Non-Cooperation movement as well.

For Chaudhuri, British rule was the best political regime in the history of India. This personal preference is quite evident throughout his historical record and it

accounts for his ideological position being that of Anarchistic in White's terms. He often deliberately wished to ignore the evil side of the British rule: "There was, first, my historical view of British rule in India, which I regarded as the best political regime which had ever been seen in India, inspite of its shortcomings and positive evils" (Chaudhuri 27). Moreover, he mentions of his loyalty towards English life and civilization which formed a part and parcel of his personality. He writes that he identified himself with the British greatness (27). Chaudhuri's personal viewpoints, imaginations and ideologies also feature in his discussion of the activities of Jawaharlal Nehru and Shubhash Chandra Bose. He considered them as typical upper class products. He offers personal comments on each and every national event. Witnessing the Civil Disobedience Movement made him come to a reductionist conclusion that Indian nationalism was heading towards negativity in the absence of positive thoughts as well as ideas. Chaudhuri's anger and disgusting attitude towards Gandhian mass movements which he accuses of indiscipline and danger figures repeatedly in most of the chapters in his second autobiography.

Despite being an Anglophile himself, Chaudhuri critiques Nehru's love for English life and education, calling him an "Indophile Englishman". As an Anglophile, he personally detested the emerging hatred against the Englishmen. That hatred, he identified as one of the basic underlying causes behind the end of the rule. The predominance of his view points and ideological position in his narration of history is reinstated when Chaudhuri writes, "I shall describe such Hindu-Muslim conflicts as I saw them at first hand, and also set down the view I took of the whole question at different stages" (Chaudhuri 40).

Time and again he tries to justify why Gandhian stance seemed crude and irrational to him. The whole autobiography is in the form of a series of records of the shortcomings of the Indian national movements which, he perceived, led to the tragic end in 1947. He dissects Gandhian ideas step by step using a reductionist method in order to highlight the laws or causes, which, according to him, brought down the fall in the form of Indian independence in August, 1947. For Chaudhuri, Gandhi's efforts were meant to induce xenophobia among the Indian masses in order to bring the end soon. The Mechanistic mode of argument gets manifested here as the author attempts to uncover the laws or reasons which, he believed, resulted in the disruption of the

existing British structure. For Chaudhuri Gandhi had no practical achievement and the political achievement adhered to him was merely a myth. He scathingly argues against Gandhi's non-violent moves: "Mahatma Gandhi's non-violence never excluded social and psychological violence whose object was moral coercion" (Chaudhuri 42). He further opines that Gandhi's passive resistance as applied to the African situation could not be applied in India without converting it into a wider revolt against British rule. Moreover, Chaudhuri accuses Gandhi of contaminating Hindu religion with power politics and calls him "a Sadhu or a Guru with a political cloak" (Chaudhuri 49).

As per the Anarchist mode of ideological implication, Chaudhuri considered the ideal state of Hindu-Muslim friendships and the amiable bond with the British as something terribly degrading in the 1920s with the rise of Gandhian movements. The irrational fall, according to him brought down three spectral hatreds in the then Indian political scenario—hatred of all Hindus for British rule, the same hatred on the part of the Muslims and the mutual hatred of Hindus and Muslims (50). He portrays such kind of hatred as negative hatred with a very pessimistic approach. Typical of Mechanistic mode of argument, he regards Indian nationalism as having a completely negative character. In the context of Bengali literature too Chaudhuri views the British influence as instrumental in bringing about a complete revolution in the literary style of modern Bengali literature. The age-old Bengali literature lacked the proper form and subject matter as per him. He gives complete credit to English literature for introducing prose literature: novels and short stories in Bengali too. The limits of Bengali literature were as if widened by the British influence according to him. Bengali verse also imitates the European style as per Chaudhuri. He writes, "At the turn of the century anyone familiar with European poetry of the period could sniff a little of Swinburne or Mallarme in Bengali poetry of the times, although there certainly was no conscious imitation" (Chaudhuri 150). So, he claims that the English literature refashioned the Bengali minds with new ideas. Chaudhuri further appreciates writer Bankim Chandra Chatterjee for whole heartedly supporting the role of English literature in the creation of a new civilization and new Bengali literature. He even clearly regards Bengali literature as inferior to its counterpart English literature. The Bengali sonnet too, Chaudhuri believed, was structured in the Spenserian and Petrarchan style.

British leaving India meant for him degradation in the quality of Bengali

literature too—again a fall from the former ideal state—a fall from superiority to inferiority indicating an anarchist implication. The transformation of Bengali life under the influence of British culture was about to make a drastic shift with the fall of the empire as per him. The “fullness of human existence” to which Bengalis arrived after interaction with English life was about to shatter in Chaudhuri’s view, owing to the anticipated independence of India which he calls the decadence of modern Bengali life and culture.

Chaudhuri accuses Gandhi’s political passion and hatred for the Europeans as instrumental in the tragic end. Moreover, Gandhi’s anti-Bengali feelings, he thought, alienated Bengal from the mainland Indian nationalism. He in fact calls the relation between Gandhi’s method and the Bengali revolutionary movement as antithetical. Subhash Chandra Bose is yet another personality whose stance Chaudhuri dissects from his own angle in order to show the former’s role in nationalistic movements. Bose’s militant nationalism was also considered by Chaudhuri as responsible for Bengal’s political detachment from the rest of the country.

For Chaudhuri, the age-old xenophobia of the Hindus was the main reason behind the Indian nationalist movement. All the ways and measures followed by Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose seemed to him as unfit for the country and rather a fall from the ideal state set by the foreign rulers. In the chapter called “The Gandhian Congress” he elaborates at length on the workings of the Congress committee, Gandhi and his staffs and also on Nehru. Chaudhuri’s utter dislike of Gandhi’s ideals, lifestyle, food habits and leadership quality is well evident in this chapter. He writes how he hated the fact that Tagore was obliged to call on Gandhi rather than the other way round: “It irked me that Tagore was obliged to call on Gandhi, the far less disabled man, instead of Gandhi going to call on an elder and not a less celebrated man...” (443). Personal preferences thus inevitably play a significant role in Chaudhuri’s documentation of history. According to him, Gandhi could be compared to Stalin as the former had an insatiable lust for power. He even gives hints about the possibility of Gandhi killing Bose. Moreover, his contempt for Nehru’s attitude towards the British is evident every now and then in his narrative. His subjective ideology and reductive mode of argument is thus manifested here. From Chaudhuri’s viewpoint, the then Indian intelligentsia had no intellectual interest in the international affairs in the

world.

He points out in detail what he perceived as the negative impacts of the Govt. of India Act, 1935. The Act, he asserts, ruined Bengal and its people in an irreparable manner by making the Bengali Hindus a permanent minority without any prospect of political power and thereby making them inclined towards Bengal partition. Chaudhuri posits a derogatory picture of Bose's "Mass Contact Movement" in Bengal. He even comprehends Bose's political ideal as a mere illusionary model. The mode of storytelling employed by Chaudhuri is thus of tragedy throughout. Like the French historian Tocqueville, he only saw the evil side of all the happenings centring the freedom movement using the tragic mode of emplotment. Bose's removal from the Congress is also narrated in a tragic tone in the chapter "Gandhi-Bose Feud": "It led to his miserable death in 1945, brought about a greater estrangement between Bengal and India, and finally completed the eclipse of Bengal in Indian politics" (Chaudhuri 501). The predominance of subjectivity in his historical narration is yet again reinstated when Chaudhuri puts forth his own opinion on how Bose should have reacted with Gandhi. "I, on the other hand, thought Bose should have compelled Gandhi and the Gandhians to come to terms with him by threatening to take Bengal out of the Congress with him,"(524) he opines.

The chapters centring round the Second World War make Chaudhuri's historical mode of argument and his ideological implication even clearer. He critiques the fact that the Congress did not co-operate with the British during war. According to him, that very act fastened the anticipated doom or Indian independence which could otherwise be prevented. He always had the desire to somehow prevent the fall in the form of independence. The dependence on the British rule was the absolutely ideal state for him from which India fell into a corrupt state by gaining independence. This Anarchistic implication is reflected when he says, "Had the Congress cooperated with Britain in the war it would have ensured greater support for itself from the British side in 1947, and quite possibly the partition of India would have been prevented" (Chaudhuri 560). The reluctant attitude of the Indians towards war was always looked down upon and criticized by Chaudhuri. His personal hatred for the Indian intelligentsia gives his narrative the ideological bias: "But the real absurdity and perversity of Indian opinion was seen in another direction: in the total change of

attitude in regard to the Soviet Union. This filled me with contempt and disgust for the Indian intelligentsia” (Chaudhuri 584-585). His contempt for non-violence also recurs throughout the autobiography.

The chapter “Tagore: The Lost Great man of India” further highlights his ideological stance as an Anarchist. The fall of modern Bengali culture he believes was accompanied by the lost memory of Tagore too in the literary scenario. “...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,” (595) remarks Chaudhuri on the forgotten aspect of Tagore. Even till today, Tagore is recognized, read all over the world as one of the greatest writers. But, for Chaudhuri, Tagore’s essence died with the fall of modern Bengali culture—a very pessimistic tone typical of the Mechanistic mode of argument. This marks yet another tragic dimension to his story telling technique of history. Recounting his perception of Tagore as a forgotten hero Chaudhuri writes, “...the tragedy continues: his real personality will not be recalled as an example, and his work will be like a buried city of the past. Only the fetish Rabindranath will remain, but not for the purpose for which it has been created by his people” (636). He thus gives a tragic dimension to Tagore’s death and immortality.

Similar to his tone in the first autobiography, Chaudhuri writes in his second autobiography too how he analysed megalomania and xenophobia as two of the strongest passions leading to the so-called fall of Hinduism from the ideal state to the corrupt state. Chaudhuri’s personal liking for European music even intrudes in his judgement of Bengali culture. For him, it was something derogatory for the Bengalis to not like such music. He satirizes the “insincere affections about European music among certain Bengalis” (645). He was very pessimistic about the future of Bengali people in India, reason why he left India and settled in England as he recounts: “I was convinced that my people had no future, and I was not prepared to share their fate” (Chaudhuri 655). In the chapter “Farewell to Bengal”, he traces the causes behind the decline of Bengali life and culture. According to him, the idea of synthesis between the East and the West as adopted by intellectuals like Rammohan Roy and Tagore led to a sterility of Bengali intellectual and moral life, thereby leading to the anticipated doom of the civilization. He accuses the Bengalis of weak character, duality of personality and

mindless imitation of the European culture.

India's partition also takes a very tragic tone in Chaudhuri's narrative. The author's Anarchistic mode of ideological implication gets best expressed in the chapter "My faith in Empires" where he insists on the necessity of imperialism, authority and empire in order to protect a civilization. He firmly believed that imperialism sustained the dignity of a civilization. This dignity of Indian civilization thus underwent a great fall into corrupt state with the British leaving India, as per Chaudhuri's analysis. "...the exercise of imperial authority was necessary for the protection and survival of civilization", writes Chaudhuri (778). In his opinion, a degradation of Britain's moral basis of imperialism led to its downfall and forced it to leave India.

Romantic and Radical historiography in Nehru and Anand

Jawaharlal Nehru always glorifies history in all his narratives, *An Autobiography* being no exception. Sunil Khilnani in his "Introduction" to the autobiography writes, "Nehru's *Autobiography* brings to life, in ways that works of historical scholarship rarely manage, what it felt like to live through these critical decades of India's history and how things looked through the eyes of one of its important actors" (xiii). The mode of historical explanation in Nehru's autobiography appears to be a mingling of both Organicist and Formist modes of historical argument. It is a clear reflection and microcosm of India's freedom struggle. Nehru being a nationalist writer makes this even clearer. Very little of his personal life is in fact covered in his autobiography. It is rather a canvas with all the colours of India. The condition and plights of the huge number of peasants in different parts of India are portrayed by Nehru in great detail. Most of his visits to the villages were revelations to him about their intolerable conditions. They in fact gave him a new picture of India: "A new picture of India seemed to rise before me, naked, starving, crushed, and utterly miserable" (Nehru 57). He went on to divide India into two parts—that of the zamindars' area and the area of the peasant proprietors. He devotes chapters to reinstate the peasant upheaval. Nehru details every characteristic of the agents and agencies inhabiting the historical scenario during his era. Mr. Gokhale's "Servants of India Society", Tilak and Besant's "Home Rule Leagues", Gandhiji's path breaking movements, the condition of the peasants—all these and many others enhance the vivid depictions of Nehru.

The romantic mode of emplotment according to White entails a historical narrative where the hero is victorious over all existing evil circumstances. The post First World War phase in India is romanticized by Nehru when the middle classes were especially expecting drastic constitutional changes followed by self-rule. Nehru in fact romanticizes all the freedom movements beginning with Non-cooperation. All those gave him a sense of liberation, uplifted his morals and personal freedom. Even while in prison he never took a reductionist or pessimistic stance. Nehru mentions time and again of his growing drift towards extremism as against his father's liberal take on the freedom struggle. He criticized the moderates for not supporting a sudden necessary change in India. He never wanted to sit silently complying with the Britishers. He supported Satyagraha strongly and went to jail several times. During the Non-Cooperation movement, he points out how moderates like Lala Lajpat Rai and C.R. Das opposed Gandhi. Nehru's narrative covers the reaction of the whole nation during every single event in the course of India's freedom struggle. The best instance of the same would be the Chauri Chaura incident when Nehru analyses the pros and cons of Gandhi's non-violent policy and the nation's reaction to it in order to comprehend the prevalent situation. The prison life is also portrayed by Nehru in full vividness.

David Arnold in *Telling lives in India* analyses Indian prison narratives as life history and as a significant sub-genre of modern South Asian writing about the self. The chapter "The Self: Indian prison narratives as life histories" is particularly significant. Notably Nehru's autobiography was originally titled *In and out of Prison*. Gandhi also started writing his autobiography at the jail near Pune during the early 1920s. A number of chapters in his autobiography are dedicated to a depiction of prison life. Nehru in fact narrates a romanticized picture of his and his father's prison life. They had the luxury and privilege of staying in separate sheds within the prison and also enjoying regular visitors, newspapers etc. The daily news of the burning struggle out there increased Nehru's excitement and enthusiasm all the more: "Newspapers came and the daily news of fresh arrest and the development's power struggle kept up an atmosphere of excitement" (98). From the very beginning of the chapter "Lucknow District Jail" Nehru strives to give an alternative picture of prison life which is otherwise considered to be grim, isolated and humiliating with beastly criminals.

Besides spending time with his father in the Lucknow district jail, Nehru even

taught Hindi and Urdu to many illiterate prisoners there. He even mentions of playing volleyball at some point of the day, everyday in prison compound. Nehru recollects in the chapter “In Naini Prison” how he was privileged to take a walk, open-air exercise outside the prison enclosure for some time in the morning without the notice of other prisoners. “I liked that outing, and it refreshed me tremendously,” he writes (Nehru 230). He could even romanticize nature while toiling in jail. He romanticized the comforting view of the pole star peeping over the wall of the prison. The way he perceived the same manifests his peaceful and happy state of mind amidst imprisonment: “Surrounded by a revolving sky, it seemed to be a symbol of cheerful constancy and perseverance” (Nehru 231). The Dehra Dun gaol found him romanticizing mountains, birds and animals extensively. Nehru’s approach and philosophies on prison life reflect his ever optimistic world view and his romantic take on life as well as history. Despite the dark prison rules which give no sign of weather change Nehru discovered enjoyment in the rain clouds in the monsoon season. The darkness and pessimistic environment of the prison never came on the way of his optimistic worldview. Moreover, he always perceived the eminent freedom of his country despite all the restrictions that were imposed upon them eventually in the jail.

Unlike Nehru most of the then Revolutionary figures voiced prison experiences with a very tragic note. Upendranath Bandopadhyay’s *Nirbasiter Aatmakatha* (1921) relates sheer pathetic prison experience in the Andaman Islands. David Arnold notes that for many of such prisoners writing was not even possible emotionally and physically until they were released from prison. But Nehru's narration of prison history is rather full of conveniences and privilege. He mostly had both the facilities of reading and writing in prison which eventually resulted in the production of three of his greatest books. The abused trauma field and darkness usually associated with prison is almost missing in Nehru's prison life history. Many self-narratives manifest the regular abuse of prisoners at Kala Pani from 1906 onwards. VD Savarkar’s biography *Life of Barrister Savarkar* (1926) describes his brutal experience of imprisonment which forms the epicentre of his entire life history. Even Gandhi underwent traumatic experience in prison though it led to his personal transformation. He found prison experience in South Africa harsh, brutal and inhumane. Rajagopalachari’s diary also depicts the struggles of prison life. Political prisoners like Gandhi and Nehru were visibly treated in a better

way. This in fact led to a huge gulf between political prisoners and the ordinary convicts. Thus, the romantic history by Nehru gets prone to apprehensions as it overlooks many of the pathetic prison experiences of the ordinary prisoners.

Again, despite his own comforting experience in prison, Nehru nevertheless tries to portray the plight of most other prisoners who were less privileged than him like the one sentenced with life imprisonment. He always sought for a healthier and educative environment in Indian prisons which had been badly missing. He portrays pictures of how all prisoners were locked up in enclosed barracks for months with no scope for reading or recreation. “One sees in prison the inhuman side of the state apparatus of administrative repression at its worst. I have seen long-term convicts sometimes breaking down at the dreariness of it all, and weeping like little children,” observes Nehru (235). He even compares Indian prisoners with European or Eurasian prisoners who were given better food and access to books or papers. Moreover, he recounts degraded treatment of political prisoners towards the end of 1930s. “...the hardest of labour was given to our men in prison—mills, oil presses etc. And their lot was made as unbearable as possible in order to induce them to apologize...” (359), expressed Nehru in the chapter “In Bareilly and Dehra Dun Gaols”. Nehru and Gandhi often protested against the inhuman torture on the ordinary prisoners.

He even points out certain loopholes in the municipality body as compared to those in the other countries. The laziness and the lack of education among the public is what he blames the most for that. He spent two years as the chairman of Allahabad municipality following which he finally resigned. As he covers the entire gamut of the then Indian political scenario, the controversies regarding the growing number of political parties can never be left out. He uncovers the background and working of the new Nationalist party formed under the leadership of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Lala Lajpat Rai. This party according to Nehru was supposed to be the Swaraj Party and eventually lead to communism due to its blind take on Hinduism.

His Organicist mode of historical argument becomes all the more prominent as the microcosm in the form of his autobiography entails every colour and flavour of the country’s battle for freedom. The no tax campaign in the United Province is another landmark movement in the history of India's freedom struggle on which Nehru throws

enough light to show how it developed awareness among the rural areas in particular. Nehru's vivid depiction of India as a microcosm covers prison, political parties, urban areas, rural areas, agricultural issues, Gandhian philosophies and so on. Most of the resolutions, pacts, conferences during the freedom struggle are covered by Nehru in his narration. During his stay in Bareilly and Dehra Dun gaol, Nehru got almost disconnected from the regular historical scenario of the country to the extent that his narration of the same seems apprehensive. "I do not know enough of those years 1932 and 1933 to trace the development of our national struggle", he writes (Nehru 351). His historical narration thus has fissures, literary undertones, ideological preferences and subjective, imaginative moulds in every aspect.

Mulk Raj Anand has always been an advocate of universal humanism. The philosophizing of Indian history can be found at its best in Anand. All of Anand's enormous life work concerns the development of Indian culture and independence, and all but one of his more than fifteen novels are set in India. As his late book *Is There a Contemporary Indian Civilisation?* (1963) points out, the process of Indian development out of the colonial situation was based on long term "efforts to build a contemporary Indian Civilisation, different from the old feudal Civilisation and also different from the Civilisation of the West" (Anand 3). He was a Radical in his ideological implication as is manifested through his strong attempts to bring in change in the existing system through his literary ventures. Anand advances a view of a common humanity in order to combat the violence of conquest and factionalism within Indian history. In the chapter "The Search for National Identity in India," he describes the pattern of conquest and religious conflict that occupies much of Indian history, as well as the nation's lingering desire for unity:

In spite of all the cultural conflicts, there has always been the residuum of all the cultures, surviving, generation after generation. This has left an ethos which is recognizable in every Indian, whatever his race, religion, or colour. The paradox is as relevant today as it was in the past. (Anand 74)

He wanted to build a new civilization of people with more moral values and revolutionary artists in order to revive the lost sense of humanity. He advocated socialism, secularism and was strictly against religious fundamentalism, idol

worshiping, caste system etc. As he writes in *Apology for Heroism*, “It is not very well known that Hinduism has tended for a long time to be more and more the social organism of caste and less and less a unified religion” (Anand 9). Anand as a philosophical historian can best be understood through his interactions in the memoir *Conversations in Bloomsbury*. There he writes how he tried to answer various troubling thoughts and ideologies to which he had been exposed in Bloomsbury. Though he was an advocate of English literature, he always abhorred British rule in India like Nehru. The way he tried to retort back to the poets in Bloomsbury gives clear evidence of that. The English poets had a very wrong notion of Indian history, literature and poetry as they judged the same from an Orientalist viewpoint. Bonamee Dobree and T.S. Eliot stereotyped the poetry of Sufi writers like Iqbal as exhibiting vague mysticism through the use of age-old metaphors. Moreover, they believed the one-sided narrative of history which portrayed that the British were instrumental in building roads and giving Indians justice. “Gandhi seems to be an anarchist. Sometimes, I feel the Indians should pursue their culture and leave government to the British empiricists”, opined Eliot in one of his conversations with Anand (qtd. in Anand 37). D.H. Lawrence typecasted Indian novels as only centred on fables and moral lessons. The way they undermined Indian history, culture and civilization is further witnessed from Huxley’s comment that Indian life and civilization were unreal and unauthentic. As put forward by Anand, Huxley directly criticized the genuine Indian spiritual practices like transcendental meditation and Yoga, thereby making fun of the concept of “maya”. On top of that, Lawrence and Huxley left no stone unturned in falsely analysing Indian paintings as exotic and pantheistic.

As a Radical historian in his ideological implication, Anand constantly countered the constructed discourses of the English writers in Bloomsbury. He liked the English writers and their writings but he made up his mind to fight against them for the freedom of the country. He defended India and Indians at every step. For instance, Anand, after confronting the opinions from different English writers contemplates, “I felt that each of these Europeans was clinging to his “I”. In India we said “We”... They exploded in impatient voices. Our contradictions were expressed somewhat more softly” (Anand 43). He further adds that the sense of oneness and brotherhood found in Indian communities have been typically missing in the West.

Anand tries to come up with an alternate history of Indian civilization which is opposite to what those Westerners pictured. The chapter entitled “Crumpets with Nancy Cunard” is especially significant in this regard. In one of his replies, he explained that Indians had aeroplanes in ancient times as the God-kings flew on the back of a bird. Similarly, he added that some areas of Freudian subconscious were anticipated well in advance by Indian sages and that D. H. Lawrence’s search for the man-woman bond in the ecstasy of sex was also already published by certain secret cults. He further made Nancy aware of the indigenous Tantra Shastra which encompasses a transcendental take on man-woman relationship (Anand 60). He tried to shatter the dominant white man’s ego through his radical take. He also threw light on old Indian myths which predicted the coming of the Kaliyuga or the Iron age long back during his conversation with T.S. Eliot. Eliot even went to the extent of saying that Gandhi owed his austerity to Jesus and Christianity. But Anand assured him that he would write back through a rewriting of Kipling’s *Kim*. “I could see strains of paganism among most of the English, underneath the long-lined faces of the ‘melancholy gentleman’, as I called them behind their backs and sometimes in their presence as well” (Anand 68).

Anand makes a comparison and contrast of Indian art or Hindu view of creative art and Western art or the European view of the post renaissance period as well concluding that those two have very different forms and orientations. *The Hindu View of Art* (1933) encompasses Anand’s revolutionary approach towards differentiating the Indian religious craft from that of Western egoistic artistic realism. In *Conversations*, Clive Bell’s dismissal of all Indian art works as mere crude craft works by peasants was a big blow for Anand in one of his conversations. He resented Bell’s words: “In your country it is mostly peasant craftsman who have painted or sculpted. They are crude. They are not artists!” (qtd. in Anand 133). He further criticized Indian sculpture as lacking a sense of design. Being a radical historian, Anand countered this saying, “The dancing Shiva bronze in the V&A Museum is the work of one of those craftsmen and not quite so crude” (134). He strengthened his point by referring to the sculptor Auguste Rodin’s take on that sculpture. Anand added that in the old civilizations there were only craftsmen and no artists: “I am sure in Egypt there were court artists, who made the monument sustainable to the taste of kings” (134). The chapter “Art Nonsense Talk

with Eric Gill, Herbert Read and Stanley Morrison in Gordon Square” further continues the debate and discussion on Indian art, religion, music versus the Western counterparts. Anand kept on striving to explain the Hindu view of art, religion and philosophy as against the Western notion of aesthetics.

Anand vindicated the Indian family system, especially princely families when he was confronted with derogatory opinions on the same by E. M. Forster. Sons being subservient to father was something questioned by Forster during one of his conversations at Bloomsbury. “But after the tormented Christs I have seen I feel Krishna Lila is wonderful” (99). At another get together he replied to the criticism of Hindu Gods by Virginia Woolf and Leonard Woolf when Woolf exoticised the Hindu idols. Anand explained to them the historical and cultural significance of Shiv-Shakti which was perceived by them as a mere myth on enigmatic androgyny. Most shocking to Anand was Leonard’s attack on goddess Kali as “a fearful figure who dances on the dormant body of her spouse”. To this he reinstated the epitomization of Kali’s dance to the assertion of women empowerment, liberation and revolt. He mentions how Virginia Woolf was reduced to awe at her lack of knowledge on Indian culture, history and mythology.

Justifying the nature of Indian epics like the *Mahabharata*, Anand highlights about his explanation to the Oriental historian Arthur Waley “Like our epics have everything. Love and war and death and jealousy and utensils and dice and things of the toilet” (111). Eliot and Anand even had a heated argument once on a comparison between the two genius philosophers Shankaracharya and Schopenhauer. Eliot perceived Indian religious history as being sentimental, magical and often fierce. Anand tried his level best to overpower Eliot’s post war dystopian view of religion, philosophy, history though mostly in vain. Eliot rather accused the oriental civilizations as being responsible for the decline of the West (Anand 161). A romantic mode of emplotment is thus visible all over his narration where the individuality and victory of the protagonist is given the utmost importance. Anand’s take on every aspect of Indian civilization—art, history, religion, philosophy, mythology and even classical dance undoubtedly characterize him as an Organicist in Hayden White’s coinage. A complete microcosm of India can be picturized in his arguments throughout his memoirs, especially *Conversations in Bloomsbury*.

The entire series of episodes in R. K. Narayan's *My Dateless Diary* attempts to vindicate the Indian culture and way of life as opposed to that of the American counterpart. That way it is very much similar to Anand's anti-colonialist take in *Conversations in Bloomsbury*. It is a kind of compare and contrast between Indian and American belief system. The text is autobiographical also in the sense that Narayan brings the cultural baggage and judges the Americans accordingly. Narayan's travel is a constant journey of cultural shocks and negotiations. Narayan calls *My Dateless Diary* "a subjective minor history" of America. The history depiction is clearly very poetic and subjective both of America and India. Following Hayden White's proposition, the depiction of American history by Narayan is very Mechanistic in its argument. Almost all the conclusions he draws about America are pessimistic and reductive in comparison to those of the Indian counterparts. The ideological implication again is that of Anarchism where the constant fall of American society, life and culture has been addressed.

Americans according to him dwell on materialism and terribly lack spiritualism unlike the Indians. "I definitely feel man to man, an average American is totally materialistic in the best sense of the term, work, wages, good wife and good life—are all his main interests; while an Indian will be bothering about the next life also in addition to this," (39) replied Narayan to Dorothy Norman when she asked him to jot down some distinguishing characteristics of Americans and Indians. A fall from all kind of spiritual connection characterizes the American culture in his perception.

He defends Indian culture and civilization time and again asserting the importance of India's spiritual heritage, the traditional set up of meditation and prayer in most Indian households. As a counter to the fast-paced restless life of the Americans, he mentions how praying and meditating for a few minutes by most Indians lead to their calm and peaceful existence despite poverty and other struggles. Just like Anand, a strong stand for the Indian freedom struggle, the great Indian epics and poets characterize many of Narayan's conversations with the Americans. The depiction of Indian history is romantic in the manner of Nehru and Anand. Many pages run to explain the positive side of joint family which was very much unknown to the American society. Narayan vindicated the discourse on joint family very alien to the Americans. He acknowledges having faced many interrogations by the Americans on

the Indian concept of joint family. As depicted in *My Dateless Diary*, he threw many counter arguments in the lecture on Indian joint family at the Quadrangle Club, Chicago. He was interrogated by the Americans on how so many people could live and manage together under one roof. To those he replied: “I have always stressed the point about the joint family that this system of living affords protection to the oldest and the youngest in a family... Anyway children grow up very well in a corporate household, without neurosis, angularities or over-sensitiveness” (Narayan 71).

He narrates how an Indian boy from an orthodox family got completely uprooted from his Indian background after mingling culturally with the Americans for years. The boy named Govind defended beef eating as modern and economically beneficial for the Indians in contrast to the supposed prejudices against the same. But true to his typical Indian roots, Narayan looked down upon such cultural mingling as he believed “...in India where the cow is a sacred object, beef cannot be eaten, no rationalization is ever possible on this subject” (Narayan 51). For him, American idea of modernity had nothing to do with the Indian counterpart. In the manner of Mulk Raj Anand, Narayan was also a true advocate of Hindu way of life, even to the extent of being conservative in many cases like that of beef eating. Even when it came to the food habit of the Americans, Narayan drew very reductive conclusions with an ideological bent of mind. He establishes the superiority of South Indian cuisine while detailing about his dinner at the Indian Consulate in New York: “The dinner was a triumph, establishing once for all the supremacy and the tranquilizing qualities of South Indian food—Rasam, Sambhar, Masala Dosai, pickles and so forth. I’m more than ever convinced that the South Indian diet marks the peak in the evolution of culinary art...” (Narayan 40-41).

When one of the American reporters asked him for a feasible solution for the American civilization to save itself from the modern unrest, Narayan suggested the Indian practices like prayer and meditation as refuge. He stood for the Indian spiritual beliefs again and again: “Most Indians pray and meditate for at least a few minutes every day and it may be one of the reasons why with all our poverty and struggle we still survive and we are able to take a calm view of existence” (Narayan 54). Again, in a deep conversation with the Hollywood actress Greta Garbo Narayan explained to her the meaning and essence of the Gayatri Mantra with its philosophy behind. Through the

meditative principle of the mantra he tried to explain to her the meaning of life with the Indian view of Karma. His constant striving to establish the supremacy and genuinity of Indian life and culture over the Americans gets manifested here yet again. Narayan placed Hindu art and architecture in a higher position whether in terms of authenticity or imagination when he paralleled the same with the Sullivan architectural exhibition in Chicago. He acknowledges how he compared the works of art in Chicago Museum to that of the craft in Indian temples. Unlike Mulk Raj Anand, Narayan never had a knack for art and sculpture yet he consciously or unconsciously depicts a very postcolonial view of the same in his dateless diary.

Satirical History narration in Rushdie and Moraes and Singh's Contextualist stance

Very different from the above four writers, Salman Rushdie in *Joseph Anton* narrates history in a satirical mode which constantly reinstates the overpowering affect of death and how man is a puppet under the world's varied forces. Hayden White defines the satirical mode of emplotment as:

...a drama of diremption, a drama dominated by the apprehension that man is ultimately a captive of the world rather than its master, and by the recognition that, in the final analysis, human consciousness and will are always inadequate to the task of overcoming definitively the dark force of death, which is man's unremitting enemy. (White 9)

At every step following the fatwa Rushdie felt like a captive in the world. He and his family received death threats now and then. The helplessness and utter confinement of the protagonist in the degenerating historical context gets reflected when Rushdie writes, "Hang Satan Rushdy. How easy it was to erase a man's past and to construct a new version of him, an overwhelming version, against which it seemed impossible to fight" (Rushdie 5). His narration constantly hints at how the entire facets of history, media, society etc conspired to victimize Rushdie as a Satanic writer: "He looked at the journalists looking at him and he wondered if this was how people looked at men being taken to the gallows or the electric chair or the guillotine" (Rushdie 5). The fear was restricted not just to him but to the entire publishing industry. He writes, "Publishers and translators were threatened by fatwa, too" (Rushdie 150). The fact that

the author reinstates his captivity in front of all such forces of the world undoubtedly gives his history a satirical dimension of emplotment. In *Joseph Anton*, the protagonist's will and consciousness are subject to the dark force of death and uncertainty to the extent that he writes, "He was prepared to die, if dying became necessary for what Carmen Callil had called 'a bloody book'" (Rushdie 285). History put his survival at bay.

His memoir portrays a historical take on religion, terrorism—an intermingling of the three of those. As he writes, he was "fascinated by gods and prophets" (39). While in college he always had an inclination for history which is well reflected in all his works. Apart from choosing Indian history and American history as special subjects he also opted for a paper entitled "Muhammad, the Rise of Islam and the Early Caliphate" under the supervision of Arthur Hibbert. Rushdie is undoubtedly an authority on historical novels. The third person narrative and the use of pseudonym Joseph Anton in his memoir *Joseph Anton* make this text an apt ground for exploring elements of metahistory. In many parts of the memoir, Rushdie, in fact, recounts the mingling of history and fiction in his novels. "He was a historian by training and the great point of history, which was to understand how individual lives, communities, nations and social classes were shaped by great forces, yet retained, at times, the ability to change the direction of those forces must also be the point of his fiction", (56) writes Rushdie on the intersection he found between the two. Rushdie's preoccupation with historicizing fiction and fictionalizing history runs through his memoir as well. He acknowledges that by naming himself as Joseph Anton, he turned himself into yet another fictional character. However, metafictional elements can hardly be identified in his memoir. But the process of fictionalizing history in his novels is quite well explained in most pages of his memoir.

The satirical and ideological stance he held while composing his novel *Shame* is manifested when he mentions that his feelings towards Pakistan were "ferocious, satirical and personal" (60). He perceived Pakistan as a historical blunder. For him, it was "a country insufficiently imagined, conceived of the misguided notion that a religion could bind together people whom geography and history had long kept apart" (Rushdie 60). He cites a number of personal reasons for hating Pakistan. So, his historical version always aimed at rewriting the political scenario. His Mechanistic

argument gets manifested when he portrays a reductive view of religious extremism in countries like Pakistan and Iran. The Mechanistic mode of historical argument may also be identified in Rushdie's pessimistic anticipation of religion and politics through his repeated discussions on Islamic influence in the world:

He knew, as surely as he knew anything, that the fanatical cancer spreading through Muslim communities, would, in the end, explode into the wider world beyond Islam. If the intellectual battle was lost—if this new Islam established its right to be 'respected' and to have its opponents excoriated, placed beyond the pale and, why not, even killed—then the political defeat would follow. (Rushdie 346)

The Satanic Verses rendered Rushdie an offensive writer in the eyes of the whole world—a loss that was irrecoverable. The attack by Ayotollah Khomeini therefore did a permanent damage to his career, making him feel like a captive for his own work of art, “As his book became simply an insult, so he became the Insulter; not only in Muslim eyes, but in the opinion of the public at large” (Rushdie 115). The banning of the book made him very pessimistic about his future. The aesthetic was overpowered by the religious ideologies. The intellectual terrorism by Khomeini threatened Rushdie's existence in the worst possible way. The fatal crisis, the merciless burning of his book made him a disbeliever in himself as well as in society. He points how the modern technologies were used to circulate retrograde ideas of Islamic radicalism. The publishing houses and television networks were all bound upon making him feel like a criminal. One of the worst instances was the Pakistani film “International Gorillay” where the characters vowed to kill an author called Salman Rushdie. Even a sixteen year old girl called for Rushdie to be stoned to death at a Muslim youth conference. In every way, history portrayed him as the victim. As a captive, urges were made for Rushdie to apologize. According to his narrative, every moment after the announcement of fatwa, the world anticipated his death and captivity.

Claiming that the fatwa issue would be put to rest, Zaki Badawi, the Egyptian president of the Muslim College in London made Rushdie sign a statement asserting his Muslim identity despite Rushdie's own wish for a secular identity. But even after that Khameni refused to withdraw the fatwa, Rushdie was struggling for freedom of speech

and freedom of imagination which made him emplot history in a satirical mode. The fatwa was renewed again and again giving him more reasons to make him feel like a captive or a prisoner in this world. He also believed in defeat and decay—a gradual fall into an utter state of corruption through religious extremism. His way of deciphering history includes identifying the master narratives in religion and deciphering their subsequent impact on world politics. His comprehension of history centred around the reaction of the Muslims all over the world on his book. As a result of the attack by South African Muslims accusing him for being a blasphemous writer, the South African government also eventually banned *The Satanic Verses*.

Rushdie's historical elaboration of the utter fall of religion and politics into a corrupt state renders his ideological implication an Anarchistic one. The world he perceived fell from an ideal state into a state of corruption and terrorism all over. Rushdie condemns the degradation of politics and religion in the Islamic countries like Pakistan and Iran. The same is noticed in his novels too. For instance, *Shame* presents a degenerating picture of both democracy and fundamentalism in Pakistan, or, in other words, the failure of Pakistani nationalism. His protagonists are always chained and imprisoned by history be it in fiction or non-fiction.

In Dom Moraes' autobiographical narration history is witnessed mainly through his travels, interviews and biographies. The title of his 1992 memoir *Never at Home* sums up those years perfectly. Sparked off by James Cameron into a career in international reporting which began remarkably with Moraes at 21 covering the Eichmann trial in Israel, he travelled relentlessly in Asia, Africa, the Americas, writing for a variety of foreign newspapers, working on a book for the United Nations and making television documentaries for the BBC. Most of the historical snippets of India drawn by Moraes manifest a satirical mode of emplotment whereby the protagonist ultimately ends up being a captive of the world. He repeatedly emphasizes on the country's fall, victimization and his as well as the Indians' captivity. Placing himself in the context of history, he himself felt like a captive always. He was all for English literature, culture and lifestyle. He detested anything Indian. He hated most of the Indian culture and way of life which is evident from his take on the same: "...the Indian habit of talking about 'the cultural heritage of the nation', and then attempting to foist it on others, had irritated me for years" (Moraes 42). His orientalist inclination for

everything English always kept him detached from everything Indian. He supported the Goans wanting a separate state and considered the Indian government to be imposing its dominance on the Goan community. He protested against the then Indian government in this matter: “I wrote a long piece in which I said, among other things, that since Nehru had refused a plebiscite and forced the issue, making the Goan Indians without consulting them, I was ashamed to be an Indian” (Moraes 41).

Crafted on the basis of first-hand accounts of shattering events in recent Indian history, like the communal riots in Gujarat, the turmoil in Ayodhya, terrorism in Punjab, and caste wars in Bihar, Dom Moraes’ *Out of God’s Oven* (2022) traces India’s cracks. *Out of God’s Oven: Travels in a Fractured Land* is a travel narrative based on his personal experiences that depicts how Moraes perceived the country to be fractured. He picks up many old wounds of India like Gujarat riots, 1984, Naxalites’ problem to justify his point. Dom Moraes criticizes contemporary Indian society and political system. In Moraes’ opinion, even after half a century of independence and democracy, the old inequalities of caste and class still persist in India; civil wars break in several areas and Hinduism turns out to be the greatest menace to the country’s stability. Dom Moraes and Sarayu Srivatsa in this book portray voices and images that manifest the picture of a shattered and damaged nation. Three days after the demolition of the Babri Masjid, they witness a man being burnt to death by a mob in Mumbai. Ten years after Punjab was declared free of militancy, they met a university professor in Chandigarh fully committed to the cause of Khalistan. Apart from that, *Out of God’s Oven* relates how in Bhagalpur, Bihar, a former prisoner described the day six policemen held him down and poured acid on his eyes. Mechanistic mode of historical argument and Anarchistic mode of ideological implication thus invariably follow from Moraes’ reduction of the state as broken and damaged as a result of the fall from British dominance.

Besides, the memoir shows how Moraes hated both the Indian city and the village. Moraes and Srivatsa find dusty villages surrounded by rival armies of upper caste landlords and landless Dalits in Bihar. The beautiful and old cities like Chandigarh, Delhi, and Lucknow are depicted as being the cities filled with filth and dust. In his 1960 memoir *Gone Away* he regards Bombay as “the worst place in the world” in terms of cleanliness, caste system and racial discrimination. According to

him, Bombay has no social life as such. He also describes Delhi as a dust laden, scattered city clumped with houses all over. Moreover, India or Indian democracy is being constantly criticized here with the conclusion that Indians are violent, caste obsessed and corrupt and that Hinduism is the most complex religion of all. The entire text holds instances of many negative things spoken on Hinduism and Brahminism. The book only attempts to prove that India was better during the British Raj. This clearly draws in the fact that his ideological implication is that of an Anarchist whereby he idealizes India's past under the British rule. Moares' memoirs thus invariably echo the Orientalist historical narration in the manner of Cornelia Sorabji and N.C. Chaudhuri. His historical explanation is also undoubtedly Mechanistic in nature as he draws reductive and pessimistic conclusions on Indian history as witnessed by him.

Again, Khushwant Singh's historical narrative in *Truth, Love and a little Malice* mostly centres round the partition of India as he himself had firsthand experience of the same. Besides, a history of the Sikhs and Sikh religion mark yet another remarkable aspect of his narrative. As a writer of historical fiction, Singh's tragic portrayal of partition history is well evident in the novel *Train to Pakistan* (1956). The ruthless and brutal affect of partition in the private as well as public sphere finds best expression in the chapter "Lahore, Partition and Independence" from Singh's autobiography. As a lawyer in Lahore High Court in the pre-independence era, Singh experienced the tension caused by partition from very close quarters. While on one hand he glorifies Sikh-Muslim friendship, on the other he confesses of falsely defending the case of some Sikh criminals. It therefore becomes difficult to gauge his exact ideological stance from his narrative. Some instances reveal that Singh was in favour of partition, as, when he writes: "I supported the Muslim demand for a separate state in areas where they were in majority, believing that India would continue to remain one country with two autonomous Muslim majority states at either end" (Singh 104). Again, at other places he condemns the utter devastation caused by partition in the personal as well as public levels.

In Hayden White's terms, Singh assumes a Contextualist position in articulating his historical argument. He tries to explain the events by setting them within a context of their occurrence. "Contextualist insists that "what happened" in the field can be

accounted for by the specification of the functional interrelationships existing among the agents and agencies occupying the field at a given time”, (18) writes White. Singh depicts the event of partition contextualizing it with the existing situation in every way. He explains the gradual shift from Sikh–Muslim friendship to that of enmity. Many pages in his autobiography are dedicated to the appraisal of Manzur Qadir—his bosom Muslim friend in Lahore. Despite such friendship, Singh writes, he had no illusion about the general Hindu/Sikh-Muslim divide. Elaborating the context as a lawyer at the Lahore court he narrates how Muslim lawyers occupied different corners of the large lounge and library from Hindus and Sikhs in the High Court Bar Association and Library (105). Moreover, he observes that the occasional meeting of these groups at weddings and funerals were merely superficial.

The Contextualist, according to Pepper, isolates some elements of the historical field as the area of study and then proceeds to identify the chords that link the event to be explained to different areas of the context. Khushwant Singh isolates the element of partition and Hindu/Sikh-Muslim divide from his historical field. He narrates how the Muslim League resolution widened the gap between the two. He had firsthand experience of Pakistan’s growing demands for the same: “The demand for Pakistan assumed the proportions of an avalanche, gathering force as it went along. Every other afternoon huge processions of Muslims marched down the Mall...” (Singh 106). The dark and unexpected turns in a court case handled by Singh at Lahore Court gave him a closer glimpse of the depth of communal hatred.

The riots and massacres in Punjab find expression in Singh’s non-fiction as well as fiction. In the context of partition violence in the North-West Frontier Province he narrates in his autobiography the terrifying prospect of travelling in a train at Taxila where many of his fellow Sikhs were dragged out and murdered brutally. According to Singh, Muslims had the upper hand in communal riots as they were in majority and were more determined than the rest. Such a conclusion again raises question on the ideological stance taken by him as a historian. In his autobiography he depicts more instances of the Muslims torturing the Sikhs/Hindus rather than the other way round. He relates how two young Muslim boys killed a Bihari in broad daylight. The Muslim atrocities on the Sikhs reached its epitome when the entire Hindu locality of Shahalmi in Lahore was set on fire. The raging threat forced Singh also to leave Lahore with his

belongings and family. He draws a tragic note on the numerous refugees who fled from Pakistan and had nowhere to go:

Some were housed in refugee camps, others occupied old monuments, railway station platforms, verandahs outside shops and offices, or made their homes on pavements. The magnitude of the tragedy that had taken place was temporarily drowned in the euphoria of the Independence to come. (Singh 114)

Such instances clearly manifest the tragic mode of emplotment and the Contextualist explanation followed by Singh in his historical narration. The ideological position identified in Singh is that of a Liberal. The fact that he supported partition and a separate state for Muslims makes it even clearer. In the chapter “Sikh Religion and History” Singh explicates the journey and course of his documentation on the history of Sikh religion. However, his exact approach towards such a history cannot be comprehended from his autobiography. During the partition phase Singh critiqued the Muslims for having the upper hand in most of the violence besides supporting the criminal Sikhs in many court cases in Lahore. But again, in independent India he chose to support the Indian Muslims, who, according to him, were discriminated for carrying pro-Pakistani sympathies. Understanding his ideological stance as a historian thus becomes difficult at every step. “They found it difficult to get jobs in the government and almost impossible to get them in privately owned industry and business houses which are largely controlled by Hindus”, (255) observes Singh about the then Indian Muslims. Following this, Singh made “The Illustrated Weekly” a forum for Indian Muslim opinion by taking a pro-Muslim stance. The magazine published a number of articles on Muslim history and the role of Indian Muslims in the freedom movement. Contrary to his former denouncement of Muslims during partition, Singh mentions that the Muslims suffered greater loss in the Hindu-Muslim riots in post independent Indian scenario. Further, he preferred building friendly relations with Pakistan which, according to him, would imbibe a sense of security among the Indian Muslims (255). Singh’s words themselves highlight the change of ideologies observed in his narration of history:

Although in the 1971 war over Bangladesh I denounced General Yahya Khan’s military regime and General Tikka Khan’s genocide of Bengalis, *The Illustrated Weekly* was the only Indian journal to persist in pressuring the government to

release the 93,000 Pakistani prisoners of war when it was over. (Singh 255)

The reason behind such a shift of ideology cannot, however, be aptly traced. Even Indira Gandhi was against Singh's pro-Muslim stance and his support for the prisoners. Many other Indians who disliked his stance called him "an unpaid agent of Pakistan" (256) as Singh himself writes. Singh's ambivalent attitude towards Emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi reinstates his Liberal mode of ideological implication. He did not take an extremist or radical position in terms of partition or India's political history. In the words of Hayden White, "Liberals imagine a time in the future when this structure will have been improved, but they project this utopian condition into the remote future, such a way as to discourage any effort in the present to realize it precipitately..." (25).

Interestingly, according to Singh, the poisoned relationship between the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and her daughter-in-law affected the course of Indian history. His narrative on the then India's political scenario was based mostly on his personal acquaintance with Maneka and Sanjay Gandhi as he mentions in the chapter "With the Gandhis and the Anands". He tried to contextualize the nation's history through familial conflict and malice. Mrs. Gandhi, he writes, assumed dictatorial powers with her son Sanjay as her principal adviser (285). However, much of his narration on the internal dialogues between Indira and Maneka seek authentication as Singh hardly had first hand experiences of the same at every step. Besides, his portrayal of the role of Sanjay Gandhi in the nation's history often appears biased and ideologically motivated as Singh himself writes, "I confess I expected some kind of recognition or reward for what I had done for them" (301). Anticipating a future favour from Sanjay, Singh supported the former's birth-control programme and slum clearance drive during Emergency. As a favour, Sanjay Gandhi then helped him get a nomination to the Rajya Sabha and the editorship of "The Hindustan Times". Singh condemned the Akali agitation and their rising demand for an autonomous Sikh state though he supported their demand for a Punjabi-speaking state. Despite being a Sikh, he always supported Indira Gandhi and her operation to bring the Dharma Yudh Morcha under control. He points out how false stories of Sikhs celebrating Indira Gandhi's murder were being spread by some Sikhs, owing to which he was also unable to pay homage to her departed soul.

To conclude, history narration in all the memoirs and autobiographies turn out to be poetic, imaginative, subjective and ideological in nature, accounting to yet another creative aspect of the select self-narratives. True to New Historicism, autobiography as a work of literature is influenced by its author's times, circumstances and context. The Indian English self-narrators interpret events as products of their time and culture. Metahistorical elements and subjectivity invariably find a way into their history narration in varied forms making the binaries of history and fiction/imagination very fluid. Besides the outer factors or tropes that lead to the creation of autobiographical lives and subjectivity, it is equally important to interpret the inner worlds of the self-narrators as well. In view of this, the next chapter deals with an analysis of the tropes of psychoanalysis in the autobiographical imagination.