
MONOGRAPH III

OCCASIONAL PAPER ON LITERATURES AND CULTURES, 2014

Autobiographical Discourses in Indian Writing in English and Indian Literatures (in English translation): A Bibliography

Ram Shankar Nanda



UGC.SAP Special Assistance Programme (DRS-I)
Department of English
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Preface

The focus of my sabbatical project – a one-year period beginning June 2013 - was on autobiographical discourses in Indian writing in English and Indian literatures (including English translations). As the research progressed, autobiographical texts in Odia and Hindi – the two Indian languages I know fairly well – engaged my attention. Of course, there are autobiographical texts in all major Indian literatures (Bengali, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Gujarati, to name a few). A few of them have been translated into English. But this report is a selective one with regard to the bibliographical incorporation of Odia and Hindi texts (with a separate section on Odia autobiographical texts) although it presents a more detailed bibliographical exploration of secondary material available on a whole range of Indian autobiographical texts in English language. My sub-section on theory of autobiography in the Appendix is deliberately a highly selective one as this is one area where criticism has grown in incremental proportions in recent years. In the initial stages of my study I consulted a few major international autobiographical texts available in English which I have mentioned separately in the Appendix. All in all, I have found a number of resources and imbibed significant ideas in the area of my study which will keep me academically engaged in coming months.

I take this opportunity to thank my employers, Sambalpur University and the colleagues in my department for consenting to my absence from regular academic assignments for one academic session to focus on a project of absorbing critical interest. I must add that I missed my students and classroom lectures, but this temporary absence has compensated me with insights which I hope to use in my teaching and research in future.

R.S.Nanda

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I: Introduction

Posing the Problem:

Writing in an *Indian Literature* issue in 2001, K. Satchidanandan concludes his reflections with a series of questions that are relevant to an examination of Indian autobiographical discourses, its variety and modes:

Is it necessary to evolve an Indian theory of autobiography or a theory of Indian autobiography? Is it possible at all to have a general theory that will be applicable to the variety of autobiographies and self-portraits in India based on the indigenous concepts of self knowledge, language and truth? What about the different sub-genres? What is specific to, say, a woman's autobiography, a Dalit autobiography or the autobiography of a worker or a Gay, in other words, how do gender, caste, class or sexual preferences limit, define or qualify the form and content of autobiography? What is the relationship, say, of the autobiography of a political leader to the nationalist discourse or of a housewife to feminist discourse? How does ideology work in autobiography? What are the technologies of self-production employed? What is its relation to reality and to imagination, to fact and fiction? What are the modalities of its enunciation?

In the present case, these questions relating to the theory (if any) and practice of writing Indian autobiographies helped in

delimiting an area and a range of texts that threatened to be unwieldy. For the sake of focus I chose to concentrate on Indian autobiographical texts in the 19th and 20th centuries, even updating the data for the years already covered in the 21st century. In principle, I accept Tridip Suhrud's contention that "In Indian literary history, autobiography as a reflection of the self and its relationship to private and public realms essentially developed in the 19th century – it is therefore relatively a recent development, although one that grew out of a long Indian biography tradition." (Suhrud 2001)

So, mostly I am talking about modern autobiographies that have emerged in the Indian context. Further, I am conscious of a distinction between what can be designated as 'autobiographies' and what comes under the rubric of 'life writing' which has surfaced as an umbrella term for all manner of self-writings including memoirs, diaries, letters, journals, confessions, *testimonios*, travels, pilgrimages etc. I must add that, wherever possible, I have included rather than excluded items that attend to the basic task of writing the self using the conventions and authority of a narrator who either writes under the sign of history or maps intensely subjective states in a way that nonetheless patterns memories registering the impact of external stimuli, be it in a minimalist manner.

It is far from appropriate to talk about a 'general theory' of autobiography in this connection because, in case of India, one is dealing with diverse histories, languages and cultural matrices. So the differences in any articulation of "Indian autobiographical discourse/s" cannot be gainsaid. The specific trajectories and inflections of autobiographical practice in different Indian locations make challenging demands on the perceptive researcher. In the

course of my project work I got increasingly drawn towards a number of Odia autobiographical texts that emerged out of specific historical and cultural situations because of my own inscription in a specific socio-cultural milieu. At the same time, issues of the nation and the self as articulated in nationalist autobiographies and issues of caste and gender in post-independence texts across India shall always stoke critical curiosity.

Collecting Data:

In the initial leg of my project work I made use of libraries located in Bhubaneswar and Hyderabad for accessing material. I want to make a mention of Shikshasandhan, Bhubaneswar, a voluntary organization where I discovered a special collection of autobiographies in Odia, including their English translations. The Shikshasandhan team has made special efforts to acquire print material on Odia life narratives.

I also interacted with the following scholars who have worked in the area of life writing in Odisha:

Dr Debendra Kumar Dash, editor of Fakirmohan's *Atmajibani*, who shared his views on my project and gave a bird's eye view of the field in the context of 19th and 20th century Odisha

Dr Jatindra K. Nayak, Professor of English, Utkal University, well-known translator and a storehouse of autobiography-related information

Dr Ashok K Mohanty, who has translated three Odia autobiographies and is completing a fourth one. He has perceptive views on the production of English language texts.

My trip to Hyderabad included visits to the following centres:

- i English and Foreign Language University(EFLU) – Central Library
- ii Osmania University Central Library
- iii Osmania University Centre for International Programmes (OUCIP) Library (formerly ASRC)
- iv Central University of Hyderabad library

All these libraries have reasonably good collection of books and back volumes of journals. EFLU library subscribes to the online database of MLA International Bibliography which was a great help in doing the initial survey and bibliographical work. Both EFLU and OUCIP libraries have some invaluable resources in back volumes of journals. Osmania library has in its collection the first edition of well-known Indian autobiographies. The Central University library also houses books and digital resources which helped in consolidating the initial survey necessary for the project.

The subsequent trip to Delhi was intended to avail additional library resources on my project. The following facilities were covered:

- i Delhi University Library System – North and South Campus
- ii Sahitya Akademi Library
- iii Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
- iv Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts – Kalanidhi Reference Library and General Library

Of the above, DULS offered Proquest online dissertations, apart from the special collections of books and journals. Sahitya Akademi library has the back issues of *Indian Literature* as well as the English translations of texts from regional literature. NMML has a good collection of books on Gandhi, Nehru and the nationalist phase. It also has a vibrant research atmosphere for historical studies. The IGNCA library has close to three hundred titles on life writing and it offers access to a number of digital resources.

There are some specialist journals that publish reviews, articles and research findings in the area of autobiography studies:

- *Auto/Biography* (Yearbook of the Auto/Biography group of the British Sociological Association) begun in 2008
- *a/b:Auto/Biography Studies* started as a newsletter in 1985 by the Autobiography Society based at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

- *Biography* (published by the University of Hawai'i) started in 1978
- *Life Writing Annual* - Biographical and autobiographical studies (AMS Press, New York) started in 2006
- *Memory and Narrative*. Published by Transaction (based at Rutgers University)

Apart from the use of library resources I attended a two-day National Seminar as a resource person on "Writing the Self: Autobiography as a Cultural and Historical Discourse" at Ravenshaw University, Cuttack on 17-18 January, 2014. The deliberations in this gathering was wide-ranging, which raised pertinent issues of theory and practice of autobiographical discourses. What emerged was a wide array of autobiographical practices in the Indian context, representing the writing of diverse selves in society. There was a general agreement on editing and making accessible archival source material on life writing from a variety of Indian contexts, particularly of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Trends & Patterns

Certain trends and patterns did emerge in the course of data collection for the project. These are as follows:

- a) Autobiography as distinct from other forms of life writing is a late entrant into the Indian literary scene in its diverse manifestations. This was a late nineteenth century

phenomenon. Narmad's *Mari Hakikat* (See Joshi in Primary Texts) is a good example of this. Fakirmohan Senapati's autobiography, which appeared in a fragmented form towards the end of his life, is a continuation of the same tradition. Rassundari Devi and later Binodini Dasi came out with women's stories that added a different perspective to the same tradition.

- b) In the 20th century Gandhi's *Autobiography* is a key text. Jawaharlal Nehru and Nirad C. Chaudhuri also wrote autobiographies and autobiographical texts that would define and develop an India-specific practice of life writing. The first half of the 20th century saw a flurry of autobiographical practice in the wake of struggle for freedom and a new sense of self linked to national liberation. National history was discursively reconstituted and side by side there were confident assertions in writing of individual destinies. A subsequent case of the same tradition is discernible in the writings of Nayantara Sahgal.
- c) Women's personal narratives proliferated after independence. A key text here is Kamala Das's *My Story*. It is interesting to note that in Odia autobiographical practice these texts have been few (Rama Devi, Shoilabala Das and Annapurna Moharana.) In the domain of Dalit personal narratives there has been a remarkable effort to record one's life experiences, resulting in a substantial body of feminine writing that encode the double curse of caste and patriarchy.
- d) Beginning with 1990s there has been an active articulation of Dalit personal identity. This is accompanied by a commensurate critical effort to put this work in the right

historical and sociological perspective. A cursory look at the texts listed in bold in my report would give the reader some idea about the period and quantity of this type of writing.

- e) Without detracting from the very individual effort to write selves, life narratives can be linked to group identities for thematic focus - nuns(Sister Jesme), sex workers(Jameela), legal luminaries(Chagla and Hidayatullah), English teachers(C.D. Narasimhaihah, Chaman Nahal and P.Lal), writers (P Macchwe and R.K.Narayan), social activists(all the Odia Bhoodan workers), theatre personalities(Binodini Dasi, Kalicharan Patnaik, Baisnab Pani), persons with disability(Chib), expatriates(Meena Alexander and Suniti Namjoshi) etc.
- f) There have been atypical examples also. There are a few celebrity cricketers' autobiographies, but Sujit Mukherjee's *Autobiography of an Unknown Cricketer* is one of its kind.

The indications given above are useful for classification and academic study. In criticism and interpretation of Indian autobiographical discourse the only book-length study that was comprehensive and competently written was R.C.P. Sinha's *The Indian Autobiographies in English*, published in 1978. Sinha's historiographical account ought to have led to more theoretically inflected book-length study of Indian life narratives. The only exception has been Javed Majeed whose 2007 book in this area has substantial discussions on Gandhi and Nehru. Although Meena Sodhi's two books, one in 1999 and the other in 2011, did add new material to this pioneering critical work in collections of individual essays, her second book is largely an expanded version of what she

had published as a small monograph earlier, an offshoot of a UGC-funded project she had undertaken. She largely follows the nationalist and feminist productions in life writing. Strange to say, in her 2011 collection of essays on Indian autobiographies, she does not include a single subaltern or Dalit text. Although she will find a mention in any survey of the critical reception of Indian autobiographies she has largely followed a conventional historical model and not opened out to the new currents in Indian life writing. Much of the critical assessment in the last three decades are stored in the pages scholarly journals and periodical literature. Stimulating book-length studies focusing on a sustained theoretical argument are hard to find.

It must be mentioned that translation of Indian-language autobiographical texts into English has perceptively increased in the last twenty or thirty years. This is particularly so in the case of languages such as Hindi, Odia and Bangla. This adds an additional dimension to the study of Indian life narratives as these become implicated in the global production and circulation of specific life histories from India. This process has thrown up questions of quality and reception of these translated texts in different locations. There is an imperative need for new methods of analysis in a comparative framework without eliding the specifics of historical and cultural contexts.

II: Autobiographies in Indian writing in English and Indian literatures

What follows is a list of books and articles I consulted as I worked on my project. These are presented in two separate sections. The first one presents primary texts – in English and English translations. It also contains a few entries on Hindi autobiographical texts in their original Hindi version. Since I started focusing on Odia texts more in the last leg of my sabbatical study these primary works are listed in the next chapter (including available English translations). These needed to be identified in a more visible cluster. However, the critical reception on these texts are integrated into the second section of the present chapter which is a select list of secondary material on Indian autobiographical discourses, which is an area full of multiple critical methods and contributions. The first section comprising primary texts could have been grouped along linguistic lines or regions (Hindi/ Tamil/Marathi etc) or themes (women/Dalit). But all texts have been integrated into one list(minus Odia) to convey a sense of the pan-Indian mix in self-writing. To give some idea about certain trends Dalit texts have been entered in bold as an illustrative strand in the corpus of Indian life narratives.

i) PRIMARY TEXTS

Abbas, K.A. *I Am Not an Island: An Experiment in Autobiography*. 1977. Ed. Suresh Kohli. New Delhi: Imprint One, 2010

Abbott, Justin E. *Bahina Bai: A Translation of Her Autobiography and Her Verses*. New Delhi : Cosmo, 2005.

Agnes, Flavia. *My Story –our story of rebuilding of broken lives*. Bombay: Women's Centre, 1984

Ajneya(Sachidananda Vatsyayan). *Preparing the Ground*. Trans. Vatsyayan and Manas Mukul Das. New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1984

Alexander, Meena. *Faultlines: A Memoir*. Rev. edn. New York: Feminist P, 2003

Amte, Sadhana. *Samidha*. Trans. Shobha Pawar. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2008

Anand, Mulk Raj. *Apology for Heroism: A Brief Autobiography of Ideas*. 1946. Bombay: Kutub-Popular, 1957.

- - - *Conversations in Bloomsbury*. 1981. Ed Saros Cowasjee. New Delhi: Vision Books, 2011.

Ansal. Kusum. *As I Am: An Autobiography*. Trans. Masooma Ali. New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications,1997

Antharjanam, Lalithambika. *Cast Me Out If You Will: Stories and Memoir*. Trans. Gita Krishnankutty. Kolkata: Bhatkal and Sen,2001.

Arundale, George S. *A Fragment of Autobiography*. Madras: Kalashetra,1940

Athavale, Parvati. *My Story: Autobiography of a Hindu Widow*. Trans. J.E.Abbott. New Delhi: Reliance Publishing House,1996

Bachchan, Harivansh Rai. *In the Afternoon of Time: An Autobiography*. Trans. Rupert Snell. New Delhi: Penguin India,1998

Bajaj, Savitri. *God's Plan Works: An Autobiography*. Bombay: Sevak Prakashan,1991

Bama . *Karukku*. Trans. Lakshmi Holmstrom. Chennai: Macmillan India,2000

Baisantri, Kaushalya. *Dohra Abhishap*. Delhi: Parmeswari Prakashan,1999

Banarasidas. *The Ardhakathanaka*. Trans.and Introd. Mukund Lath. New Delhi: Rupa,2005

Banerjee, Nripendra Chandra. *At The Cross-Roads, 1885-1946 The Autobiography of Nripendra Chandra Banerjee*. Calcutta: A. Mukherjee, 1950

Besant, Annie. *An Autobiography*. 1893. New Delhi: Penguin India, 2005.

Bhandari, Mannu. *Ek Kahani Yah Bhi*. New Delhi: Radhakrishna, 2007

Bhattathiripad, V.T. *Kanneerum Kinaavum: My Tears, My Dreams*. Trans. Sindhu V. Nair. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2013

Bhushan, Shanti. *Courting Destiny: A Memoir*. New Delhi, Penguin India, 2008.

Bismila, Ram Prasad. *Musings from the Gallows: Autobiography of Ram Prasad Bismil*. Ed. Malwinder Jit Singh Waraich. Chandigarh: Unistar Books, 2007

Bond, Ruskin. *Scenes from a Writer's Life*. New Delhi: Penguin India, 1997.

Bose, Subhas Chandra. *An Indian Pilgrim: An Unfinished Autobiography*. 1948. Ed. Sisir K. Bose and Sugata Bose. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 1997

Brata, Sasthi. *My God Died Young*. 1968. New Delhi: Penguin India, 2006

Brierley, Saroo. *A Long Way Home*. New Delhi: Penguin India, 2013

Buck, David C. and M.Kannan. Trans. *Tamil Dalit Literature: My Own Experience*. Pondicherry: Institut Francais de Pondicherry, 2011

Chagla, M.C. *Roses in December: An Autobiography*. 1973. Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 2000

Chattopadhyay, Kamaladevi. *Inner Recesses of Outer Spaces: Memoirs*. Preface by Raja Rao. New Delhi : Navrang, 1986

Chib, Malini. *One Little Finger*. New Delhi: Sage India, 2011.

Chaudhurani, Saraladevi. *The Scattered Leaves of My Life: An Indian Nationalist Remembers*. Trans. Sikata Banerjee. New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2011.

Chaudhuri, Nirad C. *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*. 1951. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1997.

- - - *Thy Hand, Great Anarch! India: 1921-1952*. Wokingham: Addison-Wesley, 1988

Cour, Ajeet. *Pebbles in a Tin Drum: An Autobiography*. Trans. Masooma Ail. New Delhi: Harper Collins Publishers India, 1998

Dangle, Arjun. Ed. *A Corpse in the Well: Translations from Modern Marathi Dalit Autobiographies*. New Delhi, Orient Blackswan, 1992

Das, Kamala. *My Story*. 1988. Haper Collins India, 2009

- - - *A Childhood in Malabar: A Memoir*. Trans. Gita Krishnankutty. New Delhi: Penguin India, 2003

Dasi, Binodini. *My Story and My Life as an Actress*. Trans. Rimli Bhattacharya. New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1998

Debi, Rassundari. *My Life*. Trans. Enakshi Chatterjee. Calcutta : Writers' Workshop, 1999

Desai, Padma. *Breaking Out: An Indian Woman's American Journey*. New Delhi: Penguin India, 2012.

Deshmukh, Durgabai. *Chintaman and I* . New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1980

Devee, Sunity. *The Autobiography of an Indian Princess*. London: John Murray, 1921

Devi, Phoolan. *I, Phoolan Devi: The Autobiography of India's Bandit Queen*. With Marie-Therese Cuny and Paul Rambali. 1996. London: Sphere, 2013

Devi, Sarala. *The Many Worlds of Sarala Devi: A Diary*. Trans. Sukhendu Ray. Introd. Bharati Ray. New Delhi: Social Science P, 2010

Dhar, Dhira. *Bina Das: A Memoir*. New Delhi: Zubaan, 2010

Gaikwad, Laxman. *The Branded: Uchalya*. Trans P.A.Kolharkar. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1998

Gaitonde, Edila. *In Search of Tomorrow*. Ahmedabad: Allied Publishers, 1987

Gavin, Jamila. *Out of India: An Anglo-Indian Childhood*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2002

Gandhi, M.K. *An Autobiography: Or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. 1927 and 1929. Trans. Mahadev Desai. Introd. Sunil Khilnani. London: Penguin, 2001

- - - *Satyagraha in South Africa*. Trans. Valji Govindji Desai. 1928. Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House, 2011

Ghose, Aurobindo. *Tales of Prison Life*. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publication Department, 1997

Ghosh, Kali. *The Autobiography of a Revolutionary in British India*. New Delhi: Social Science P, 2013

Gopalakrishnan, R. *A Comma in a Sentence: Extraordinary Change in an Ordinary Family over Six Generations*. New Delhi: Rupa, 2013

Goswami, Indira. *An Unfinished Autobiography*. Trans P. Katak. New Delhi: Sterling P, 2002

Goswami, Sabita. *Along the Red River: A Memoir*. Trans. Triveni Goswami Mathur. New Delhi: Zubaan, 2013

Gunasekaran, K.A. *The Scar*. Trans. V. Kadambari. Hyderabad: Orient Blackwsan, 2009

Gupta, Ashoka. *In the Path of Service: Memories of a Changing Century*. Trans. Sipra Bhattacharya and Ranjana Dasgupta. Kolkata: Bhatkal and Sen, 2004

Hajratwala, Minal. *Leaving India: My Family's Journey from Five Villages to Five Continents*. Chennai: Tranquebar P, 2009

Halder, Baby. *A Life Less Ordinary*. Trans. Urvashi Butalia. New Delhi: Zubaan, 2006

Hazari. *Untouchable: The Autobiography of an Indian Outcaste*. New York. Praeger, 1951

Hidayatullah, M. *My Own Boswell*. 1981. Delhi: Universal Law Publishing Co, 2003

Hiranandani, Popat. *The Pages of My Life: Autobiography and Selected Stories*. Trans. Jyoti Panjwani. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2010

Hutheesing, Krishna. *With No Regrets: An Autobiography*. New York: John Day Co, 1945

Iyer, U.V. Swaminatha. *The Story of My Life*. Trans. Kamil V. Zvelebil. Madras: Institute of Asian Studies, 1990

Jadhav, Narendra. *Outcaste: A Memoir*. New Delhi: Penguin India, 2003

Jameela, Nalini. *The Autobiography of a Sex Worker*. Trans. J.Devika. Chennai: Westland, 2007

Janu, C.K. *Mother Forest: The Unfinished Story of C.K.Janu*. Written by Bhaskaran and Trans. Ravi Shankar. New Delhi: Kali for Women, 2004

Jessawala, Dosebai Cowasjee. *The Story of My Life*. Bombay: Times of India P, 1911

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Kale, Kishore Shantabai. *Against all Odds*. Trans. Sandhya Pandey. New Delhi: Penguin India, 2000

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Kamble, Baby. *The Prisons We Broke*. Trans. Maya Pandit. Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 2008

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Khaitan, Prabha. *Anyā se Ananya*. New Delhi: Raj Kamal, 2007

- - - *A Life Apart: An Autobiography*. Trans. Ira Pande. New Delhi: Zubaan, 2013

Khan, Munshi Rahman. *Autobiography of an Indian Indentured Labourer*. Trans. Kathinka Sinha-Kerkoff. Delhi: Shipra Publications, 2006

Kidwai, Anis. *In Freedom's Shade*. Trans. Ayesha Kidwai. New Delhi: Penguin India, 2011

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Laxman, R.K. *The Tunnel of Time: An Autobiography*. New Delhi: Penguin India, 1998

Limbale, Sharan Kumar. *The Outcaste: Akkarmashi.* Trans. Santosh Bhoomkar. Introd. G.N.Devy. New Delhi: Oxford UP,2003

Lutfullah. *Autobiography of Lutfullah a Mohamedan Gentleman; and His Transactions with His Fellow-Creatures: Interspersed with Remarks on Habits, Customs, and Character Of the People with Whom He Had to Deal.* 3rd edn. London: Smith, Elder & Co, 1858

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Madhavan, K. *On the Banks of the Tejaswini: An Autobiography.* Trans.P Radhika Menon. New Delhi: National Book Trust,2011

Madhopuri, Balbir. *Changiya Rukh: Against the Night, An Autobiography.* Trans. Tripti Jain. New Delhi: Oxford UP,2010

Malagatti, Aravind. *Government Brahmana.* Trans. Dharani Devi Malagatti, Janet Vucinich and N. Subramanya. Hyderabad: Orient Longman,2007

Mane, Laxman. *Upara(An Outsider).* Trans. A.K.Kamat. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi,1997

Masani, Minoo. *Against the Tide.* New Delhi: Vikas,1981

Masani, Zareer. *And All I Said: Memoir of a House Divided.* New Delhi: Penguin India,2012

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Mazumdar, Sudha. *Memoirs of an Indian Woman*. Edit and Introd. Geraldine Forbes. New York: M. E. Sharpe,1989

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Mehta, Vinod. *Lucknow Boy: A Memoir*. New Delhi: Penguin India,2011

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Namishray, Mohandas. *Apne Apne Pinjre*. Delhi: Vani Prakashan, 1995

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Nariman, Fali S. *Before Memory Fades: An Autobiography*. New Delhi: Hay House,2012

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Nehru, Jawaharlal. *An Autobiography*. 1936. New Delhi: Penguin India,2004

- - - *The Discovery of India*.1946. Introd. Sunil Khilnani. New Delhi: Penguin India,2010

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Concluding Remarks

In the last paragraph of his study of the Indian autobiographies in English R.C.P. Sinha says, "one is sometimes assailed by doubt about its [the native tradition of life-writing] future which is bound up with the future of English education in India." (193) He avers that the influence of English was "on the wane" and that regional languages had become more dominant which might affect the future use of English as a medium of creative self-expression. Sinha wrote at a time when the role of English language in Indian socio-political sphere had become contested and controversial. No such attitude obtains now. By the time Meena Sodhi publishes her two books of essays (1999 and 2011) on Indian autobiographies there is no trace of any anxiety over its position vis-à-vis other Indian languages. English has been "Indianized" by now, very much a part of the overall language environment. In fact, it has become the principal Target Language (TL) in translation activities in regional literatures. Compared to other world languages English enjoys a privileged position as the language of choice in matters of translation.

Whether it is originally written in English or available as products of translation, the growing corpus of Indian autobiographical discourse in English displays no consciousness of using an "alien" tongue. English has provided a platform for conversation and dialogue on Indian life narratives – often as a link between the Indian languages and, more importantly, as a conduit of Indian versions of selves to the outside world. There are certain discursive and critical trends that are likely to intensify as Indian

publishing scene adds to its stock of autobiographies. A few are mentioned below:

- i) Women's autobiographies as a cluster
- ii) Dalit life narratives
- iii) Interface with global institutionalization of life writing studies
- iv) Growing importance of theory and cultural studies in the analysis of Indian life narratives, particularly linked to issues such as memory, self, history, culture, ideology, writing, narrative etc.
- v) Archival work to collect and translate life writing in a multilingual India

It may be pointed out that many forms of written self-narration will find provenance in the days to come and new theoretical tools need to be forged for their study and analysis. The methodological change required to redefine and classify diverse autobiographical texts are already in evidence in some of the critical essays listed in my bibliography. It is fairly certain that Indian autobiographical discourse will offer a fascinating terrain for interdisciplinary engagements in teaching and research. History, sociology, anthropology, psychology, philosophy and literature – to name a few disciplines – are likely to contribute to the devising of critical tools necessary for the consolidation and growth of the study of Indian life writing in its next phase of development.

Appendix

These are some of the texts consulted and browsed by me while working on this project. It is a highly selective list as the literature in English (both for theory and primary texts) in relation to autobiographical discourse in the international context is very vast. The following lists are purely indicative and illustrative in nature.

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