POLITICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY AS OBJECTIFICATION OF AN/OTHER: A STUDY OF MAHATHIR MOHAMAD'S *A DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE*, M.K GANDHI'S*THE STORY OF MY EXPERIMENTS WITH TRUTH*, AND NELSON MANDELA'S *LONG WALK TO FREEDOM*.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines how autobiography and its variants such as the memoir transforms from being the story of the writing-'I' to that of its other. In this regard, the thesis specifically looks at how the texts under study turn their narratives into a process of objectification of the non-self "other" by framing their narratives through the trajectory of overarching social hierarchies such as us/them, clean/dirty, native/stranger, visible/invisible, peaceful/violent, etc. This strategy enables the writers to turn the autobiographical act into a space for accentuating differences between themselves and others. Consequently, they turn the non-self into an object and subject of difference through ridicule, disdain, mockery, and demonisation. The main aim of this strategy is to objectify the non-self by ascribing some negative qualities to it. It is the contention of this thesis that objectification as it occurs in these texts is in the main a process of identity formation based on the taxonomy of difference in the social world of the author-narrators shaped by their beliefs and ideologies. The thesis concludes that in Mahathir's, Mandela's, and Gandhi's texts the "other" is used as a narrative device to construct and project a chosen and preferred positive identity of the self. In this sense, the "other" becomes a trope for self-articulation and enunciation within the textual-world of each of these writers. Viewed in this way, the "other" becomes the surface created and sustained by autobiography which could be viewed as a discourse of power on which to bounce off the contrasted image of the self.

ABSTRAK

Tesis ini mengkaji bagaimana autobiografi dan variannya seperti memoir bertukar dari kisah tulisan –'Saya' dengan 'yang lain'. Dalam hal ini, tesis ini menghalusi bagaimana dan sejauhmana penulis teks yang dikaji menghidupkan kisah mereka melalui proses perwujudan dengan merangka kisah mereka melalui trajektori hierarki sosial menyeluruh seperti kami / mereka, bersih / kotor , yang dikenali / orang yang tidak dikenali, yang kelihatan / tidak kelihatan, aman / ganas, dan sebagainya. Strategi ini membolehkan mereka menjadikan autobiografi mereka sebagai suatu ruang penampilan perbezaan di antara diri mereka dengan yang 'lain'. Oleh itu, mereka menjadikan yang 'lain' sebagai objek dan subjek melalui ejekan, penghinaan, ejekan, dan fitnah. Tujuan utama strategi ini adalah untuk mengkonkretkan yang 'lain' atau bukan diri dengan memberikan beberapa kualiti yang negatif kepadanya. Justeru, tesis ini menegaskan bahawa objektifikasi di dalam konteks ini merupakan suatu proses utama dalam pembentukan identiti berdasarkan taksonomi perbezaan di dalam dunia sosial pengarang-perawi yang dipengaruhi oleh kepercayaan dan ideologi mereka. Kesimpulan tesis ini ialah di dalam setiap penulisan autobiografi Mahathir, Mandela dan Gandhi, yang "lain" digunakan sebagai alat naratif atau penceritaan untuk membina dan menonjolkan identiti tersendiri yang positif. Dalam pengertian ini, yang "lain" menjadi kiasan semata-mata untuk artikulasi diri dan lafaz diri dalam teks-dunia setiap penulis ini. Ringkasnya, yang yang "lain" menjadi 'permukaan' yang diwujudkan dan dikekalkan oleh kuasa wacana, untuk melantun imej kontras diri

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The central argument of this thesis is that rather than seeing autobiography and its variants such as the memoir as narratives about the lives of individuals written by themselves, it will be more profitable to study it as a process of objectification of an "Other", that is the non-self, the othered "Other". Looking at autobiography in this way will open another vista for its understanding as a writing that is about both the writer- self and the processes and implications of the textual creation of the "other". The "other" in this regard is the *object* of the autobiographer's scorn, sneering, ridicule, and mockery. But it is noteworthy that the non-self could also be an *another* not necessarily an embodied person but a *system* such as a political party, a religion, an ideology, a race, etc. Most often the story of this othered "Other" is subsumed as subtexts within the narrative frames of autobiography.

The second argument is that more often than not, these subtexts are ignored in the textual study of autobiography as will be demonstrated in the literature review for this study. Hence bringing them into focus will help in illuminating their importance in understanding autobiography as a textual process of not only fashioning the self but the dis/embodied "Other".

Thirdly, the study will focus on what the texts under study did not say, fail to say, or deliberately refuse to say in their narratives. In other words this study will specifically focus on the gaps and silences in the texts under study. Hopefully, by revealing these gaps and silences, the forces at work in shaping the narratives will be unveiled.

Fourthly, the study will also pay attention to the narrative strategies employed by the writers under study in their attempts to objectify the "Other". Specifically, the study will examine the reasons behind the favoured narrative strategies employed in shaping the narratives.

1.2   Background to the Study

Autobiography as a literary mode of expression is the story of the life of the self written by the same individual. It is an especially promising discourse in which the self is arguably assured of its existence and continuity through the medium of writing. It is an idealistic dream for self-preservation formed and framed through a textual encoding of self-presence. Consequently, the narrator of an autobiographical tale is central to that tale. In other words, the narrator of an autobiography lives within that narrative rather than outside it. She or he is the "I" that narrates and propels the story through the aid of memory and the employment of literary tropes. Viewed in this sense then, and interestingly so, the "I" outside the text is tangentially related to the "I" that inhabits the text. This is because writing autobiographically allows the author-narrator to historically and textually imbue their life with greater cultural and political significance. Consequently, autobiography is as much a filter as it is a mirror through which an unbounded appetite for self-transcendence is textually and artfully projected through the medium of writing.

It stands to reason then that autobiography is enormously relevant in explaining life beyond the beckoning of the immediate situation of here and now. Indeed, writing the self autobiographically is a complex mixture of subjective experience, re-framing of those experiences in discourse, interrogating memory for intuition and interpretation of those experiences. In this sense, we can argue that autobiography is a Cartesian project of clear and distinct individualism. However, it is also significant to note that the life represented in an autobiographical narrative is often full of jumps and leaps, gaps and inconsistencies. It is indeed in the realization of the self's dominating appetite to storify a life that is simultaneously too diverse and too disjointed to be exhausted, that autobiographers try to artfully define, shape and frame their life-narrative as a meaningful discursive ontogeny. As a corollary, it could be rightly deduced that autobiography is a creation, a discovery

and an imitation of the self through the act and art of writing. This is because it is through the act of writing that the self and its representations become related and integrated, take on an emblematic form, articulate a particular shape and image and endlessly reflect that image back and forth between themselves. This is why in organizing their material, autobiographers may leave out whatever they wish and include anything they wish; they may turn their books into a litany, a confession, an apology, a cathartic act, a collection of anecdotes or gossip, or even a place to wash dirty laundry.

They may also turn the autobiographical act into a space for accentuating differences between themselves and others in order to either set the record straight, assert racial superiority, or to score a political and/or ideological point. Most often they do this by demonizing the other through a process of *objectification*, that is, they frame their narratives through the trajectory of overarching social hierarchies: them/us, inside/outside, good/bad, native/stranger, etc. Similarly, they may choose to disclose truths about themselves and their loved ones, or they may hide certain unpleasant events from the prying eyes of the reading public.

Furthermore, in autobiography the author is also the narrative voice. For this reason the author-speaker in the autobiographical text directly addresses the reader through the medium of narration whereby events are carefully selected and interpreted to suit the intentions of the writer. In fact, as noted earlier, autobiographical narratives are self-reflexive accounts of the life of the biographee-subject. However, there are times when the autobiographer will deploy his or her powers of reflexive monitoring with the aim of objectifying other people, religions, or ideologies. Here the author- speaker will exploit the strength of what Philippe Lejuene calls the "autobiographical pact"[1] ----a sort of an unwritten agreement between the autobiographer and his reading public who a priori assumes that what he or she is saying is corrigible, verifiable, and matter-of-fact. Armed with this knowledge, the autobiographical subjects would then proceed to transfer onto

the "other" the properties of an object by usurping the power to narrate as well as interpret the life and actions of the "othered' in a way that fits their ideological, political, or religious agenda.

1.3   Statement of the problem

Part of the problem of studying autobiography lies in its truth claim---that is in its self-proclamation as a true and factual tale about the individual focusing on the growth and development of his or her personality over a certain period of time. However, most often, researchers have neglected the possibility of autobiography becoming the story of the life of other people rather than the life of the writer. For in narrating the story of his or her life, the writer may be forced by political, sociological and/ or historical circumstances or expediencies to also co-opt the story of others into their own. Consequently, the important question left unanswered is how does the writer tell the story of others in his or her text? This study is aimed at examining this question by looking at the narrative strategies employed by the autobiographers under study in telling the story of others alongside their own.

One fundamental thing about autobiography is that unlike biography where the narrative is believed to be hinged on objectivity, it is a subjective rendering of a person's life by their own self. Consequently, autobiography cannot be divorced from the vested interest of the author-narrator. Hence, even though it is a reflexive narrative as pointed out above, autobiography cannot be detached from its subject. In other words, in autobiography the subject (the writer) and the object (the life, story) are organically fused. This then raises the question of objectivity in reporting not only the life of the author-narrator but that of others. In this regard whereas there is an assumed disinterestedness in biography because the writer is detached from the story, it will be difficult to claim the same for autobiography. This could make autobiography an overly sentimental,

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subjective, and emotional narrative. This in turn makes it imperative to study the "othering process" in autobiographical narratives such as the ones under study.

Likewise, as noted earlier, autobiographical texts are in the final analysis nothing but representations. In this context, it is significant to affirm that an autobiographical subject's text is, to all intents and purposes, a seeing and a textualizing form, a kind of writing strategy, which, however, as Jacques Derrida would argue, never touches the soil, as it were, for the writer has only made a writing of a *reality*[2], rather than out of the real, matter-of-fact reality of his or her life or biographical details, for all such details, are rather, his or her own *visual*[3] , imaginative, and semantic practice within the textual spaces of narrativity. Viewed in this way, autobiography is a metaphorical and often hyperboli*c* narrative that has axiological pretentions toward reality. To put it in yet another way: neither Mandela's, Mohamad's, or Gandhi's books portray or reflect a real, transfactually active life, or *historical* self, but necessarily and inescapably a metaphorical self, a self which has been reduced to its semiotic and linguistic play of, in the words of Terence Hawkes, "the shape and structures of the activity of writing" (144). In a nutshell, even the author's presentation of his or her life is only a text. In this sense, an autobiographical narrative is not factual, corrigible, and transfactual knowledge about a transcendentally real person, a self, or other people's, languages, cultures, and landscape but a text----an impossible dream of plenitude, in which the self is no more than a system of distinctions and hierarchical oppositions.

1.4   Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are mainly but not limited to the following:

1) To explore how political autobiographies of Mahathir Mohamad, M.K. Gandhi, and Nelson Mandela become a process of objectification of an/other.

2) To examine why these autobiographical compositions could be turned into an objectification of an/other.

3) To explore the narrative strategies used in these autobiographies to achieve the objectification of an/other.

4) To highlight the consequences of the change in focus from the "self" to "other" in understanding autobiographical narratives as discourse of power.

1.5   Significance of the study

Interest in non-fictional genres of autobiography and memoirs has generated a lot of studies each with its particular concern. Some scholars have dealt with conceptual problems related to this genre[4] (De Man 1979; Lejuene 1989; Gusdorf 1980; Olney 1980); feminist scholars see it as a way to resist oppression through the use of narratives about the self (Buss 1993; Perrault 1995; Nueman 1991; Smith and Watson 1992; Friedman 1988; Benstock 1988; Gilmore 1994; 1990); others tackle problems of memory, representation, selection, and organisation of materials in autobiography (Ray 2000; Eakin 1985; Bruner 1990; Pascal 1960). Still other scholars view it as a conduit for expressing ideologies as well as an avenue for inscribing their identity on national imaginaries (Lionnet 1989; Bergland 1994; Huddart 2008; Holden 2008). Scholars such as Derrida (1988); Lejuene (1989) and Barthes (1977) on the other hand focus on the centrality of the reader in realizing the autobiographical text as narrative performance. This study on the other hand intends among other things to examine how autobiography becomes a process of *objectification*[5] of others. In other words the study will focus on how autobiography shifts from being the story of the "self" to that of others often with negative consequences or outcomes.

My thesis will add to the contemporary understanding of autobiography by specifically looking at how it is used to objectify the non-self which in this case is more than the individual person but includes among other things competing ideologies, beliefs, religions, cultures, etc.

This thesis draws on theoretical developments linking autobiography with identity formation processes by scholars such as Paul de Man, Gilmore, Smith, Watson, Anderson, Stanton, and Bruss, to mention a few examples, but it goes further in that it explores how autobiography is used to narrate the story of the non-self which, in the process, is made to mutate into an object and subject of difference from the self. This is largely achieved through turning the non-self into an object of ridicule, disdain, demonization and humour. In addition, my approach investigates the narrative strategies employed in achieving this objectification in the texts under study. As a means of doing this, my approach combines close reading of the texts under study by situating them within the social and political contexts of their production.

As noted earlier, one of the central arguments of this thesis is that autobiography is a means of objectifying the non-self 'other'[6]. In this respect, objectification presupposes the othering of people, objects, entities, mechanisms, concepts, structures, and beliefs. Objectification is viewed as a process of identity formation based on the taxonomy of difference in the social world of the author-narrator shaped by his or her desires and beliefs. In broader terms, it is the contention of this thesis that objectification can be achieved through association of the objectified with certain qualities, traits, symbols, images, and events. These qualities, traits, symbols, and images are most often negative.

1.6   Theoretical Framework

As much as possible the discussion in this thesis will be framed within the template of postcolonial theory, a wide concept that binds together a set of theoretical concerns in fields as diverse as literature, history, sociology, philosophy, and psychology. Postcolonial theory as an epistemological enterprise addresses among other things issues of identity, race and racism, belonging, domination, subordination, power relations, class divisions, spatial configurations, intercultural contacts, and ideological formations as they are imbricated in cultural and literary texts. It is a reading strategy or rather "a way of

reading" (Bill Ashcroft xvi) that allows the critic to identify ideological and "political sediments in a literary text" (Mark Paryz 2) by critically evaluating the modes of representation that are woven in the tapestry of a narrative. This is the sense in which postcolonial theory sees "textuality as a site of resistance" (Paryz 8), a domain where the dominant discourse is interrogated for its hidden ideological assumptions. In essence a postcolonial reading will more often than not unsettle the dominant rhetoric of a text by carefully "reworking its tropes" (ibid) thereby widening the scope of its interpretation. Even more, postcolonial theory is concerned with what Edward Said (1983) sees as the worldliness of the text or its *locatedness*. Said describes this as the text's "status as an event having sensuous particularity as well as historical contingency, [. . .] incorporated in the text itself, an infrangible part of its capacity for conveying and producing meaning" (39).

This observation presupposes that texts are historically, culturally, and socially positioned in the course of their production. A natural corollary is that texts must be studied in the contexts of their historical positionality in attempts to derive meaningful epistemological interpretations from them. A postcolonial reading is therefore an embedded critique that is framed by, and thus dependent on, specific cultural and historical contexts.

Furthermore, postcolonial theory seeks a resituating of literature not only in relation to other genres and discourses but in relation to social institutions (discursive formations) and non-discursive practices (e.g. context, history, society). On this view, the formal (textual) and the historical and social (non-discursive practices) are complementary, rather than opposites. Patently, in postcolonial reading the text and its author are evaluated in relationship to historical and cultural contexts. Even more fundamentally, postcolonial reading strategy presumes that subjectivity exists in various forms of cultural, historical,

and self-chosen layers of power and these are inscribed in texts. Postcolonial theory refuses a rigid distinction between "text" and "context", "literary" and "non-literary". Yet in seeking to reconcile "text" and "context" (or actually hold the two in constant tension), postcolonial theory conceptualizes "social context" as a "textual device" (a discursive practice, or as a narrative construction) and indeed conceptualizes History (or the Real) as only a different kind of text or discursive practice. Thus, for postcolonial critics, the text is viewed "as a cultural practice" (Ashcroft xx). In this regard, one of the primary concerns of postcolonial theory is forging "material and discursive connections between the text and its cultural grounding" (Ashcroft xx). By the same token, postcolonial theory presumes that human experience is shaped by ideology and ideological discourses, practices, and institutions. This is why postcolonial theory is preoccupied with among other things the interrogation of ideological assumptions, political and social differentiation, as well as scrutinizing the discursive formations generated through social interactions.

Postcolonial theory is equally concerned with issues of textual mis-representation of especially the perceived 'other' in narratives written by both colonial (European) and postcolonial (native) writers. In this regard, mis-representation mostly arises as a result of the enormous power that the writers wielded in their hands which they textually deploy to construct the image of the non-self/other as they desire. Centrally important in this observation is that the portrayal of the 'other' and its resultant image in textual constructions such as the autobiography and memoir are most of the time not a true reflection of the person(s) or groups being described. This is the sense in which Said links narrative with imperialism because they both have the capacity to monopolize and control an entire system of representation. Thus, for Said (1993) postcolonial theory in the main "expand the areas of engagement as well as the terrain" (379) of contestation not only with "Europe" but even within discourses produced by postcolonial writers.

The discourse of autobiography especially that written by people from postcolonial societies is more often than not organised around issues of domination, resistance, difference, subordination, exclusion and inclusion, as well as identity formation. Indeed, one of the perennial concerns of postcolonial literary writings is what Taura S. Napier (2007) calls "the search for a name" (87) by especially the "author-protagonists" (Holden 6) in self-reflexive narratives such as the autobiography and the memoir. In fact, if "cultural difference, social authority, and political discrimination" (Homi Bhabha 438) are some of the defining characteristics of postcolonial discourse, it is reasonable to argue that there is no better place to observe the intricacies and imbrications of these concepts than in autobiographical writings. Postcolonial theory is equally concerned with giving testimonies by postcolonial writers (i.e. "selves") especially in their attempts to challenge and dislodge assumptions about the so called natives in colonial discourses ranging from historiography to literature. One literary genre that allow postcolonial writers to give testimony of their experiences is autobiography. It is my contention that the template of autobiography is a suitable site for the operationalization of postcolonial concepts such as "self", "identity" and "objectification". In view of this, an attempt will be made to explain these concepts as they are used in this thesis.

1.6.1   Issues of Definition

The term "autobiography" was first used in English by the poet and critic Robert Southey in 1805. Indeed, Southey is credited with coining the word "autobiography" in his attempts to critique essays written in the English periodical *Quarterly Review*. Since then the term has acquired new semantic currency especially after the emergence of the Romantic revolution that stressed the importance of individual feelings in literary compositions.

In an attempt to properly situate the discourse of autobiography in literary scholarship, Philippe Lejuene offered a definition of the genre as "retrospective prose narrative written by a real person concerning his own existence, where the focus is his individual life, in particular the story of his own personality" (4). To be sure autobiography is a unique form of writing because in it the narrator is the protagonist. Fundamentally, the story in autobiography is not anchored on objectivity because it is a subjective rendering of a person's life by his or her own self. Indeed, Karl Weintraub (cited in Smith 1995) has observed that the subject of autobiography invariably "concerns a major component of modern man's self-conception: the belief that, whatever else he is, he is a unique individuality, whose life task is to be true to his very own personality" (55). Thus, Mark Zuss (1995) could say that autobiography is a kind of writing "that is constructive, a mediating act that strings along on its narrative thread disparate identities and temporal disjunctures […]" that are textually constructed through narrative framing (29). In connection to this, Louis Renza (1980) has cogently argued that autobiography is "a unique, self-defining mode of self-referential expression" (16).

In fact, the self-referentiality of autobiography is not in doubt because its narrative is structured mostly around the ontogeny of a single, dominating consciousness. Consequently, autobiography cannot be divorced from the vested interest of the author-narrator. It will not be farfetched, therefore, to say that autobiography's horizons of significance could be centrally located in its attempt to fashion out an identity for the author-narrator. It follows then that autobiography is a compelling demonstration of an identity-formation project in which the self features very prominently. Even more, it could also be viewed as an effective discourse of power and domination.

1.6.2   Objectification

Objectification is a notoriously contentious concept in social theory and analysis. Consequently, it has been defined by several scholars in various disciplines. For instance, Immanuel Kant sees it as a process that involves stripping a person of their personhood (cited in Gervais 44). Nick Haslam (2006) on the other hand associates it with a loss or disregard for an individual's emotions, autonomy, and liveliness. This process, he argues, further alienates the persons involved thereby turning them into things (cited in Gervais 74). Philosopher Martha Nussbaum also echoes similar sentiments when she suggests that objectification is a process that "entails making into a thing, treating as a thing, something that is really not a thing." She further argues that this process turns what is objectified into objects and tools that are "inert, violable, fungible, or interchangeable with similar objects, as well as lacking in self-determination" (cited in Gervais 6). In yet another formulation, Jamie Goldenberg (2013) describes objectification as "any instrumental subjugation of a people by those with more power (cited in Gervais 81). Sarah Gervais (2013) on her part sees objectification as a process whereby "a person's body parts or functions are separated from the person, reduced to the status of instruments, or regarded as capable of representing the entire person" (2). Rae Langton (2009; cited in Rector 19) has argued that objectification also involves "[t]reating the other person as if they are silent, lacking in the capacity to speak". In other words, when people, either singly or collectively, are denied the power and agency of speech, they are being subtly objectified. This process of rendering the "other" silent ultimately results in their depersonalization "so that no individuality or integrity" (Dworkin 2000[1985]; cited in Rector 15) is made available to them. This is the sense in which Rector (2014) describes objectification as "a perceptual error in which the truth of (the existence) of others is either obscured or not honored" (21). In short, objectification most often entails the exclusion of "the "other" from our consideration of what really matters" (Rector 77).

It is against the foregoing background that in fashioning out a working definition of objectification I try to incorporate the ideas of Kant, Nussbaum, Langton, Rector and Haslam. Thus objectification as used in this discussion implies the 'thingfication' of the nonself (the 'other') by attributing some negative qualities to it or by denying or ignoring its presence or existence in a shared social space with the 'self'. The nonself/other in this sense become the object of the autobiographer's scorn, sneering, ridicule, mockery, or even obliteration through textual silencing. Even more importantly, objectification as a concept used herein is viewed as a process of identity formation based on the taxonomy of difference in the social world of the author-narrators shaped by their desires and beliefs. Hence, it is my view that most often this narrative of difference is framed through a trajectory of overarching social hierarchies such as "them/us", "inside/outside", "good/bad", "clean/dirty". In broader terms, it is the contention of this discussion that objectification can be achieved through association of the objectified with certain qualities, traits, symbols, images, and events. Moreover, these qualities, traits, symbols, and images are most often negatively presented from the vantage point of the author-narrator. It is in line with this that the present discussion examines how autobiography becomes a process of *objectification*. From this perspective the discussion focuses on how autobiography shifts from being the story of the self to that of others often with negative consequences or outcomes. In this context the discussion draws on theoretical developments linking autobiography with identity formation processes by scholars such as Paul de Man, Leigh Gilmore, Julia Watson, Sidonie Smith, Linda Anderson, Domna Stanton, and Elizabeth Bruss, to mention a few examples. But it goes further in that it explores how autobiography is used to narrate the story of the nonself which, in the process, is made to mutate into an object and subject of difference.

1.6.3   Autobiography, Self, and Identity

In this section I will attempt to explore the relationship between autobiography and the concepts of "self" and "identity". As a means of doing this an attempt will also be made to clarify the meanings of these notoriously ambiguous concepts as well as to highlight the context(s) in which they are used in this thesis.

That the autobiographical project is about the existential question of being is not disputable. In fact, the inherent urge to document the self for the present as well as for the future is central to autobiographical writings. Certainly, autobiography as a literary production is propelled by the desire of the writing self to create, nurture, sustain and preserve an identity that is both real and imaginary. It is real because it is supposedly about a living, historical person but imaginary because it is a textual composition. In fact the creation of this image and/or identity can be seen as part of the human desire for continuity in the face of immanent mortality that has been and will continue to be the bane of human existence. Thus, in the urge to preserve the self through writing, the author-narrator of autobiographical text unwittingly creates a new identity for his or herself.

1.6.3.1   The Concept of "Identity" in Autobiography

Identity is a notoriously complicated and unclear concept that prominently features in various fields of knowledge. It is a concept that defies a single, totalizing definition. Furthermore, in addition to its diversity and complexity, it is also one of the most appropriated concepts in fields as far apart as Psychology, Literature, Philosophy, Sociology, Anthropology, Theology, and Gender studies. This is largely the case because it is a very important concept in discourses about the self, especially in defining who a person is or what a person wants to be(come).

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) the concept of identity first emerged in the 17th century in tandem with the emergence of what Stuart Hall (cited in Bennett et al 172) calls the "Enlightenment subject", based on "the conception of the human person as a fully centred, unified individual, endowed with the capacities of reason, consciousness and action." This observation ties in the concept of identity with a human agency that is deeply rooted in social practices. In other words, even though identity is largely anchored on the individual, it is nonetheless structured and controlled by the social and physical environment within which a person exists. Indeed, Bayart 1996 (cited in Bouché and Alou 126) has cogently acknowledged the constructedness of identity by describing it as "a cultural, political or ideological construct." In addition to this, some scholars such as Stuart Hall and Judith Butler view identity as a fictional construct----a performance that can be staged as the situation demands. In fact the idea of identity as fiction is amplified by poststructuralist and feminist scholars in their attempt to undermine its assumed solidity in social discourse. In this regard, they see identity as a fiction constructed by a person to put an orderly pattern on the actual complexity and multidimensional nature of the psychological and social worlds he or she inhabits.

Furthermore, identity is also symbolic because it is manifested in representations, knowledge, memories and projects concerning the self in the social world of its existence. Consequently, it is constructed in and by the various discourses and interpretations that intersect at different levels in the social world of the individual. Unarguably, part of the complexity of identity is that it is a concept that is always hyphenated in both its lexis and structure. In connection to this, the multidimensionality of identity could be observed in its semantic diversity as a polymorphic concept of sameness as well as difference. In this regard, a single person can be the locus of various identities that intersect, comingle, separate, coalesce, and contradict one another. Thus a single individual could have multiple 'identities' ranging from personal-identity, national-identity, ethnic-identity,

religious-identity, class-identity, and political-identity. And the one that a person accentuates will depend largely on his or her intention and agenda. This taking-up of preferred identity by a person depending on situation has been described by Bronwyn and Rom Harré (1990; cited in Stephanie Taylor 2010) as "positioning". They explain positioning as the identities conferred and taken up by people in different situations (14). In fact this is the sense in which Michael Bamberg (2010) defines identity as a label "attributed to the attempt to differentiate and integrate a sense of self along different social and personal dimensions" (4). Echoing a similar sentiment, Jenkins (2004) understands identity as a process of "'being' or becoming" (5). In the same vein, Brubaker and Cooper (2008; cited in Jenkins 10) have equally noted how identity is a product of discourse about the "fragmented quality of the contemporary experience of an unstable 'self' […] contingently 'activated' in differing contexts." In this light we, then, come to see identity as a social location where individuals are defined and in turn define themselves as subjects by way of discourse.

It is pertinent to note that most often people search for, and reveal their identities in stories and tales. To put the matter in another way is to say that the search for identity at the level of the individual is always articulated in narrative(s). Consequently, identity formation is constructed through the various discourses that intersect to define the individual. Hence identity formation becomes a product of discourses that are constructed in language. In other words, in trying to search and project his or her identity through the trajectory of language, an individual ends up constructing that identity as an artifice. This fabrication of identity is inevitable because its process is largely based on selection, organization, and integration of various experiences from the vast reservoir of memories accumulated over time. It is indeed in this selection, organization, and integration of events that are separated in both space and time that identity formation resembles narrative construction. Apparently this principle of selection, organization, and

integration is a clear pointer to the fact that identity formation is based on choice and exclusion from the repertoire of experiences available to the person. As a corollary, in constructing his or her identity textually, it follows that not all remembered incidents and events will be included by the subjects in their discourse. In fact, the person will only include those memories that serve his or her ideological, political, social, and religious agendas well.

Viewed from this perspective identity may be considered as no more than a constructed fiction; an attempt to define the "self" in narrative construction as found in autobiography, memoir, journal, and diary. This is the import of Georges Gusdorf's assertion that "autobiography is not a simple recapitulation of the past"; but it is in addition also "the attempt and drama of a man struggling to reassemble himself in his own likeness at a certain moment of his history" (cited in Julie Rak 308).

It is evidently clear that though oral narratives about the self are not uncommon, the educated elites most often narrate the story of their lives in writing. As a matter of fact, without contesting the existence and validity of oral narratives about the self, the point could still be made that the autobiographical act is "a model of self-invention" that is most of the time articulated in writing (Eakin 198-199). However, committing life experiences into writing comes with certain risks. This is because once a life is committed into writing, the self it encodes in the process henceforth lives separately "as a literary phenomenon" on the pages of the autobiographical text (Meyer Spacks 1). In fact, the urge to turn a life into a story reflects the ontological human need to affirm not just the identity but the larger-than-life teleology of the self (Meyer Spacks 18).

This is the reason why narrative selves are not absolutes: like any story they require the imposition of an authoritative "counterfeit coherence" (Boje 2001, cited in Rostron 97) through the selection, distillation, rejection, arranging, and sequencing of events to

achieve narrative unity and coherence. Conceptualized in this way, then, autobiographies are windows through which existence and identity are affirmed through textual encoding.

1.7   Scope and Limitation

This study is primarily about three autobiographical texts written by three prominent postcolonial subjects, two of whom (Mandela and Mahathir) were leaders of their respective countries. The third figure, Gandhi, was the epitome of hope and resistance that favoured nonviolent struggle against oppression and subjugation. These persons have severally and individually influenced their societies for better or worse. Hence, the stories of their lives as portrayed in their autobiographies are important repositories of wisdom, hope, affirmation, disavowal and controversy. In each writer one can observe an appreciable degree of rhetoric of protest and affirmation, inclusion and exclusion. Mandela and Gandhi, for instance, extensively use the *admisericordiam* or "the appeal to pity" rhetoric to further their agenda and propel their narratives forward. Mahathir Mohamad on the other hand favours the use of the rhetoric of political exclusion to carve a niche for himself as an "ultra". In spite of this it is important to examine these narratives with a view to unearthing fractures, ambiguities, and gaps, as this will shed more light on their personalities. It is important also to interrogate whether or not they are free agents writing a factual story about their experiences. The study will also look at how they tell the stories of others in their texts.

In this sense, the study will look at the subject status of Mahathir, Mandela, and Gandhi in the texts with a view to uncovering hidden motives, gaps, silences and contradictions inherent in the texts. The study will in addition look into other factors that affect the narration, the hailing and interpellation of the writers, the ideological instruments at work at the time of the production of the texts.

1.8   Research methodology

The methodology to be employed for this research will be largely based on the textual analysis of the primary texts. However, other texts that have direct bearing on the subject matter will also be closely studied with a view to enunciate issues that are relevant to the research area.

1.9   Structure of the Thesis

The arrangement of chapters in this thesis is guided by certain considerations. Firstly, the chapters about the three primary texts studied in this thesis are arranged to reflect regional proximity as well as thematic similarity of the primary texts studied in this thesis. As a result of regional proximity, the memoir of Mahathir Mohamad is discussed in chapter 3, and M.K. Gandhi's autobiography in chapter 4.On the other hand, discussion of M.K. Gandhi's text is followed by that on Nelson Mandela's autobiography in chapter 5 because of some observable thematic similarities.

Similarly, one can track down stylistic resemblance between Gandhi's autobiography and Mandela's autobiography. This stylistic proximity can be seen in their textual packaging of suffering, courage, perseverance, defiance, and above all forgiveness. Of course, these laudable virtues are missing in Mahathir's memoir. In short, Gandhi's and Mandela's texts are an example of a "humanitarian discourse" (Whitlock 23) that critique the brutality of the colonial project in South Africa and India respectively.

Yet another point of convergence between the narratives of Gandhi and Mandela is how they duplicitously render certain unpleasant things invisible in their texts. Examples of these could be seen in the way Gandhi renders the "troubling presence" (Whitlock 35) of the native Africans invisible in his text. The same could also be observed in Mandela's text where he attempts to exonerate the ANC from the violence that engulfed South Africa during the period of transition to multiracial democracy. In addition, as pointed out

earlier, there is an observable thematic contiguity between the autobiography of Gandhi and that of Mandela. This could be seen in their avowed political and social activism as well as their trenchant representation of an "aesthetics of violence, sympathy, and pain" (Whitlock 24). Consequently, placing the Mandela chapter directly after Gandhi's will help the reader to easily see these connections in the discussions.

On the other hand, even though there is an observable "chronological proximity" (Gillian Whitlock 23) in terms of the years of publication of Mahathir's memoir and Mandela's autobiography (there was only 15 years gap between Mandela's autobiography (1994) and Mahathir's memoir published in 2009), the authors' approach to issues are more often than not, very divergent. For instance, the two texts have attempted in their different ways to interrogate the challenges of living in multiracial societies. However, whereas Mandela sees these challenges as a great opportunity for South Africa to harness the benefits of racial harmony and social if not political blending, Mahathir on the other hand views the multiracialism of Malaysia as a great threat to the somatic existence of the Malay race. As a result of this belief, he detests political pluralism as at the time he was writing his memoir, because it opens an avenue for challenging the hegemony of United Malays National Organisation (UMNO).

1.9.1 Chapter 1: Introduction.

This section introduces the major arguments of the thesis. The section outlined the four central arguments of the thesis.

Background to the study:

This section provides a general overview of the concerns of autobiographical narratives such as autobiography and memoir. The section briefly discussed the centrality of the "I" in autobiographical compositions.

Statement of the problem:

This section suggested that most of the studies conducted in and on autobiography has focussed on its truth claim as a factual story of the life of the author-narrator. However, most often, researchers have neglected the possibility of autobiography becoming the story of the life of other people rather than the life of the writer. This study hoped to fill that gap by looking at how autobiography could be used to narrate the story of the non-self, often with negative consequences.

Research Questions:

This section outlined the four guiding questions that framed this study.

Research objectives:

This section outlined the four research objectives that formed the bedrock of the thesis.

Theoretical framework:

This section briefly introduced postcolonial theory as the main theory in which most of the arguments were framed.

Scope and limitation:

This section explained the scope and limitations of the study.

Research methodology:

This section briefly explained that the study is largely qualitative and text based.

1.9.2 Chapter 2:

A review of relevant literature is carried out in this section. The review was aimed at locating the gap that the present thesis intended to fill.

1.9.3 Chapter 3:

Autobiography, Grand narrative and the Rhetoric of Self-Fashioning in Mahathir Mohamad's *A Doctor in the House*: This chapter discussed how Mahathir Mohamad re-fashioned his identity through the trajectory of three grand narratives: "Being a Malay", "UMNO", and "NEP".

1.9.4 Chapter 4:

The Gandhian Metaphysics of Identity in *My Experiments with Truth.* : This chapter examined how M.K. Gandhi re-created his identity in his autobiography by using the Indian subaltern groups in both India and South Africa as palimpsest on which to inscribe his chosen identity. In addition, the chapter has also discussed how Gandhi textually elided the presence of the native Africans in South Africa in his autobiography.

1.9.5 Chapter 5:

Autobiography, Identity, and the Phenomenology of Violence in Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom*: This chapter focussed on how Nelson Mandela emplots his identity through the use of violence as a tropological device in his autobiography. In this regard, the chapter had focussed on how Gandhi objectified his opponents, especially Inkatha Freedom Party (IPF) and Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) by portraying them as violent and intolerant when compared with the African National Congress, whose members were portrayed as civilised, non-violent, and tolerant.

1.9.6 Chapter 6:

Conclusion: This section summed up the whole arguments of the thesis.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The position of autobiography as a form of non-fictional prose has helped in opening it to a variety of studies. Consequently, scholars differ in their areas of focus in its study. The beginning of interest in autobiographical criticism could be traced to Georges Gusdorf (Olney 8), who stresses the importance of autobiography. In his widely read "Conditions and Limits of Autobiography" (1956), he considers St. Augustine's Confessions a milestone signalling the early origins of autobiography, in which the "theological mirror of the Christian soul is a deforming mirror that plays up without pity the slightest faults of the moral personality" (34). Considered the pioneer of the theory and criticism of autobiography in our times, Gusdorf, in the same essay, draws attention to the fact that autobiography has not always been a universal phenomenon, that interest in the self has appeared only in recent centuries, that "the conscious awareness of the singularity of each individual life," accepted by autobiography, "is the late product of a specific civilization" (29). He reminds us that in primitive societies the individual lives under communitarian values, functions fully as an integrated member of the society, never opposing "himself to all others, but [is] very much with others in an interdependent existence […]." (29). consequently, his role in the community and the name he receives are always bound to ancestry. These structures "governed by the principle of repetition" promote an "unconsciousness of personality" and a lack of interest in the life of the individual. Hence in the Middle Ages, biographies were the medium for consecrating important and outstanding lives, becoming a well-grounded literary genre which had as its main purpose the edification of the lives of the saints and secular rulers about whom the biography was written. Gusdorf further argues that the rise of autobiography is closely aligned to spiritual and cultural revolution. In this regard man sees himself as worthy of being immortalized. There is an overwhelming desire for a shift from public to private history. He also sees the beginning of literary autobiography as emanating from the

unholy alliance between Christian and classical thought in the Middle Ages, further accentuated by the questioning spirit brought about largely by the Copernican revolution. Furthermore the Protestant Reformation that was grounded in revolt also added momentum to the desire for written self-revelation.

Notice that in this formulation, Gusdorf is restricting the autobiographical writing tradition to something that is only available to the patriarchal Western consciousness. In doing this, Gusdorf is merely reasserting the hegemonic vision of Western superiority that is built around the ideology of pernicious exclusion of the non-Western other in supposedly "civilized" activities such as, to borrow Roy Pascal's famous phrase, the "search for the true self". In fact, in this ideology women were also categorized in the same group with the non-Western other and as such they too were not capable of writing something as reflective as the autobiography. It would be useful to note that despite its ring of unjustified essentialism, Gusdorf's assertions have been taken and reformulated by scholars such as Roy Pascal who in his *Design and Truth in Autobiography* (1960) unreflectively argues that there is no autobiography "outside Europe" (22). Yet in spite of this damning peroration, Pascal still fails to advance a single reason as to why such should be the case.

In fact later happenings in the field of autobiographical studies have clearly exposed the weakness of both Gusdorf's and Pascal's formulations. This is because today it has been proven beyond any reasonable doubt that writing autobiography is not the exclusive preserve of the "superior Western consciousness". In fact, writings by women in the autobiographical mode are today the norm rather than the exception. The same could also be said of the non-Western other. In fact the preponderance of autobiographies written by women has sparked the interest of scholars from fields as far apart as Psychology and Literature[1]. For instance, Domna Stanton (1984) has suggested that despite the generic

affiliation of all autobiographies, a sharp distinction could still be drawn between those written by women as opposed to men because they are unique. In this view, she suggested that such writings by women should be called *autogynography* to distinguish it from those written by men. In an elegant formulation she argues that this is necessary, "Because of woman's different status in the symbolic order," she continues, "autogynography[…]dramatized the fundamental alterity and non-presence of the subject, even as it asserts itself discursively and strives toward an always impossible self-possession" (15). In fact, we can still counter the assertions of Gusdorf, Misch, Pascal, and a host of others in their league by pointing to the existence of autobiographies in Arabic from as early as the ninth century[2.] Female or feminist autobiography was also at the heart of Catherine Savage Brosman's passionate discussion in her (2005) essay "Autobiography and the Complications of Postmodernism and Feminism". In this essay she stressed that critics of autobiography must of necessity pay particular attention to "racial and sexual differences" because there are "deep emotional and cognitive differences between the sexes" in attempts to share their experiences in autobiographical writings (99,101). She further notes that in female autobiographies there is the persistent presence of "a particular feminine voice […] that speak[s] with authority outside of the cultural tyranny exercised by men […]" using a new language that is free and (citing Shosana Felman 1975) '"outside of the phallagocentric structure […] [of] masculine meaning"' (101,102). She contends that this unique female voice occupying an Archimedean position within the female "autogynographical" tradition is one of the defining characteristics of feminine autobiography.   The purpose of female autobiography, she suggests, should be to "deal with reality by denarratizing it (undoing familiar plot and character representation) and removing it from conventional historical considerations", and "the paradigms of logical (scientific) thinking" (101). In this sense

therefore female autobiography employs a poetics of subversion that undermines phallagocentric ideology that is at the heart of the male writing tradition.

Karl Joachim Weintraub in his *The Value of the Individual: Self and Circumstance in Autobiography* (1978) has echoed Gusdorf's assertion by saying that autobiography originated from "modern man's self-conception: the belief that whatever else he is, he is a unique individuality, whose life task is to be true to his very own personality" (xi). It is noteworthy that the "self" in the title of Weintraub's book exclusively refers to "man", most speculatively white, middle class.

In yet another perspective, James Olney (1980) hinting at the fictional status of autobiography's writing-speaking-"I", has argued in his book *Autobiography: Essays, Theoretical and Critical* that "the subject of autobiography produces more questions than answers, more doubts by far (even of its existence) than certainties" (5). Olney is unarguably responsible for the observable shift in the conception of the status of the writing-"I", which, in the 1980s, became the main focus of theorists on autobiography. Studies on autobiography from the late nineteenth century to early twentieth century were mostly focused on the *bios* of the autobiographer and were especially fixated on historical accuracy, assessing the quality of life as it was lived and the truth and veracity contained in it while encoding the life story. Of course this trend is no longer fashionable in autobiography criticism especially with the advent of poststructuralism that favours a hermeneutic of suspicion as a critical tool that questions the often taken-for-granted concepts and ideas. This could be seen in the works of scholars such as Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes, Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson to mention a few examples.

Elizabeth W. Bruss' *Autobiographical Acts: The Changing Situation of a Literary Genre* (1976) was more prescriptive than descriptive. In her elaborate discussion about the protean nature of autobiography, Bruss sets out to teach the reader how to properly

identify and thereafter read an autobiography. In this regard she draws out some criteria for identifying autobiography: 1) An autobiographer, according to her, undertakes a dual role. He is the source of the subject matter and the source for the structure to be found in his text. 2) Information and events reported in connection with the autobiographer are asserted to have been, to be, or to have the potential for being the case. 3) Whether or not what is reported can be discredited, whether or not it can be reformulated in some more generally acceptable way from another point of view, the autobiographer purports to believe in what he asserts (10-11). In a word, then, Bruss' discussion still centres on the issue of truth and historical accuracy in autobiography. It should be recalled that this approach to the study of autobiography was rather problematic because it tends to ignore the literary qualities of autobiographical texts and instead focused more on historiography. It was thus easy for poststructuralist scholars whose interest was in the operation of language within discourse to disparage this reductive approach.

Philippe Lejuene gives an outstanding contribution to autobiography scholarship by inserting the figure of the reader in his theory and also by offering the celebrated terminology, now consecrated, of the "autobiographical pact." Lejuene begins his essay "The Autobiographical Pact" (1973) with the question "Is it possible to define autobiography?"(3). Interestingly while acknowledging that autobiography is a historically protean category, Lejuene, in his first attempts to define it, proposes the following definition of the genre: " Retrospective prose narrative written by a real person concerning his own existence, where the focus is his individual life, in particular the story of his own personality"(4). What separates autobiography from fiction, in his view, is the identity of the proper name, shared by the author, narrator, and protagonist of an autobiographical text which involves a kind of an unwritten contract with the reader that is sealed with the author's signature. This "autobiographical pact," an agreement between author and reader about the form of the work, is the foundation of Lejeune's poetics of

autobiography. Thus, according to him, autobiography can be seen as a "mode of reading as much as it is a type of writing; it is a historically variable contractual effect," in which the history of autobiography would be a "history of its mode of reading" (30).

In a view contrary to Lejeune's, Gilmore doubts the authenticity of the "autobiographical pact" by arguing that the "self" in autobiography which supposedly represents the narrator or autobiographer or protagonist is a "fiction" (121). She explains thus:

Where the author, the text and the protagonist share the same

name, the author's disappearance is almost superfluous for he

is always already overrepresented. Proper names assert an identity

and continuity between the self and language, between a signifier

and signified, and cover over the differences produced by discourse

[…] yet this assertion of a singular voice and subject, of a unique and

unified self, contravenes the very dynamic that enables the autobiogra-

phical act and its characteristic play of identity in language.

(87; original emphasis)

It needs be most emphatically noted that for Gilmore the autobiographical pact so much cherished by Lejuene is an impossibility because the author, one of the pillars of the pact, is simply not available. On this conception, the author is obliterated, or, to put it more lightly, subsumed by the operating mechanisms of discourse.

In his 1979 essay "Autobiography as De-Facement" Paul de Man proposes that autobiography is not a genre of literature but "a figure of reading or of understanding that occurs […] in all texts (22)." He views autobiography as a textual production, not a kind of referentiality in a physical form. For him it is necessarily a fictive exercise that is

rhetorical but not historical in nature. Consequently, what the writers of autobiographies do is to try to imbue their inscription within the text with all the characteristics of a face in order to hide or conceal their own fictionalization or displacement by writing (Anderson, 12). He also problematizes the process of identity formation in autobiographical writings. He suggests that the relationship between life and autobiography is similar to that between an act and its consequences. He explains the problem in the following manner:

> We assume that life produces the autobiography as an act produces its
>
> consequences, but can we not suggest, with equal justice, that the auto-
>
> biographical project may itself produce and determine the life and that
>
> whatever the writer does is in fact governed by the technical demands
>
> of self-portraiture and thus determined in all its aspects by the resources
>
> of his medium? (920).

It is thus the case that for Paul de Man the author of autobiography is seriously constrained by the operating mechanisms of autobiography. On this view, then, rather than seeing autobiography as a literary creation of an autonomous author, the author is rather 'produced' as an after-effect of autobiographical discourse. In this sense, the author is more or less a fictional creation whose existence is only possible within the autobiographical text.

In a similar fashion Mark Zuss (1995) in his essay "Autobiography as a Politics of Metissage: A Pedagogy of Encounter", sees autobiographical production as a "Metissage" (a term he borrows from Francois Lionnet), a complex weave of linguistic, racial, and gendered selves. In his opinion, metissage serves as ways of describing textual practices that deliberately braid the multiple and composite identities intentionally drawn from experience in acts of self authorization. He thus views autobiography as inherently

involving a "split intentionality," dualistic, in that "in the heat of writing, the autobiographical enterprise occludes the writer's own continuity with the "I" being conveyed through his narrative performance" (29). He further explains that autobiography is a "form of writing that is constructive, a mediating act that strings along on its narrative thread disparate identities and temporal disjunctures with their recontextualized memories and referents" (ibid). Notice that this view makes nonsense the belief that the autobiographical subject (writer) is a Cartesian subject that is stable and coherent. Rather than a single personality, the writer of autobiography is a composite of personalities, each competing for a place within the narrative space of the autobiographical text. In an almost similar fashion Folkenflik (1993) in his essay "The Self as Other" has pointed out the duality of the speaking subject in autobiographical discourse. In this sense he sees the self or the writing-"I" in autobiography as a "split subject" that fragments into the self-as-subject as well as the self-as object. Viewed in this way, then, the writing-"I" becomes an elongated consciousness that constantly oscillates back (past) and forth (present) through the medium of writing. In fact this view tallies with that of Laura Marcus (cited in Underwood 32) who suggests that one of the epistemological attractions of autobiography is that it is a medium through which the author can move freely "between subject and object positions […]." [3]

Jacques Derrida introduces a twist to the study of autobiography. His theoretical contributions to an understanding of autobiography could be seen in his attempts to position the reader as an author in his or her own right. Derrida in his lecture "Otobiographies" in *The Ear of the Other* (1988), inaugurates an animated discussion about the many inflections that the "biographical and the autos of the autobiographical" (5) have been submitted to as well as a new approach to the proper name and the signature in autobiographies and the boundary between the *graphien* (the writing) and the *bios* (the life), the system and the subject of the system. Through the homophonic inflection of the

term autobiography into otobiography, the autos, the self as subject of biography is displaced into the otos, the structure of the ear of the other. Derrida suggests that the conception of authorship in autobiography is shared between the "I" and the "other". By changing the auto for oto, he seeks for a "keen ear […] an ear attuned" (21), the ear of the other, to be aligned with the author thereby dismantling the boundaries between the self and the other in autobiographical discourse. In this respect, both the text and its reading are pluralized. The writing-"I" draws up a "contract" with the reader, "a secret contract, a credit account, which has been both opened and encrypted […] an alliance or annulus"(9), where the reader, the other, is one of the members to this contract, and is responsible for the " eternal return," the rebeginning, which is untimely, different, and anachronistic"(19). This "eternal return" generates the "death of the author." The author's life is authenticated when he is no more present, "life returns […] to the name but not to the living, in the name of the living as a name of the dead" (9). Thus, the autobiography's signature is like a credit-facility opened onto eternity and refers back to one of the two I's, the nameless parties to the contract. In yet another place (Points 347) Derrida has similarly argued that the attempts of autobiography to produce and present a self-present self that is unified and coherent is a fictional formulation because that 'self' is only given by and in writing. Thus the self preserved is a different self because by assembling truth about the author's life, truth is re-produced and events are irrevocably changed. Roland Barthes has also echoed similar sentiments when he describes autobiography in his *Image-Text-Music* (1977) as an art of self-abolition. In fact, he likens the autobiographical act to the "simple idea of suicide" because the "pronoun of the imaginary "I"' in autobiography "is *impertinent*" (original italics 56). He also castigated writing in general by seeing it as a place "where our subject slips away", a space "where all identity is lost" (142). Thus for him writing autobiography is an impossible task because language will never allow the writer to say what he or she means. On this view language is a murky and

non-transparent medium that is incapable of capturing let alone representing human experiences.

Similarly, Karl Wentraub (1978) has argued that autobiography can only be understood if the place the author occupies in relation to his life can be reconstructed by the reader. Reading an autobiography properly according to Wentraub means reading with an already existing knowledge of the text's meaning. In this sense, Wentraub ties in epistemology with social and ideological contexts. By this Wentraub meant to stress that just as no text is free from ideological influence, no reader is equally innocent. Both texts and readers are implicated in the ideological construction of meaning.

In *How Our Lives Become Stories: Making Selves* (1999), Paul John Eakin mulls on the notion of the death of the subject/death of the self. This notion indeed heralds the split of the subject of autobiography, thereby causing it to be decentred, and doubled. Yet another important issue raised by Eakin is the "notion of relational identity." His belief is that all identity is relational, that the subject of autobiography to which the pronoun "I" refers to is neither singular nor plural, but is defined by its relation with others i.e. "models of identity […] central to lives and life writing" (47). He considers the most common form of relational life, the story of the self viewed through the prism of its relation with "some key other person, sometimes a sibling, friend, or lover, a parent […] the proximate other to signify the intimate tie to the relational autobiographer" (86). As a matter of fact relational identity is one of the key concepts to be explored in this thesis. This is because the concept of objectification, which is the bedrock of this thesis, is closely connected to relational identity. It is thus the case that for the writers under study in this thesis, the story they tell about themselves is comingled with the stories of others. Indeed this thesis is interested in the way they tell the stories of these relational others in their texts.

Some scholars like Tuija Saresma (1998) see autobiography as a place where the discourses of truth and agency meet and produce the subject. The interest of Saresma in the study of autobiography is, like that of Stanton and others, largely feminist in perspective. In fact women's autobiographical practice has become a terrain for feminist analysis because they are a fruitful ground in studying the recent theoretical debates concerning 'the self, 'the subject' and 'the author'. Following this tradition Saresma also focuses on what she calls the "autobiographics" of autobiography. She uses this term to explain the metaphysics of the "I" in autobiography. In her essay "The Politics of Reading the Autobiographical 'Is'" (2005), she explains the autobiographic as both a description of self-representation and a reading practice. It is specifically concerned with interruptions and eruptions, with resistance and contradictions as strategies of self-representation in autobiography. In this passionate study Saresma interrogates the rhetorical impact of the autobiographical "I". She sees the writing-"I" in women's autobiography as a righting-"I" that challenges the hegemony of male domination.

Echoing Saresma, Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson (2001) have also emphasized the complexity of the autobiographical "I". In their submission, they suggest that "we need to think more critically about the producer of the life narrative" and propose "complicating this autobiographical "I" beyond the 'I' then and the 'I' now framework by attending to the multiple 'I'-thens, to the ideology spoken through the 'I', to the multiple 'I' –nows, and then to the flesh and blood author' (Smith and Watson 58-59). They distinguish four levels of 'I' in autobiographical discourse: the historical 'I', the narrated 'I', the narrating 'I' and the ideological 'I'. Of course each of these "Is" occupy a different metaphysical place in autobiographical production. Similarly, J. Lenore Wright (2006) has also suggested that there are two levels of "self" in autobiographical writings. In this regard, she distinguishes the "ontological self" (the writer-self) from the "rhetorical self" (the written self). She goes further to say that "the interplay between the

rhetorical and the ontological levels of self-representation within autobiography clarifies two features of the human experience: one's relationship to one's self and one's relationship to others" (5).

In *The Philosopher's "I": Autobiography and the Search for the Self* (2006) J. Lenore Wright (2006) also looks at the processes involved in the textual production of autobiography. She argues that writing autobiography invariably involves the three complementing processes of introspection, retrospection, and alterspection. In this regard, "introspection" involves reaching deep into the psyche to dig for those "memories, experiences, emotions, beliefs, and desires" that are buried in it (33). In other words, introspection is a reaching backwards to those important events and memories that shape the personality of the writer. A particularly point of interest is that the process of introspection is *psychological* rather than a physical act because it entails soul-searching for those important memories and events that moulds our personality over a long period of time.

"Retrospection" on the other hand is temporal in nature and most often involves a process of reaching backwards to those important moments, memories, and events that shapes and or constitutes our ontological selves. Retrospection therefore produces self as a historical product or structure.

"Alterspection" conversely involves a disengagement from both the psyche and its history by focusing on the transforming abilities of narrative in general, and self-narration in particular. In this sense, then, alterspection is existential because it deals with the changing nature of the writing-"I" as it emerges in autobiographical discourse. It is reasonable to infer from this that "alterspection" is focused on the changing identity of the writing-subjects in their texts. An important observation is that the identity produced

in autobiography involves the concatenation of the psychological, the temporal, as well as the existential modes of reflection highlighted by Wright.

Berel Lang (1990) on the other hand addresses the technical question of whether autobiography is fact or fiction. In a highly philosophical tone, Berel interrogates the question and arrives at the conclusion that the distinction between fiction and non-fiction is just that i.e. fiction. He says, "The distinction between fiction and non-fiction, it goes: is that distinction fiction or nonfiction?"(169). He then uses this rhetorical question as a spring board for his philosophical enquiries into the status of non-fictional writings like biography and autobiography; whether they are literary or non- literary; fact or fiction etc. After a lengthy discussion Lang concludes that the distinction being made between fiction and nonfiction is untenable because both are literary writings. The point is that since both fiction and nonfiction texts are composed in the written form it would be redundant to seek to separate them into mutually exclusive categories. To put the point in yet another way is to say that both fictional and nonfictional texts cannot escape the structure and complexity of language because both are produced in and by language.

Truth in autobiography has also been interrogated by various critics. The question has always been whether or not the events described in the book tally with how other people have experienced the same events. In other words, is the world what each individual writer of autobiography perceived it to be? For Roy Pascal (1960) truth in autobiography depends on "The seriousness of the author, the seriousness of his personality and his intention in writing" (60). This point is supported by Karl Joachim Weintraub in his *The Value of the Individual: Self and Circumstance in Autobiography* (1978) where he made a canny observation on the subjective bent of autobiography by noting that every autobiography is "written from a specific retrospective point of view, the place at which the author stands in relation to his cumulative experience when he puts interpretative

meaning on his past" (xviii). On this conception there is no way autobiography can be divorced from subjectivity. Thus whatever its pretension, autobiography still remains the subjective and most often selective recollections of its author.

Jerome Bruner (cited in Stephanie Taylor 2010) focuses on the role that autobiography plays in positioning its writer in the world. He suggests that "the ultimate function of autobiography is self-location […]. Through autobiography we locate ourselves in the symbolic world of culture" (34). Similarly, Jessica Lynn Knight (2011) has located the importance of autobiography in its capacity to mediate the sense of selfhood between "the text and the social identity of the author" (179). She accurately noted that autobiography is an important mechanism for the formation of selfhood.

Some scholars such as Robert Smith (1995) and Louis Renza (1977) see autobiography as a space where language plays an important role in giving shape to the image of the writing-"I". Yet, language should be viewed with suspicion, according to them because it is not a transparent medium but is rather complicit in political and ideological domination. Hence we cannot unproblematically assume that language can represent reality. Seen within this context, therefore, the "I" presented through the act of writing, according to Smith "[…] ends up not only as a political and philosophical delusion but as a linguistic one too" (58). In the same vein Renza has observed that the first person pronoun "I" is "under erasure" in autobiography because it is "in disarray as a transparent signifier of an authorial signified" and henceforth any "self-reference (achieved through the "I") becomes another illusion of self-presence" (cited in Smith 58)[4.] Viewed from this perspective, the whole notion of autobiography as a "self-referential document" becomes an illusion, a sort of fiction because once a self is committed (in) to writing the purported self-presence sought by the writing-"I" will disappear in the labyrinth of writing. In the end, what will remain visible is the *graphien* or the writing whereas the *bios*, the self will

only surface as a trope of representation in form of an overarching metaphor. Autobiography becomes a space where writing is synonymous with death or rather it is a space where "death by writing inaugurates life" (136).

Commenting on the "linguistic turn" in the study of autobiography, Paul John Eakin in his *Fictions in Autobiography* (1985) describes the autobiographical act as "a second acquisition of language, a second coming into being or self, a self-conscious self-consciousness" (8-9). Seen in this way, autobiography becomes a place for the textual affirmation of existence of the writing-"I" through linguistic and or textual inscription.

Let me conclude this review with the comprehensive exposition of the historical development of autobiographical studies by Danielle Chassin de Kergommeaux. I will attempt to summarize her views as succinctly as possible.

In her study of "Autofictional Practices" (2005) Danielle Chassin de Kergommeaux has outlined three observable waves in the study of autobiography beginning from early 20th century. The first wave, according to her, was concerned with establishing what constitutes an autobiography. In this sense, then, the first wave was preoccupied with issues of definition. In this regard most theorists take autobiography to be the retrospective narrative of a "self-interested individual intent on assessing the status of the soul or the meaning of public achievement" (Smith & Watson 2).

The second wave, on the other hand, focuses on interrogating the concept of self in autobiography. During this period researchers were particularly interested in interrogating the assumed unity of the autobiographical-"I". In this regard, autobiographies were read to unearth how they manipulate identity-construction through textual encoding. Researchers were particularly interested in how autobiography tries to fix something that is admittedly protean by conferring a forced unity on it. Indeed in the process of

questioning the authenticity of the identity constructed in autobiographies, scholars also challenged the transparency of texts, and questioned the authority of the writing-"I" in telling an objective story about itself. The feminist perspective marked the third wave in autobiographical study. During this period researchers were particularly interested in studying how autobiographical texts are performance in the sense in which Judith Butler (1993) describes it. During this period theorists see identities created by and in autobiographies as no more than an "act", a display, or a spectacle. Viewed in this way, then, the identity being projected in autobiography does not exist prior to its encoding in the text, but is rather a textual production that is created through performance. In this sense, then, the self that is created in autobiographical narrative is a fiction. In broader terms, seeing autobiography as performance also jeopardizes its truth-claim. In this light, we come to see autobiography as a text that does not retell the truth but rather creates a truth through performance. In fact the third wave focused more on agency, positionality, and dialogism. This point is supported by the submission of one of the leading voices of the third wave, Smith and Watson (2001) when they state that:

Theorizing performativity contests the notion of autobiography

as the site of authentic identity. Theorizing positionality, with an

emphasis on situatedness, contest the normative notion of a universal

and transcendent autobiographical subject, autonomous and free. And

theorizing dialogism contests the notion that self-narration

is a monologic utterance of a solitary, introspective subject.

All of these concepts enable more flexible reading practices

And more inclusive approaches to the field of life narrative.

(146)

With the above submission Smith and Watson have succeeded in accurately capturing the areas that autobiographical studies have so far paid particular attention to. These areas are/were "performativity", "positionality" and "dialogism". But as we have seen above the interrogation of each of these areas in the end raises more questions than answers. In fact, it could be noted from this brief review that despite the extensive reach of autobiographical study in the areas of both theory and practice, scholars have not paid attention to how autobiographers employ their narratives to objectify the non-writing - "he,she,it" that they subtly (mis) represent in their texts. This thesis therefore intends to look at how autobiography is used to objectify the non-writing other by looking at the narrative strategies employed by the writers under study.

CHAPTER 3: AUTOBIOGRAPHY, GRAND NARRATIVE AND THE RHETORIC OF SELF-FASHIONING IN MAHATHIR MOHAMAD'S *A DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE*

3.1 Preamble

This chapter looks at the rhetoric of self-fashioning in Mahathir Mohamad's memoir *A Doctor in the House*. The chapter among other things focuses on the rhetorical as well as the narrative strategies employed by Mohamad in conferring an identity on himself. Thus the central argument of the chapter is that in his attempt to re-create himself through the textual practice of memoir-writing he favours a strategy of using a chain of grand narratives to articulate/realize his rhetorical intentions. Part of this strategy is his attempt to articulate a distinctive "Malay identity' through the use of a master metaphor or a metaphorical totalisation of the concept of being "Malay". His narrative is thus orientated towards conferring a forced unity on an otherwise heterogeneous group through a master narrative of binarisms such as us/them, natives/immigrants, inside/outside, etc. Closely allied to this textual practice is his concomitant celebration of the pillarization of the Malaysian nation along ethnic and racial divides. This is mostly signalled by his constant invocation of the tripartite structure of Malaysian society throughout his narrative. Through this style he succeeds in turning his story into a narrative of difference. The chapter further argues that he consciously adopted this strategy because it suited his political as well as ideological agenda within a multiracial and multicultural Malaysia where racial loyalty is a sure way to political prominence. The chapter argues that by deploying a phenomenology of difference Mahathir is able to accomplish the Othering and objectification of the real, in this case the Chinese, the Indians, and those opposed to his political ideology such as PAS and Anwar Ibrahim. More importantly he deftly uses this trajectory of race and racism to project himself as a fighter for Malay rights. The chapter concludes that in spite of all this Mahathir has failed to create a concrete image

for himself because he emplots his narrative in language, which, as the poststructuralists have argued, is a medium he has no control over. Thus at the end of the memoir he dwells at the margins of his identity-construction discourse.

3.2   Introduction.

People write autobiographies and memoirs for a variety of reasons. Some write to confess their past sins and misdeeds (Augustine's *Confession;* J.J. Rousseau's *Confessions*); others write to encode how they managed to overcome overwhelming desires of the flesh (Gandhi's *My Experiments with Truth*); yet others write to document how they were able to overcome institutional persecution and violence through perseverance and tolerance (Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom*). At yet another level, some people write autobiographies and memoirs to put into circulation their contribution to the growth and development of their race, ethnic group, or nation. Arguably, Mahathir Mohamad's memoir *A Doctor in the House* falls into this last category.

Before going into the main discussion it is important to situate the discourse properly by drawing connections between writing, narrative and life. The chapter will also have a preliminary discussion on the status of memoir writing. In this regard, my discussion will attempt to probe the argument surrounding the fictional or non-fictional status of memoir writing.

3.3   Mahathir Mohamad: A brief Biodata.

Mahathir bin Mohamad was born on 20 December 1925 in Alor Setar, Kedah, a northern state in Malaysia. He is the youngest of nine siblings. He attended the Government English School, Kedah in 1933. In 1947, he went to University of Malaya in Singapore where he graduated with a Medical degree in 1953. Upon graduation, he worked as a Medical doctor with the government for four years. He left the government service in 1957 to start his own private clinic. He has always been interested in politics. He joined

the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) and was elected Member of Parliament in 1964. He was expelled from UMNO in 1969 as a result of his conflict with the first Prime Minister of Malaysia Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj. He was brought back to the party in 1972. He held various Ministerial posts under successive UMNO governments. He became the Prime Minister of Malaysia on July 16, 1981. He ruled for 22 years. He finally retired in October 2003. His memoir *A Doctor in the House* was published in 2009, six years after his official retirement from participatory politics. Writing in the "Preface" of the memoir, Mahathir declares that, "This is the story of Malaysia as I see it. This is also my story" (x).

Mahathir Mohamad wrote his memoir against a background of a barrage of mixed reactions regarding his tenure as the longest serving prime minister in recent Malaysian history. In this regard, there are two opposing views in the debate about his tenure as prime minister. On the one hand are those that see him as a symbol of change and development i.e. a leader that literally lifted Malaysia from the mire of poverty and underdevelopment to a position that placed her among "the most developed in the developing world" (*A Doctor in the House* x). This camp further argued that it was his administrative acumen that fast-tracked the modernisation of the Malaysian nation. This achievement however, is not without some negative consequences. For instance, although Verma (2002) has duly acknowledge Mahathir's contribution in modernising Malaysia, he nonetheless argues that "Mahathir had […] consolidated personal power, protected cronies, and expanded the powers of the executive" (112).

The other side of the debate however, view him as a dangerous dictator who was brutal in dealing with the slightest opposition to his regime. In this regard, they were quick to point out how under his watch as prime minister, the human rights of Malaysians were abused with utmost impunity. Along these lines, Khoo Boo Teik has noted that during his time as prime minister, Mahathir's "will to power was intimidating" (169) because "he

was wont to consider any challenge to his leadership or regime as foreshadowing anarchy" (188). His opponents equally accused him of perfecting, glorifying, and solidifying racial discrimination within the Malaysian body politic. In short, his critics accused him of hyping racial, religious and ideological bias to the level of state policy. For example, Claire Dawn Morais argues in her Ph.D. thesis (2008) that during his tenure as prime minister, Mahathir "shaped public policy, gave the national conversation a far more combative tone, and altered relations between races structurally and socially. In the process he also tore at the tolerance and accommodation he himself acknowledged had been part of the fabric of Malaysian identity" (11). Other critics have noted how he consolidated a political structure that was "based on patronage and reward" for "loyalty and political support" (Verma 37). This of course encouraged cronyism and corruption in the governance of the state.

What is particularly interesting is that Mahathir is fully aware of these accusations and has strenuously tried to explain, affirm, and sometimes refute these allegations in his memoir.

The memoir consists of 62 chapters covering the political history of Malaysia from colonial to postcolonial periods. It chronicles the development as well as the transition of the Malaysian nation from "an agricultural economy to an industrial one" (*A Doctor in the House* x). It also tells us about the political intrigues among and between politicians jockeying for power especially in the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO).

The story in the memoir did not start with the birth of Mahathir but rather opens with the chapter that narrates how Mahathir "became the fourth Prime Minister of Malaysia on 16 July 1981" (01). It then, through a flash back, takes us back in time to when and where Mahathir was born: "My father retired when I was in Primary Two of the Government English School in Alor Star. It was in the poorer quarters of this town that I was born, in

an area called Seberang Perak. My real birthday is 10 July 1925, but my father registered all his male children as born in December" (13). Thereafter, the story takes us through the tortuous history of the Malaysian nation from the pre-colonial, right through the colonial, and the post-colonial periods. The memoir closes with a verbal attack on both Anwar Ibrahim and Tun Abdullah Badawi. For example, Anwar is cast in the image of a hypocrite as well as a political opportunist: "He (Anwar) has captured the imaginations of many with his apparently liberal and progressive talk. Upon close scrutiny, however, nothing he says reflects progressiveness. He was merely mouthing the racist sentiments of the extremists in every group to gain their support. He had always been supportive of the Israelis but when the Government appeared to be revising its anti-Israel policy he condemned the Government, to the annoyance of the Jews" (808). Tun Abdullah Badawi on the other hand is castigated for his ineptitude with the declaration that "Still, Najib's administration is far better than Abdullah's" (809). However, it is highly unlikely that Mahathir would as at now (i.e. 2017) praise Najib or his Government considering the icy relationship between the two. In fact, Mahathir is now singing a different tune with regards to the transparency of Najib's Government. For instance, in one of his of blog posts of 13 July, 2017, Mahathir has pledged to "[…] spare no effort to overthrow Najib and his decadent, corrupt, kleptocratic Government" (chedet.cc/?=2564). As a matter of fact, the table has turned today in that Mahathir is now a close political ally of Anwar Ibrahim, and a bitter critic of Najib. This is a clear testimony to the aphoristic saying that in the political game of a nation "there is neither permanent friend nor permanent enemy, but a permanent interest".

To be sure, Mahathir's memoir was not the first autobiography to come out of Malaysia. Other people had written novels, short story, and poetry that critics such as Claire Dawn Morais has considered as "Life Writing". Morais' 2008 doctoral dissertation studied materials as diverse as the memoir, novel, short story, poetry, film, and visual images

from Malaysia. These materials are classified as "life writing" in the dissertation because elements of the autobiographical are enfolded within their textual tapestry. The dissertation takes a guided tour of life writing on and about Malaysia from the colonial period (e.g. Henri Fauconnier's *The Soul of Malaya* written in 1930) to the postcolonial writings of John Victor Morais (Witness *to History: Memoirs of an Editor* 1981), Salleh ben Joned (his newspaper columns and poems were studied), Shirley Geok-Lin Lim (her memoir *Among the White Moonfaces*), and K.S. Maniam (his short stories, novels, and plays). The dissertation looked at how these writers explored autobiographical issues of identity and belonging in the Malaysian nation at both individual as well as communal levels. However, Mahathir's memoir did not feature in Morais' dissertation because it was only published in 2011.

A Doctor in the House has been reviewed by some critics. For instance, Tom Plate writing about Mahathir's memoir in the 14 April, 2011 edition of *New Mandala* www.newmandala.org describes Mahathir as a "warmonger of rhetoric" that would "rather be misunderstood than un-heard". He also points out that the memoir's style "was no tea party" but "more like carpet bombing". He concludes by noting that overall the story in the memoir "well reflect the man" because it is "almost completely unapologetic".

Similarly, Sholto Byrnes sees Mahathir's memoir as "a very readable account of a remarkable politician's life and career as he sees it". He further notes that "Both in length and span, it bears comparison with the memoirs of his old sparring partner, Lee Kuan Yew, and will likewise be indispensable to future students of Asian history" (*Asian Sentinel*, March 25, 2011 www.asiasentinel.com .

On his part, Timo Kivimaki, writing in the September 2012 edition of *Journal of Peace Research*, declares that Mahathir's memoir contains "crucial insights on the formation of

Malaysian politics". He goes on to assert that the memoir "is […] interesting for those who want to know how knowledge and politics interact in Malaysia" (745). The focus of this thesis however is to explore how Mahathir objectifies the nonself in his memoir.

3.4   Writing, Narrative, and Life.

The importance of writing and narration in the organization of the lives of modern men and women cannot be overemphasized[1]. Indeed writing and narration has come to define the existential reality of modern life because of its efficacy in giving shape to an otherwise amorphous and discrete set of experiences often separated by time and space. Writing and narration has also come to signify the means of keeping tabs on and sharing of experience with others in a fast-paced modern life. It is thus a means of keeping dreams alive as well as an avenue for documenting both personal and collective histories for posterity. Moreover, it is a means of ascertaining self-presence and displacing *absence* by reconstructing lived experience. In fact, I would like to suggest that the modern person has finally conquered death and mortality through the act of narrative and writing. In this sense, the human life has found a means of transcending its existential and metaphysical limitations in the medium of writing through the act of storytelling. As Julia Kristeva has noted, what distinguishes the human from the non-human is "the possibility of narrating…birth and death…to others" (8). More importantly, through the act of writing humanity can break, to borrow a phrase from Eagleton, the "pregnant silence" that surrounds it from all directions.

It is my contention that humanity is personified and symbolized fully in the medium of writing because within its discursive frame the aural, the oral, and the ocular intersect, interpenetrate, and reinforce one another. This is the import of Hannah Arendt's assertion that "with word and deed we insert ourselves into the human world, and this insertion is like a second birth, in which we confirm and take upon ourselves the naked fact of our original physical appearance" (*The Human Condition* 176-177, cited in Kristeva 25). The

human life is thus given meaning through movement (activities and deeds) as well as enunciation/writing (word). Indeed man, as pointed out by the philosophy of dualism, is both matter and spirit, body and soul, and writing is the embodiment of both. In this regard writing purports to take care of the spirit by probing into the deepest and hidden recesses of the soul of man thereby rendering even the unspeakable, most private and secret thoughts of individuals visible to others. It also takes care of the body by furnishing it with a *raison d'être* to live by giving shape to the chaotic and often conflicting, affective, metaphysical, and ontological experiences of people across space and time. In the process of giving shape to this cornucopia of experience, writing sleuths and stitches these fragmentary incidents into a coherent, understandable, and meaningful narrative. In this regard, Abbot (2002) has emphasized that narrative is very important to humanity because of its use in organizing the chaos that permeates our daily existence. He contends that we impose order, create reality, and come to comprehend the world better through the mediation of narrative and storytelling. This is important because "the real world is utterly disorganized or at least utterly unknowable", but we can tame this cornucopia of unknowability by "impose[ing] the stories that give our lives meaning" (19).

Yet writing has not always had this importance in human life. As a matter of fact, writing is viewed with suspicion and held in contempt in societies that associate life or *being* with the present: the immediate, the here and now or what is philosophically referred to as "presence."[2] For instance, in classical Western tradition that believed in what Derrida calls "the metaphysics of presence" its philosophical and historical discourse principally assigns importance to speech, presence, and voice as sine qua non of being or existence. Thus, in this tradition as Derrida has demonstrated in many of his writings (1973; 1976; 1978; 1982), while speech is seen as an embodiment of living presence, writing on the other hand is seen as a "detached and ultimately lifeless form of representation, a mere copy of the original (the spoken word) which, indeed, threatens

presence with its supposed 'Other'----absence" (Morgan Wortham 103). Writing is therefore seen in this phonocentrist view as the Derridean supplement, an addition to speech. Nonetheless, Derrida has refuted this claim in *Of Grammatology* by dismissing this importance attached to speech at the expense of writing in the "metaphysics of presence." For example, he probes Rousseau's categorical premise that writing forms a 'dangerous supplement' (cited in Morgan Wortham 103) to speech. It is important to remember that for Rousseau and the whole metaphysical tradition from Plato down to Husserl, speech has come to be regarded as the master metaphor of presence. Writing, in contrast, is viewed as not more than a technical supplement and an embroidered form of representation. Thus, in this view the 'supplementality' of writing is a seductive danger, indeed a corruption and a contamination of speech which is considered as the pure, living word (hence *logocentrism*). It is for this and many other reasons that cannot be discussed here, that writing is subordinated to speech.

Interestingly, Derrida has demonstrated again and again that contrary to this entrenched belief, writing is not simply a supplement to speech, but is indeed its *raison d'être*, or its condition of possibility; it holds fort when speech is long gone or absent. After an exhaustive discussion, Derrida concludes that the valorisation of speech over writing by this tradition is tantamount to a metaphorical manoeuvre of reality. As he has demonstrated in *Writing and Difference*, one of the strengths of writing as opposed to speech is its iterability or repeatability. In this regard, he argues that unlike speech which is anchored on presence, writing is always iterable because it transcends the conditions of its production and outlives its producer. As Claire Kramsch (37) has emphatically noted, one of the advantages of writing over speech is its ability to transcend the "ephemeral, auditory nature of spoken language" by rendering it into more stable and discernible signs on a page. Suffice to say that despite efforts by people like Plato, Rousseau, and Husserl to downgrade the importance of writing in the existential reality

of man, the fact remains that a mountain of evidence points to the opposite direction. Writing in this sense remains one of the most important defining characteristics of modernity.

As already noted, writing is a means of giving shape to otherwise nebulous and discreet experiences of individuals. This shaping and organization is usually done through narrative or storytelling. Thus storytelling has come to occupy a very important place in the production of texts by men and women. In this sense the narrator being the facilitator of the narrated experience, stands in a position of mediation between the shapeless "real world" of experience and the story of it that he/she recounts in his/her narrative. In this regard, the attempt to reconstruct a cohesive and meaningful story is purely experiential and textual; hence the end result of such exercise is the production of texts. These texts can take various forms. In this chapter however we are concerned with the autobiographical text as a narrative of experience.

3.5   Autobiography/ memoir writing.

Autobiographies and memoirs are mediums of storytelling. They are avenues through which people share their experiences as well as their views about the world around them at the time of writing. People write autobiographies and memoirs for a variety of reasons: confession, apology, explanation, justifying an action, reinforcing an ideology, etc. It is thus important to understand that it is the intended aim of the writing that ultimately determines the rhetorical strategy to be adopted by the writer. Let me acknowledge from the outset that there are suggestions about a technical distinction between the genres of autobiography and memoir[3]. Some scholars such as Laura Marcus (3) have noted a distinction between autobiography and memoir by stressing that whereas in the former there is an "evocation of a life as a totality," in the latter the main concern is with "an anecdotal depiction of people and events." Going by what Marcus has said above, the

distinction between autobiography and memoir can be located in the scope of their content or coverage. In this regard, the autobiography tends to be more elaborate than the memoir. Another distinction given by Misch (cited in Marcus 149) is that whereas in autobiography the subject of the story (the narrator) is central to the narrative, in memoir on the other hand, the subject is peripheral to it because s/he is a mere observer of events and activities. However it is my contention that this may not always be the case because in most 'political memoirs' the subject of the story is very central to the narrative. For example, a thorough consideration of Mahathir Mohamad's memoir *A Doctor in the House* would reveal the narrator-author occupying an active rather than a passive position as his story and the stories of other people intersect at various places throughout the memoir. We thus learn about events, phenomena, and people that feature in the narrative through his eyes and voice. In this sense he not only tells us about these things but he does so through an imaginative inventiveness. Thus, in most cases his narrative is not merely a reporting of events as Misch has suggested, but is an active shaping of those events through a textual construction mediated by ideological framing. In fact some scholars such as Georg Misch have noted that the term "memoir" predates "autobiography" by centuries. He further noted that in ancient Greece and Rome memoir writing is practiced "as a sort of pre-writing, a dress rehearsal for the real thing, which is biography, history or autobiography" (Julie Rak 309). Misch further contends that:

> Man's relation to the world may be conceived actively or
> passively. From this consideration comes the distinction
> between autobiographies and "memoirs" [. . .]. In memoirs
> that relation is passive in so far as the writers of memoirs [. . .]
> introduce themselves in the main as merely observers of events
> and activities of which they write, and if they join the active
> participants it is only in minor parts [. . .]. The autobiographer
> concerns himself with such things in so far as is necessary for

51

the understanding of his life story. (cited in Rak 309)

Thus for Misch people that have an active relationship with their experience would in the main write autobiography whenever they chose to share those experiences with the reading public. Whereas those that have reluctant or passive relationships with their experiences would gravitate toward memoir writing because of its apparent depersonalized qualities.

Similarly, Louis A. Renza in his essay "The Veto of the Imagination: A Theory of Autobiography" (1977)[4] has noted some family resemblance between autobiography and memoir. In this regard he sees the memoir as just one variant or mode of autobiography within which the writer "tries to suppress her evocation of pastness by surrendering to the present-oriented and public currents of language and literary convention, notably the way they conspire with the writer's specific historical situation and its ideological parameters of "self" to determine how one tends to represent oneself before contemporaries. The memoir-prone autobiographer uses language to declassify information about her life; she uses language to apprehend her own life as an intersubjective phenomenon" (7). In the same vein he defines autobiography as "the writer's de facto attempt to elucidate his/her present rather than past" (3).

Stephen Regan in his essay "Autobiography and Memoir in Modern Ireland" (2009) has noted that the "distinctions between autobiography and memoir are not easy to establish and maintain" because "memoir often brings with it the personal, emotional intensity of autobiography" encoded through "the devices and techniques of fiction" (152).

Going by these observations therefore it is my opinion that the distinction made between autobiography and memoir is largely redundant. This is because insofar as they are both stories told by narrators who are very central to the tale they are narrating, they

remain the same. Certainly, in both autobiography and the memoir the presence of the narrating-self is visibly conspicuous. Indeed both autobiography and memoir are affective discourse in which the author-speaker weaves his story and those of others through the medium of writing. Moreover in as much as both are concerned with story of the lives of people, they are life narratives or what Courser (14) calls "Life writing(s)." Thus, for the purpose of this discussion both autobiography and memoir are taken to be part of the repertoire of life writing and hence their technical distinction is discounted. In passing over the technical and generic distinctions between the two, I am following the example of John Pilling (1981) who explains that the term autobiography first used by Robert Southey in 1805 has been liberally used to describe:

> […]any kind of personal writing which has to do with the
>
> fact of the author's life, irrespective of whether the author
>
> has intended to create a continuous and determinate work
>
> of self-portraiture. As a result, many sub-genres tend to be
>
> included under [its] rubric[…]among which *the memoir, the*
>
> *confession, the apology, the diary, and the 'journal in time'*
>
> are the dominant species.(1; my emphasis)

Similarly Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson in their *Reading Autobiography: A guide for Interpreting Life Narratives* has also classified both autobiography and memoir as a form of life narrative.

In addition to the above, autobiography and its variants enumerated above are cultural and rhetorical practices that are framed through narrative reconstructions of lived experiences.

The Memoir: Fact or fiction?

Many scholars have discussed the fictional status of life writings such as the autobiography, biography, memoir, diary, journal, etc. These scholars have also questioned the assumed existence of the 'self' or rather the 'unified Cartesian self'[5] that is usually the subject and object of life writings. In the opinion of these scholars, both the 'self' and its purported representation in life writings are fiction. More importantly, they view such kinds of writing as attempts to "fabricate" the story of the self through the acts of composition or textual *re*-presentation. In other words, what the narrator-author does in memoir, for example, is to compose a 'fictional' self through narrative framing and metonymic reduction. For instance, Daniel Dennett (1991) has suggested that the self is an illusion created out of "the myriads of attributions and interpretations (including self-attributions, and self-interpretations) that have composed the biography of the living body whose centre of Narrative it is"(426-427). Central to Dennett's observation is the revelation that the self written about in life narratives is nothing but an imaginative formulation of the writing-self. This has far reaching implications for a writing that is supposedly factual, verifiable, and anchored on truth. Similarly, Antonio Damasio (2010) has cautioned us against taking the self as an entity that has a corporeal existence. He instead sees the self and its formation as an ongoing event and a "process" that "is present at all times when we are presumed to be conscious" (7). This further suggests the connection between the self and its manipulation by individual consciousness to create or fabricate an identity based on personal or collective fantasies. This in turn puts the existence of the self, especially, in life writings in a precarious position thereby rendering their truth value questionable.

Furthermore, structuralist scholars such as Derrida, Barthes, and Foucault have at various times questioned the existence of a stable and coherent self that resists the influence and impact of socio-economic structures and practices. They thus see the existence of the

concept of the self as an after-effect of discourse in the Foucauldian sense. In fact, this is the truth of Derrida's assertion that the self produced by the act of writing is nothing but "a fiction, an illusion constituted in discourse (read----writing)." He goes on to further unravel even the fictionality of discourse by describing it as more or less "a hypothetical place or space of storytelling" (cited in Sigvartsen 21). It thus follows that a self that is produced in discourse is no more real than the discourse that produced it. In fact one of the useful insights of the structuralists' position regarding the self and discourse is their assertion that both are fictional fabrications. Even so it is important to understand that this argument is not in any way denying the existence of the "flesh and blood" author. The point is rather that the real person and the person in the narrative are not the same. This is because the 'I' that writes/tells its story is never singular and harmonious. It is varied, mysterious, and often conflicting. Above all, it is processual and thus in constant flux. Indeed, Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson have theorized that in auto/biographical narratives, the narrated "I' and the narrating "I" are not the same. Whereas "the narrated "I" is the object or the protagonist of the narrative," it is however revealed to us by "the narrating 'I'" through a textual encoding that is entirely subjective (cited in Flanagan 22). It is noteworthy that subjectivity here involves the selection of what to include as well as to exclude in the narrative out of the plethora of choices available to the author-narrator. It is, therefore, logical to assume that the writer of an auto/biographical narrative will consciously *choose* what to *show* to the world about his identity as well as that of others. This further reinforces the fictionality of life writings.

It is indeed worth remembering that memoir writing is an existential project of self-recovery, self-fashioning, self-regeneration, and self-reinvention brought about through the agency of memory. In fact the word "memoir" is etymologically traced to memory. Issues and events presented in the memoir by the author-narrator are filtered through the frail medium of memory. Furthermore, memoir writing invariably involves selection,

interpretation, narritivization, and storification of the life of the author-narrator. As a corollary, where there is no selection, construction, and storification, there can be no memoir. To this extent, memoir is a fictional and fictionalizing artifice, in the sense of something created, imaginatively made and fashioned as a poetics. This is because the content of a memoir as presented by its writer cannot be balanced with the actual or the lived experiences of the writer. Hence, in spite of the memoir's ring of strong empirical realism, it would be a manifest error to accept it as anything more than a fictional representation of recollected experience. Moreover, the writing-remembering-seeing 'I' in a memoir will most probably choose to remember only those events and things that have significance on her narrative. Certainly, memoir writing is a metaphorizing discourse of what is invented in the process of its being re-presented. In principle, the self and the discourse (i.e. the memoir) in which it is encoded are for the most part a linguistic and narrative production. The memoir is a literary interpretation of a life both in the way it is technically put together (beginning, middle, and end) and the way its eloquent language (poetics) is repeatable, citational and iterable. From what has been said so far, it is easy to see that contrary to its claim to reality and objectivity, the memoir is no more than a fictional narrative of self-reinvention. Indeed this is the import of Courser's (2011) assertion regarding selfhood and life writing in general. He argues that contrary to its presumptions to factualness

> Life writing does not register pre-existing selfhood,
> but rather somehow creates it. This inverts the intuit-
> tive idea that one lives one's life, then simply
> writes it down. Instead, in writing one's life one
> may bring a new self into being. If this is true, then
> in reading life narrative, we witness self-invention.
> (14)

Fundamental to Courser's assertion above is the assumption that life writing is an act of "self-invention"; an artifice and a fabrication. Paul De Man (1979) has also echoed similar sentiments when he suggests that the relationship between life and autobiography is similar to that between an act and its consequences. He explains the problem in the following manner:

> We assume that life *produces* the autobiography as
> an act produces its consequences, but can we not suggest,
> with equal justice, that the autobiographical project may
> itself produce and determine the life and that whatever the
> writer *does* is in fact governed by the technical demands
> of self-portraiture and thus determined in all its aspects
> by the resources of his medium? (920; original emphasis)

It is indeed plausible to suggest that memoir writers are at liberty to select the best rhetorical strategy for executing this program of self-invention. The following discussion will focus on the rhetorical strategy adopted by Mahathir Mohamad in re-inventing himself in his memoir.

3.6   Self-fashioning, Grand narrative, and Difference in *A Doctor in the House*.

The central argument of this chapter is that the memoir of Mahathir Mohamad is an identity-creation project that is anchored on the rhetorical strategy of difference. Thus in the memoir the writing-remembering-seeing 'I' is concerned with creating a public identity of himself through the textual encoding of his carefully selected, filtered, and structured experiences. In trying to forge and give shape to these experiences in the form of a coherent narrative, he chooses to encode his text as an aesthetic ontology of racial difference. He achieves this through the deployment of a series of grand or master narratives as rhetorical tools for projecting and articulating the textual construction of himself and others. He thus deploys three fundamental master narratives to articulate the

rhetorical apprehension of himself and the exotic 'other' within the representational and symbolic narrative of the memoir. These grand narratives are: "Being Malay," "The New Economic Policy (NEP)," and "The United Malays National Organization (UMNO)." In other words, his narrative fundamentally revolves around the three broad areas of Race, Economy, and Politics. For Mahathir these three areas are more than mere concepts. They are in the main political arsenals that were deployed to wage a battle of political supremacy within the Malaysian body politic. In fact he started articulating his overarching vision as early as 1970 with the publication of his controversial book *The Malay Dilemma*. Here he articulates and brings to the public domain serious issues affecting the welfare of his Malay constituency. He laments that part of the Malay dilemma was that they were economically marginalized and "were becoming dispossessed in their own land" (cited in Verma 64). He calls for affirmative action to address the perceived economic imbalance especially between the Malays and the Chinese. He sees this as the antidote to a brewing crisis that might ensue between the two communities as a result of economic disparity. Forcefully, Mahathir thrusts the problems of the Malays to the public sphere in order to stimulate the government to urgently address the problem before it gets out of control. This is not surprising because in Malaysia as Vidhu Verma (2002) has noted "the public sphere is a space where ethnic and religious allegiances are dominant and remain largely unchallenged" (54). There is no doubt that the debates stimulated by the publication of *The Malay Dilemma* succeeded in making Mahathir very popular especially among the Malays. They began to regard him as a "Malay extremist and nationalist" (Verma 64), a not too unpleasant appellation in the Malaysian political context. It is not surprising therefore that when he eventually became Prime Minister in 1981, "the Malay community benefited most under a sweeping affirmative action program that gave it huge preferences in business contract, jobs, education, housing and bank loans" (Verma 37)[6].

The concept of "master narratives" or "grand narratives" or "meta-narratives" was first used by Jean Francois Lyotard to explain the totalizing tendency of ideologies (e.g. Marxism, Capitalism), thoughts (gender superiority, racial superiority), or beliefs (religion). Philip Auslander (2008) explains master narratives as:

> [Those] overarching mythic narratives which individuals
>
> tell in order to situate their particular time and place within
>
> the context of a larger story, thereby giving it broader signi-
>
> ficance. A metanarrative locates a current situation, whether
>
> individual or communal, within a larger narrative structure
>
> that plots movement toward some ultimate objective----pro-
>
> gress, triumph, victory for the proletariat, redemption. (133)

One fundamental observation about master narratives is that they usually shut out all dissenting voices in any discourse. Most often they only serve to mask or hide the contradictions inherent in their narrative. The down side of master narratives is that they limit individual freedom and have mostly brought sorrow and tears to humanity as witnessed in the genocides sparked by racial superiority in Africa, Asia, and Europe. Moreover, master narratives are usually used to give legitimacy to domination, subjugation, exclusion, and at times even the annihilation of the racial, political, social, and religious "other". Master narratives are therefore good rhetorical tools for "making reference to a shared tradition" especially by politicians and people craving for public recognition (Heller 257). In contrast, Bernstein (2003) has observed that master narratives can be used by people to create a "Social imaginary," that will satisfy their quest for certainty. He sees master narratives as "excesses in accordance with which humanity becomes intelligible to itself…" (108). To this extent, master narratives are useful to

humanity because they provide a historical grounding for individual and collective experience. They can also be used to alert communities when they derail from their "originating principle or ultimate end" (Bernstein 102). From what has been discussed so far, it would be grossly misleading to think of grand narratives only in terms of their negative consequences.

3.7   Mahathir and the teleology of race.

According to Goldberg (3, 21) race is one of the fundamental conceptual creations of modernity. The concept first manifested in European consciousness in the fifteenth century and has since then remained a highly contentious signifier. The concept is most often deployed to categorize people based on pigmentation or biological traits. In short, race and racial categorization is based on the notion of difference between people often ascribed through visual authority. It is a differential network which is used to codify and fix difference between and among individuals and groups. It is a convenient mechanism for labelling and enforcing exclusions especially against a perceived 'Other'. But race is also a very controversial concept in social analysis. The controversy surrounding race basically revolves around its ontological status. In this regard, some scholars have vehemently denied the possibility of its conceptual existence. For these scholars the notion of race is conceptually vacuous; a myth that lacks any scientific backing. At best it is a political and social construct in the same class with gender and ethnicity. For example, Linda Martin Alcoff discusses this rejection of race as a concept by scholars such as Anthony Appiah. She points out that for Appiah the concept of race is hollow because it does not in reality correspond to any "significant biological category," neither does it "correlate…to gene frequencies, clinal variations or any…human biological difference"(31). Moreover, the term according to Appiah, could not in any way "realign […] with a referent, even one which would invoke historical experience or culture rather than biology" (ibid). Appiah further urges that we throw out 'race' "from all scientific

discourse […]" (86). Similarly, David Theo Goldberg has pointed out that scholars such as Collette Guilloumin, Ashley Montagu, and Robert Miles have strongly rejected the concept of race seeing it as "unreal, socially dangerous" and "no more than an ideological construct" (84-86). Likewise, Goldberg has also suggested that "race is irreducibly a political category" rather than a biological given (87).

Even so, it is significant to note that there are counter arguments against the 'throw it away' suggestions of Appiah, Guilloumin, Montagu, and Miles. For scholars such as Goldberg, Alcoff, Knowles, and Winant, race is a social reality. These scholars argue that though race cannot in reality have any biological determination, it is none the less an important factor in the life of people. For example, Goldberg has argued that race has over the years been normalized in social discussions because it is woven in the cultural discourses of the day and hence there is no escaping it. He however affirms that race is a fabrication that is made to look as if it is a biological given "fixed from on high" (83). He further argues that race is most often used to bring together diverse and disparate subjects (people) based on common interests that are "either found or fabricated" (4). The central argument of Goldberg is that race is a semantically produced matrix for forcing out a semblance of social unity and motivations to people that are most often different in other ways (gender, social and economic status, political affiliation, religion, aspirations, etc.).

Similarly, Alcoff (1999) has cogently argued that though race may have lost its scientific credibility, it has not lost its "ontological status." She further points out that the meaning of race, however complex, "have always been mediated through visual appearance" (33). I should hasten to stress that central to the connection between race and visual appearance is the idea of difference. Consequently, race and racism are anchored on the visual comprehension of an 'other' based on the observable, legible, and inscribable economy of difference. It follows then that race is not only a framework of inclusion and exclusion in social relations among people and groups but is also scriptable

in discourse. Indeed, one of the uses of race in the political and social arena is its appropriation in denying the different 'other' certain privileges. It has also been used to textually encode the inferiority of the 'other', providing as it were, the excuse for its domination especially in colonial discourse and recently in postcolonial life writings such as the autobiography, memoir, and diary. For example, in his incisive study of Joseph Conrad's *The Congo Diary* in an essay titled "Travel, Difference, and the Gaze: A Literary Economy of the Body in Joseph Conrad's *The Congo Diary*"[7], Ibrahim Bello-Kano points out that Conrad uses the diary as "a filing system" for his "visual inspection of [African] bodies and spaces" (60). Conrad uses his gaze as "the dominant body's gaze," in order to "highlight the surface of the other [African] body as difference" useful for organizing and classifying the same bodies "according to a hierarchy of values or criteria" generated by the European literati that believe in its "moral and intellectual superiority" (59, 62). He further notes that in writing the diary Conrad is not unmindful of "his privileged position (as a "white" British citizen) relative to that of the indigenous people" (59).

Caroline Knowles (10) on the other hand has acknowledged the importance of race in social interactions seeing it as a means of creating identities because selves are made in racial and ethnic terms. It is reasonable to suggest that despite protestations to the contrary, people most often understand themselves and others through the dialectic of race. This is the verity of Pile and Thrifts' (1995) assertion that a person is nothing more than a "'subject position' mapped onto the social landscape" (cited in Knowles 34-35).

In this framework selves are constituted through social signifiers that transcend the individual such as race and ethnicity. Additionally, the person is invariably conscious (mindful) of public recognition in creating his identity. He thus crucially identifies with (racial/ethnic/political/religious) group goals and aspirations. Echoing a similar sentiment, Winant (2003; cited in Knowles 10) declares that race is neither an illusion nor

a biological fact but a social reality embedded in social processes. This further reinforces the significance of race in social relations among people and groups. Consequently, it stands to reason that however it may be defined or thought to arise as a concept, race is an accepted and visible reality as well as an enduring feature of social formation in modern societies.

It is my contention that what makes race a grand narrative is that there is conjuncture of the political, the social, and the economic within its teleological structure. Race is therefore a convenient mechanism for political domination, economic subjugation, and social exclusion. Indeed, race in the hands of a skilful politician especially in a multiracial society is a puissant tool of political manipulation and seduction. In this sense it can be doubly used to build and maintain in-group solidarity as well as to encourage out-group hostility. It is particularly an instrument of group identity politics through which politicians can will-themselves-to-power by the simple invocation of its unifying teleology. Additionally, the teleology of race can be appropriated by a politician to re-create himself in the image that he wants the outside world to behold. Race can be used to map social spaces for individuals and groups especially in multiracial societies. This social mapping operates at several levels. It can be spatial (location), occupational/vocational (profession), or demographic. However, these divisions are not mutually exclusive as they most often overlap. For example, most often spatial and demographic mappings go together. Spatial mapping can be seen in a situation where a particular geographical space or location is carved out for members of a particular race either by law (as in reserved areas), colonization or domination /control. In either of these situations, you will find a large number of people from the designated race gravitating towards that area. They will build their residences and businesses within the area to the degree of giving it a unique racial identity. Furthermore, this spatial mapping will automatically result in demographic mapping as a consequence of the racial pull

explained above. A good example of spatial and demographic mapping of social spaces can be seen in most cities and urban centres around the globe in form of "China towns" and "Little Indias". The importance of this kind of mapping was noted by Goldberg when he suggested that in multiracial societies it is easy to socially and politically control both "Citizens and strangers…through the spatial confines of the [racially] divided place" (186).

In addition to this, another form of social mapping can be seen in the area of employment and placement especially in Government Service. For instance, in many multiracial and multi-ethnic developing countries certain posts in the government service are always reserved for the members of a particular race or ethnic group. The race or ethnic group in question could be the one with the largest population (i.e. numerical strength), or with the highest number of elites (education, wealth, or both), or in some cases those that may be numerically a minority but skillful in political manoeuvre. Indeed, this is the truth of Goldberg's assertion that in most multiracial nations "race has fashioned […] what social and private spaces one can and dare not enter or penetrate"(206).

In the economic sphere, race can be used (and has been used) to either open or deny access to wealth and economic opportunities. In this respect, certain laws will be promulgated just to enhance the opportunities of a particular race or ethnic group to the detriment of other fellow citizens. In this sense race will be used as an instrument of not only social discrimination but economic segregation as well. Consequently, it becomes an economic marker of difference among individuals and groups. It determines not only who you are, what you are, but also what you can be/come. In fact, this is the import of Knowles' (37) avowal that "To be raced is to be positioned within (racialised) historical process and their (racialised) political landscape […]." In fact, in most multiracial

societies people view themselves and are in turn viewed by others through the spectrum of race. It is pertinent to remember that race is also an instrument of power. As noted earlier, its unifying teleology can be summoned to effect political mobilization. Hence it is easy for politicians such as Dr Mahathir Mohamad to use its template to nudge themselves into the center-stage of political activism. Sharmani P. Gabriel (2015) has noted the pervasiveness of race in the political and social configuration of the Malaysian nation. She avers that race is more visible than other factors that stratify Malaysian society such as "class, gender and religion" and is the most important "signifier of difference in Malaysia" (2). She goes on to explain that race has percolated into the crevices of the Malaysian society and hence finds different expressions in social and political discourses ranging from the "everyday innocuous to the downright offensive" (3). Taking a historical excursion into the origin of the prominence of race in the social and political discourses of Malaysia, Gabriel points out that it was the British colonialists that "introduced the notion of race" in order "to cater to their vested economic interests in Malaya" (6). More significantly, Gabriel notes that there is a "Janus-faced state discourse of race" in Malaysia that is ambivalent by encompassing the mutually exclusive concepts of "inclusion and exclusion, otherness and sameness" which "constructs nation identity and notions of equal citizenship" in a manner "that while it allows the state to reassure the 'Chinese' and 'Indians' that they are legitimate political subjects also allows it to simultaneously remind them that they are *really* ―racially― from 'elsewhere'" (original italics 18).

There is no doubt that Dr Mahathir Mohamad has clearly understood the efficacy of race in determining not only who one is, but what one can be/come. In fact, the narrative in his memoir is organized around the figurative economy of race. Thus, race is what defines him and gives him an enduring identity. It is what renders him visible to the public as well. For him, to quote Hannah Arendt who paraphrases Shakespeare, "The question

is not as for Hamlet, to be or not to be, but to belong or not to belong" (cited in Kristeva 34). He thus profusely displays a diaphanous racial consciousness throughout *A Doctor in the House*. In this regard, he is a master of the "racial grammar" of the Malaysian nation because he uses it to good effect (Knowles 12). Consequently, in most parts of the narrative, he uses race and racial difference to maintain a semantic authority over his identity and that of others.

It is essential to understand that race is very important to Mahathir because of the controversy about his lineage or origin. In this regard, there are widespread speculations that he is not what he claims to be. Some people are of the opinion that he is not Malay but Indian. Interestingly, he is aware of these insinuations and had argued several times that though his ancestors had come from India centuries ago, "my father was a Penang Malay. Almost all Malays of the island of Penang have some Indian blood" (14), he is nonetheless a Malay because "my father could not speak any of the languages of India and knew none of his forebears or relatives there" (14). There is a total disconnect between him and his ancestral roots. Moreover as he explains further in the memoir his mother "Wan Tempawan, was a Kedah Malay. The prefix "Wan" indicates that she was from the ranks of Kedah Malays who usually served the royal households or were in government service." He adds, "she brought us up to behave and carry ourselves as good, well-bred Malays" (14). By providing explanations like this, Mahathir hopes to put a lid on these embarrassing insinuations. But that was not to be because the seeds of doubt have already been sowed in the minds of the people. Hence he is compelled to not only "behave and carry [himself] as [a] good and well-bred Malay" but to prove it as well. He thus invests a lot of energy in creating a "Malay identity" for himself. For him becoming Malay is an "ultimate term" in the sense in which Richard Weaver has defined it. Weaver (1970, cited in Meghan P. Tubbs 16) has defined ultimate terms as "words or concepts that have special persuasive power for a particular audience…Ultimate terms might also

be defined as words that have a great deal of hidden or special cultural meaning." For someone for whom "politics had been in his blood since the early years", Mahathir has always been aware of the importance of race in the political equation of Malaysia (Ghazali 2). In this sense race is for him a powerful rhetorical device of political persuasion and manipulation. That is why he constantly invokes its name and spirit in his memoir. In fact, reading through *A Doctor in the House*, it is difficult to separate "Mahathir the man" from "Mahathir the Malay".

It is crucial to reiterate that creating a personal identity through the trajectory of race demands a chiasmic semiosis or what Philogene has called a "bipolar 'vision' of "us" versus "them" (32). Of course this kind of identity naturally depends for its existence on a dialectic of difference. This dialectic is organized around the creation of a different racial 'Other'. This racial 'Other' will be used as the contrasting image on which to bounce off the preferable image of the self. In this regard, the image of the 'Other' becomes a sign of essential difference between it and the besieging self, and through this constant manipulation of ascribed difference an identity is generated. However, that identity is not real; it is simply a product of textuality; a metaphysical construct. In fact, Dr Mahathir has admitted in his memoir that "[…] a person's stated ethnicity, or official public identity, will no longer be an accurate indication of his or her race"(31). It thus become easy for people to create an "official public identity" that is not in tandem with their real identity. This is precisely what he does by emphatically declaring "I am a Malay and am proud of it…Those who say that a leader's ethnicity or gender does not matter to the people are fooling themselves" (24). Going by this logic, it becomes necessary for him to downplay his Indian ancestry by accentuating his claims of being Malay. He thus deploys his epistemic skills in explaining how a person can become Malay in Malaysia:

In Malaysia today, being a Malay is not a question of

descent, or of one's family history of intermarriage, and

hence the popular idiom of "blood." "Malayness" is a legal

construct. One is a Malay if one satisfies certain legal conditions.

Constitutionally, a Malay is defined as a person who *habitually*

speaks Malay, Practices Malay customs and is a Muslim.

(25; my emphasis)

An examination of the preceding definition would reveal that the modus operandi of becoming Malay is purely a performance. It is the ability of a person to perform the outlined acts----habitually *speak* Malay, *practice* Malay customs, *be* a Muslim----that will determine whether one is Malay or not. In fact, it is not by accident that verbs of action ("speak", "practice", "be") dominate this definition. In this sense, the process of becoming Malay is a ritualized repetition of the above-mentioned conventions sanctioned by the constitution. This further shows that the concept of being Malay is fictional because it is hinged on performance; however, its fictionality is cleverly hidden by invoking the "power" of the Malaysian Constitution. Furthermore, the definition turns the concept into a signifier without any solid referent because its assumed object (i.e. Malays) in this sense is a Derridean "diastema", a gap and an empty trace of the real. This is so because the subject he refers to ("Malay") is not a pure Cartesian *cogito* of self-presence but a linguistic inscription within the textual economy of the memoir. We therefore have to be content with a "Malayness" that is at best an ideological construct because, to paraphrase Butler, there is no Malay identity behind the expressions of "Malayness". Within this framework "Malayness" is no more than the Baudrillardian simulacrum, an image and a representation. More importantly, Mahathir himself has reiterated that Malay is a "legal personality" that is "entitled to certain rights" within the Malaysian nation (25). Here we see economic interests cleverly merging with social identity. Indeed, it is not difficult to

fathom that it is the enjoyment of these rights that is at the heart of the struggle to be/come Malay. Becoming Malay is therefore a political and economic necessity.

It is crucial to note that in spite of the apparent fictionality of "Malayness" as demonstrated above, it still remains useful in the construction of individual identity for Dr Mahathir in *A Doctor in the House.* In this regard, "Malayness" becomes the positive image against which the negative images of the Chinese and the Indians are contrasted. For example, the Malays are praised for their magnanimity, tolerance, generosity and "distinctive aptitude for social harmony and public administration" (27). In addition to this, they had also "agreed to share their homeland, their *Tanah Melayu,* with the Chinese and Indians" (222; original italics). The Chinese and the Indians on the other hand are described as "coolies", and "indentured labourers" respectively (90). Though they are complimented for their business skills (the Chinese) and education (the Indians) they nonetheless remain a demographic problem (61,474,475). In addition to this, they are constantly referred to as "immigrants" in the memoir even though they are bona fide citizens. They become the 'outsiders' against which the 'natives' are pitched. This image of being immigrants is rhetorically used to turn the two groups into objects of subtle derision and resentment. For example, their presence in Malaysia is largely seen as an attempt by the British to force the Malays into an inferior and minority position in their own land (27, 30 36, 61) even though their contribution in the development of Malaysia is acknowledged (40). In yet another place the Indians are metonymically reduced to a "condition/state" as well as a "function/utility" when they are described as "destitute imported Indian labour" (65). Here what is made visible is the pitiable state of the collective noun "Indians" rather than their humanity. This vacillation with regards to the Chinese and Indian identities is noticeably present throughout the memoir. In fact, his descriptions of the Chinese and Indians are riddled with begrudging generalization. In this sense, he most often negates their individualism through extreme stereotyping. Even

so, it becomes an identity against which Mahathir will construct his own personal identity. He thus uses the idea of redressing the unequal distribution of wealth between the Chinese and the Malays as a jumping-off point for his image-creating project. In this respect, he uses the master plots of identification and emancipation to endear himself to his chosen constituency. For example, at the beginning of this narrative of identification and emancipation, he succinctly declares:

I am a Malay not just on paper. I am also a Malay in

sentiment and spirit. I identify with the Malays and their

problems, their past and their present, their achievements

and their failures. I do not do so sentimentally and uncriti-

cally, but thoroughly and thoughtfully [. . .]. Whatever their

lack of expertise and skill, to my mind their great strength

has been their willingness and ability to work with others.

(26)

By identifying with the problems of the Malays, he is firstly projecting an emotional solidarity with them. In trying to establish this phatic communion, he uses an impersonal and detached language. For instance, even though he emphatically declares himself to be part of them, he nonetheless chooses to refer to the "subject" of this discourse from the position or context of an outsider through the use of the possessive "their" instead of "our". Having cleared the ground with this detached and impersonal statement, he changes his style a few lines later by identifying himself directly with them. He thus declares: "Others may have had a special talent for commerce and business enterprise. We Malays demonstrated our own distinctive aptitude for social harmony and public administration. That has been the basis of the country's success" (27). This pattern of pillarisation[8] dominates the tapestry of the memoir. In fact, the whole narrative revolves

around this dialectic of difference in the form of binarisms such as "us" versus "them"; "natives" versus "immigrants"; "insiders" versus "outsiders"; "Malays" versus "non-Malays". He thus uses this strategy to construct a favourable public identity for himself. This identity is fashioned in the guise of a 'Malay-rights' fighter. He thus creates a public persona that is outwardly brash, fierce, and uncompromising with regards to securing these rights. In this function of an emancipator he projects himself as capable of fighting even those Malay leaders he considers as weak and compromising. A very good example of this tendency is his conflict with the first Prime Minister of Malaysia Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra whom he sees as "unduly conciliatory" (198), "naïve and of low caliber" (202) in alleviating "the economic plight of the Malays" (205). In addition to this, he also sees himself as a "Malay nationalist" (166) and relishes being called a "Malay ultra" by others. All this nomenclatures are indeed a political capital for him. Hence, acknowledging the importance of race in constructing public identity, Dr Mahathir admits that, "It was only natural as we are constructed or socialized to see race as primary determinant of our identity. This is why the race card is often played to inflame emotions and mobilize disproportionate support" (249). In fact Jae Hyon Lee (149) has observed that during the 1987 struggle for supremacy in UMNO, Mahathir "had to (sic) redefined himself as an ardent champion of Malay nationalism" as a ploy "to win over the larger Malay community." Before this debacle he had started to move away from ethnocentric politics to nationalist politics by calling for a more united Malaysia. However, in order to neutralize the danger posed by this factional challenge within UMNO, he had to revert to the rhetoric of Malay nationalism. He thus continually uses his "Malay ultra" credentials to create a public persona that will always dispel any doubt about his racial lineage and commitment. As noted earlier, he uses the economy of racial difference to construct this public persona.

Indeed the strategy deployed by Mahathir to fashion out a public-persona in *A Doctor in the House* confirms Gina Philogene's assertion (2007) that:

> Identities are no longer essentialized, but instead exist in
>
> contradistinction to others. What defines individuals is their
>
> processing of difference with others on the basis of which they
>
> integrate their identity fragments and multiple roles through
>
> participation in groups and differentiation with others. Thus,
>
> today, identity can no longer be separated from the processes
>
> of constructing otherness. (32)

Indeed, this attempt to construct personal identity on the basis of racial difference is manifestly at work in his memoir. In fact, the revelations made by Mahathir in the memoir no doubt support the preceding assertion. He is indeed, like all politicians, an entrepreneur of identity.

Having said this let me stress that Mahathir is also caught in a performative contradiction[9] in his description of the Malays in the memoir. Thus despite his unquestioning loyalty to their cause, he nonetheless bitterly criticizes them in several places in the memoir. He is particularly angry with them for squandering the opportunities given to them by the UMNO-led governments from independence to date. He castigates them for their laziness, greed, in-breeding, avarice, status seeking, poor work ethic and rigid traditionalism (230, 257,267, 337,593). He also bemoans his "failure to change the Malays" despite concerted efforts and warns that "Malay survival and continuity cannot be assumed, but must be continually pursued" (595, 758). This copious display of anger is also another rhetorical strategy employed by Mahathir in his identity construction project.

3.8   The emancipatory story of UMNO.

The second leg of Dr Mahathir's master plot in *A Doctor in the House* is anchored on the emancipatory role of the race-based political party the United Malays National Organisation (henceforth called UMNO). UMNO is one of the race-based political parties that exist in Malaysia. Others are the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC). In fact, race-based politicking is a prominent attribute of Malaysian politics, hence the attempts by the three major ethnic groups to create race-based parties to cater for their interests[10]. It is in line with this reasoning that Khoo Boo Teik in his book *Beyond Mahathir: Malaysian politics and its Discontents* (2003) has emphatically declared that, "Ethnicity cannot be removed from Malaysian politics […]" (193). Similarly Yusoff and Jawan (2009) have noted that "[…] ethnicity is[…]very important in understanding politics and society in Malaysia[…]" and although "the nation (sic) reaches half a century of nationhood", ethnicity is still a potent factor in political calculation (233). Paradoxically, unlike in other multiracial societies like the USA where political leaders campaign using the rhetoric of unity of races, in Malaysia political parties and their leaders are more eager to exploit racial difference as a vote-winning mechanism.

UMNO was formed in 1946 "as the torchbearer of ethnocultural Malay Nationalism" (L.E. Tan 1988:9-10; cited in Hyon Lee 49). It was specifically formed to challenge the antics of the British during the "Malayan Union" debacle *(A Doctor in the House* 27). After Malaysia became independent in 1957, it formed the first post-independence government and has since then been in the saddle of leadership. Indeed, UMNO is able to maintain its political hegemony on Malaysia through a combination of wit, political sagacity (alliance with other parties), and effective manipulation of the race-factor.

It is important to reiterate that the *raison d'être* for establishing UMNO is to secure and protect the rights of the Malay majority within a multiracial Malaysian nation. Thus its Malay identity is not in doubt. Consequently, as a race-based political party, UMNO provides a platform for articulating group and individual identity politics. It thus becomes easy for politicians within its folds to exploit its teleology of racial emancipation and progress. Hence it becomes easy for politicians like Mahathir to use its determined emancipatory teleology to fashion out an identity for themselves. In fact, UMNO is built upon what Derrida calls "the dialectic of desire and of consciousness" (62). In this sense, its narrative is anchored on the desire to emancipate the Malays from poverty on the one hand as well as to politically stimulate their consciousness and eventually lead them to an economic Eldorado. UMNO is then a grand narrative of hope, emancipation, progress, and unity among the Malays. These are of course qualities that politicians can easily exploit for their political ends. It is a convenient master plot for articulating personal political interests by people such as Mahathir. For instance, Jae Hyon Lee (2005) has noted that when his leadership of UMNO was challenged in 1987, Mahathir was quick to activate "the emotional language of Malay nationalism to win over the larger Malay community" (150). He equally noted the appropriation of racial difference by UMNO politicians as bait to secure support among members. In this sense, he pointed out that, "In UMNO politics, demonizing non-Malays has not only been a common tactic, it has also been effective in securing power within the party and guaranteeing general support from Malay society"(208).

It is noteworthy that within the Malaysian politscape, identifying with UMNO is also a means of articulating as well as strengthening a distinctive Malay identity. In fact, the upbeat rhetoric of people like Mahathir is that UMNO is the sole property of the Malays. In this regard, he declares that "[…] UMNO belonged to all Malays, and […] any Malay who subscribed to the party's objectives has a right to join" *(A Doctor in the House* 550).

In so far as representing the rights of Malays is concerned, the inveterate anthropomorphizing agenda of UMNO is tailored towards securing a strong and permanent political base within the larger Malay community. However, this assumed security is occasionally threatened by in-fighting within UMNO itself as witnessed in the "Team A" and "Team B" debacle in 1987 (*A Doctor in the House* 539). The political drama that produced this factionalism within UMNO is a grim pointer to the artificiality of racial unity being touted by people like Mahathir. In addition to this, UMNO also faces a stiff opposition from the equally Malay-based Pan-Islamic party PAS (Parti Islam Semalaya) and Anwar Ibrahim's PKR [Parti KeAdilan Rakyat] (*A Doctor in the House* 539,587). All this provided a ground for questioning the solidity of the grand narrative of UMNO. In this sense both PAS and PKR have become what Zygmunt Bauman, borrowing a phrase from Derrida, has called "the Undecidables." Bauman explains "Undecidables" as entities that subvert order and normality to the constructed "power of the opposition" (e.g. 'Us' versus 'Them'; 'Inside' versus 'Outside' ;). They thus paralyze and "expose the artifice, the fragility, [and] the sham" of this separation" (55).

Although the influence of both parties is nationally minimal (for instance, "PAS's influence has been largely confined to its traditional base in the east coast, especially in the states of Kelantan and Terengganu", Yusoff and Jawan 245), they nonetheless threatened and questioned the politics of collective representation of UMNO. This further exposes the artificiality of UMNO's claims. The double challenge shows that there is nothing like a homogenous and united Malay community. It simply does not exist. The Malays like any other race are too varied and different as to form a unified group with similar interests purported to be represented by UMNO. For instance, apart from the obvious fact of gender (male/female) and generational differences (young/old), there are other observable differences among the Malays strong enough to neutralize any attempt to homogenize them. In this regard, Sharuddin Maaruf (2014) in his book *Concept of a*

Hero in Malay Society has pointed out that the Malay society is stratified into two basic layers. On the one hand are the "ruling elite" who articulated a well-crafted agenda that "[…] advocate for the accumulation of wealth" by its members (83). On the other hand are "the majority of Malays, who form the peasantry and the lower income group […]" (ibid). He further noted that these two groups work at cross purpose to each other. In this respect he noted that the "suggestion to amass riches is quite meaningless" for the "peasantry and lower income Malays" because they lack the necessary tool to partake in buying shares in "factories, plantations, banks and mines" (ibid). This example further demonstrates that in addition to differences based on gender and generation, the Malays are also stratified in terms of labour (peasantry) and social class (elite/non-elite) [11]. Thus the attempt to collectivize the Malays under the emancipatory narrative of UMNO is nothing but a political totalization masquerading as representation. This is the aptness of Anderson's (97) assertion that "[T]he claim to speak for others is always problematic and can also elide further differences under an assumed representativity." This is the sense in which Mahathir sees both PAS and PKR as renegade Malay parties that are created to "split…the Malay ranks" and shatter its "unity" (223-224). In fact he views both PKR and PAS as betrayers of the larger Malay cause.

This emancipatory teleology of UMNO is, however, very useful in the Althusserian hailing of unsuspecting political subjects within the Malaysian politscape. That is why it is not easy to dislodge its rhetorical pretensions to representation especially among those in whose minds the fetishized image of the deprived Malay has taken roots. It is my contention however, that the more the Malaysian society evolves and becomes more sophisticated and liberal as a result of globalization, the less attractive racial identity politics will become among its citizens. More importantly, the challenge posed by PAS and PKR to UMNO is a testimony to the heterogeneity of the Malay community. Curiously enough, Mahathir himself has expressed the desire to see a "united Malaysian

nation" (597) where "people should regard themselves, first and above all, as Malaysians" (602). He suggests that this could only be achieved when people identify with the country rather than their race: "As citizens you must identify with your country and to that extent, you cannot be totally Chinese or wholly Indian and still be Malaysian. Even the Malays have to lose some of their Malayness. In time, there will be one common identity in our country and it will be a Malaysian identity" (602). Indeed, this metaphorical and rhetorical image of a united Malaysia envisioned by Mahathir is nothing but a textual wish veiled and revealed as semantic reality.

In a dramatic turn of events, Mahathir Mohamad left UMNO on 5th November 2016 in protest and floated another race-based political party called "Parti Primubi Bersatu Malaysia" with a determination to, in conjunction with "other opposition parties", challenge the hegemony of the same UMNO he assiduously valorises in the past (Mahathir-mohamad.blogspot.my , November 5, 2016). He has equally toned-down on his rhetorical antagonism towards the Chinese especially by recently (January 28, 2017) declaring that "I am not anti-Chinese. I am pro multiracial Malaysia and Malaysians" (mahathir-mohamad.blogspot.my).

3.9   New Economic Policy (NEP): A Grand narrative of Redemption.

In addition to the story of UMNO, Mahathir also appropriates the success story of the New Economic Policy (henceforth referred to as NEP) in his identity-construction project. The NEP was introduced in 1970 to redress the economic inequalities that exist especially between the Chinese and the Malays. It is important to remember that part of the reasons given by the Malay political elites in opposing the 'Malayan Union' was the perceived fear of domination by the Chinese who had at that time a firm control of the economy. Because they live in cities and urban centres, the Chinese were able to be the key players in the Malaysian economy. They certainly controlled most of the corporate

investments ("[…]the Malays and other Bumiputera, who made up 60 percent of the population, owned less than two percent of shares in public listed companies" 466) as well as the retail business. This control meant more wealth in the hands of the Chinese and it instilled fear that the Malays would be economically marginalized. They reasoned that unless something was done to narrow the gap in terms of ownership of wealth between the two dominant races, the stability of the nation itself would be threatened. The government of Tun Abdul Razak Hussein therefore decided to come up with an affirmative economic policy or what Mahathir calls "positive discrimination" (*A Doctor in the House* 52). Oo Yu Hock (17) has noted that NEP has "a two-fold objective: to eradicate poverty and to restructure society (in terms of wealth distribution)." It is hoped that the after-effects of the policy will foster "national unity among the diverse races in the country" (ibid). Similarly, Gomez et al. (2013) echo Oo Yu Hock's assertions by noting that one of the stated objectives of NEP was "reducing poverty irrespective of race" (6). They equally noted the way in which during Mahathir's tenure as Prime Minister the "implementation of affirmative action and privatisation" was carried out "in a selective manner" thereby laying the foundation of economic cronyism (14).

What is particularly of interest is that even though its initial conception was based on "national unity" rather than racial difference (Gomez et al. 6), NEP was nonetheless hijacked by some vested interests within UMNO through the mechanism of racial exclusion. Soon after this, it became an economic framework that was based on the concept of racial difference. As Gomez et al. note after this transformation "the policy has become highly divisive" because its implementation henceforth "reinforces ethnic identity as a basis for continued access to privileges" (24). Consequently, NEP becomes a policy whose implementation was based on racial exclusion because in it race is turned into a marker of economic difference. Here too we see how racial difference is elevated to the level of governmental policy. In fact, the policy was modified to give preferential

treatment to the Malays and the other indigenous people that are together called the "Bumiputera". The idea is to economically empower this group through governmental support and preferential treatment in contracts, allocations, licenses, concessions, etc. Hence the policy is encoded in a rhetoric of racial difference i.e. "us" versus "them"; "natives" versus "immigrants"; "center" versus "periphery"; etc. Consequently, the narrative of NEP becomes a center-point of hope and liberation among the Malays. Thus identifying with the objectives of the policy equally becomes a basic requirement of racial solidarity especially among the Malay elites. It is thus fairly easy for politicians like Mahathir to appropriate the "NEP story" to bolster his image or rather to re-create a public-persona that is in consonance with the aspirations of his constituency. He rhetorically invokes the successes as well as the failures of the policy in his memoir, and by doing so plants himself at the center of the "Malay struggle". Thus, his language as well as his tone in discussing NEP in the memoir is emotionally charged and tinged with subdued anger. Hence he could lament that: "I could not bear to see how the Malays still lagged behind other races in their own country. After more than a decade of independence, during which they had been at the helm of the Government, they had made no progress at all" *(A Doctor in the House* 222). He expresses his anger at this backwardness of the Malays using the trajectory of racial difference by subtly invoking the "us" versus "them" symmetry. By playing on this racial difference, he is technically reinforcing his "Malay ultra" image. Thus he could say elsewhere in the memoir that "The disproportionately small share of our national wealth that the Bumiputera held was a matter that concerned me throughout my political career" (*A Doctor in the House* 466).

Indeed, through this discursive matrix of economic inequality, Mahathir textually portrays himself as a Malay liberationist who should be listened to. He thus frames and forms his public-persona by emphasizing the collective problems of the Malays whom he feels are not getting a fair deal in the Malaysian nation. In fact, poverty and its eradication

among the Malays becomes an important trope in his memoir. In praising the foresight of Tun Razak in creating the institutional framework of NEP, he displays his racial preference by stressing that "to save the country from experiencing the dire consequence of widespread poverty, the situation of the Malays had to be dealt with earlier and more thoroughly as they made up the majority of the poor" (*A Doctor in the House* 466). He also defended the preferential treatment given to the Malays under NEP by declaring: "It would not look good if poverty among non-Malays was eradicated first, leaving only the Malays among the poor in the country, as was bound to happen if the same amount of attention was given to the non-Malays" (ibid). Again and again he privileges the figure of racial exclusions to articulate his identity-creation project. He thus subtly manipulates social perceptions in order to create a nuanced public identity for himself. In the case of the NEP he craftily uses its liberationist narrative to etch his image in the mind of the public by particularly summoning the perceived economic gap between the Malays and the Chinese. Interestingly, he is less concerned about the poverty among the Indians. Of course it is not surprising as even pretending to be worried about their predicaments would have cast a shadow of doubt over his "Malayness." In fact, he rhetorically distances himself from the Indians by declaring: "If I seem to be concerned only with the Malays, it is because the other races, *even the Indians*, seem to be able to take care of themselves" *(A Doctor in the House* 758; my emphasis). This discursive differentiation between the Malays, Chinese, and Indians aims to eventually articulate a group identity politics that is highly divisive but useful to him. Thus, his narrative is most often deictically encoded in a self-imposed authority of "the representative of the Malays" and only the Malays. It does not matter whether he is in reality recognized as such or not, what is crucial is simply his avowed identification with the racial category of the Malays.

Elsewhere in the memoir we could see him speaking in an institutional voice of liberation, always eager to champion the cause of his race and even celebrating their

successes. He declares, "Malays emerged in increasing numbers during my time to master business. By learning to work diligently and study hard, more Malay professionals were produced *during my time than ever before* [...]" (610; my emphasis). It is difficult to miss the patronizing voice of the liberationist in the foregoing assertion. The idiomatic specificity of the discourse could not be missed either. The statement is no doubt guided by a metaphysics of identification between the interlocutor and his race. Indeed, this is a pattern that is highly noticeable throughout the memoir. As a matter of fact, he tries to emplots himself as the spokes-person of the Malays in the memoir. He thus identifies with their problems as well as progress; successes as well as failures. He also laments his failure to mould them in his own image. Again and again, he expresses his disappointment at their failure to integrate into the modern Malaysian economy. For instance, towards the end of his narrative he emphatically states: "All I can say is that I regret my failure to change the Malays, *to mould* the new Malays, to equip the Malay people with the knowledge and skills necessary for them to make success of their lives and take their rightful place in the country" (*A Doctor in the House* 758; my emphasis). It is my contention that by speaking about the Malays in this tone he has succeeded in objectifying them in his discourse. Having done so, he uses this grammatical and phenomenological subjects-turned-object as palimpsests to discursively write/right and re-create his identity. It is therefore logical that he turns the invocation of their group identity into a mantra throughout the memoir. Of course in doing so he sometimes displays an ambivalent attitude towards them. For instance, in trying to render their economic disadvantage visible, he paradoxically exposes their negative attitudes by complaining about their "poor work ethic"; "unwillingness to learn"; "status seeking"; "greed"; "laziness"; etc. as the obstacles that have to be overcome. Yet in another place we see him complaining about the abuse of the NEP principles by the very people it was meant to benefit. In this regard, he specifically pointed out that the policy has failed to achieve its objectives

largely because of the nonchalant attitude of the Malay elites whom he bluntly accuses of betrayal. He explains the situation:

> The NEP was actually a sound policy which would have
>
> reduced the disparity between the Malays and the non-Malays.
>
> But too many Malays abused the special treatment accorded them
>
> and the NEP achieved only minimal success. In fact, as the Malay
>
> recipients of this largesse sold to the Chinese, this exercise actually
>
> increased the disparity between communities. (*A Doctor in the House* 267)

This display of frustration at the failures of the Malays is another signifying practice that Mahathir employs to stress his "Malayness". Thus, anger against the perceived inability of the Malays to transcend their "disadvantaged" status becomes another tropological device deployed by him in encoding his racial and individual identity. He thus continually uses the trajectory of Malay economic independence as a trope for projecting his "Malay ultra" public-persona. In fact he based the entire narrative of *A Doctor in the House* on the notional concept of race and racial difference. He is specifically interested in reinforcing his image-tag of "a Malay ultra" by constantly invoking his racial credentials. He thus seizes even the slightest opportunity to emphasize that aspect of him. However, in trying to do so, he sometimes effaces his individuality by mortgaging it to the larger racial identity (i.e. "Malayness"). As a corollary, what we most of the time see speaking in the memoir is not the individual Mahathir, but rather the 'institutional Mahathir', a figure that is etched and encoded within a totalized racial identity based on the noun-forms "Malay" and "Malayness", concepts that are highly problematic because they reify and mask the inherent heterogeneity of their referents. In this sense, it is safe to conclude that Mahathir has failed to speak as an individual in his memoir by encoding his personal identity through the larger framework of race. His

tropological inauguration of racial identity is thus a manifest failure because as Derrida might put it, there is no Malay, but Malays. This is the warning sounded by Benston (2000) that '"identity politics" is "an inscription always threatening to erase itself, bearing within itself the sign of its own undoing or overcoming" (286).

Presumably there is never a race that is as homogenous as Mahathir assumes about Malays, Chinese, and Indians. Moreover, any attempt to confer unity on such racial categories will fail as a consequence of their inherent diversity. More importantly, to pretend to speak on behalf of such racial groups as Mahathir purports to do in his memoir is also doomed to fail because the objects and subjects of this assumed representativeness does not exist, but is rather a "legal, social, and political construct". Hence, we can only talk about "Malay" and "Malayness" in the fictional narrative space of the memoir. In fact, that is why in spite of his presumed racial patriotism, solidarity, and identification with "Malay" and "Malayness", Mahathir nonetheless faces stiff opposition from people who are considered "Malays" both in UMNO and beyond as mentioned earlier. Thus his attempt to represent the "unrepresentable" is illogical as well as impracticable. Additionally, his attempt to discursively unify Malays as one entity is a simple dream of someone who sees himself in a position of power and authority. This kind of politics is very totalizing and misleading because it seeks to eliminate individualism. This is the insight of Lyotard's (1993) assertion that:

> To speak for others in politics is the pretension to speak for all,
>
> to achieve a discourse that is proof against pragmatics. And in the
>
> discursive pragmatics of this phrasing we have a little domination
>
> effect in miniature: the speaker effaces the addressee, legitimating
>
> himself or herself only in relation to the referent and the signification
>
> attached to it. (xxii)

From the discussion so far it is easy to see that the Malays only feature in Mahathir's memoir because they are important for the textual construction of his identity. Thus their individual distinctiveness is subordinated to a constructed and fictional collective will. Moreover, in so far as the concepts of "Malay" and "Malayness" are used in the memoir, they are only employed to articulate an individual identity politics/project that is threatened by the presence of the racial 'Other', in this case Chinese and Indians. But as we have seen, this racial other is also very important in this identity project because it is the surface on which to bounce off the contrasting image of the self. It is important to note however, that in the memoir both the self and its racial other are no more than fictional and political constructs.

3.10 Conclusion.

From what we have seen so far, it stands to reason that in trying to fabricate his identity, Mahathir has failed to strike a balance between what Benston (291) calls "the collective knowledge of "our",' with "the individual vision of "I",' resulting in the loss of that individual identity he sets out to fabricate, re-create, re-construct, and fashion in his memoir. Indeed, the challenge he faces from other people within his adopted race is a testimony to the failure of the kind of identity politics he invested so much energy to project in his memoir. Thus as argued elsewhere his attempts to project his image of a "Malay ultra" is textual, discursive and to that extent fictional. Moreover, his attempt to re-create himself through an aesthetic ontology of racial difference only exposes the gap that exists between the ideal (i.e. racial identity) and the real (i.e. individual identity). In this sense, individual identity *qua* individual identity cannot be located in racial identity because of the difference between the corporeal heterogeneity of race and the semantic specificity of the individual. The two are thus practically poles apart. It is my contention that whereas an individual can be easily identified as a human person, race is a fictional and elusive category because its recognition is based on a visual authority of skin colour

differentiation, something that most often requires a dazzling helix of explication in its articulation.

It follows then, that using race to articulate individual identity as Mahathir does in his memoir will surely produce a loss of personal agency which is an important hallmark of individualism. In such situations, the individual will be sucked in the collective vortex of racial identity, something that is not real but textually and rhetorically constructed. By engaging in such an enterprise Mahathir plunges in a web of self-defeating performative contradiction that eventually results at the end of the narrative into his effacement or de-Facement (as Paul de Man would put it). In the end the narrative in the memoir reaches a climax at a point when only a shrill voice of the narrator-protagonist is audible. In this sense, his voice, identity, and personality become what Foucault (1972) has aptly described as "erased like a face drawn in the sand at the edge of the sea" (397). Perhaps this is a demonstration of that relationship between writing and death that Foucault (1984) has graphically captured in his essay "What is an Author?" He explains the situation in the following manner:

> Using all the contrivances that he sets up between
> himself and what he writes, the writing subject cancels
> out the signs of his particular individuality. As a result,
> the mark of the writer is reduced to nothing more than the
> singularity of his absence; he must assume the role of the
> dead man in the game of writing. (102-3)

In the end Mahathir has failed to create the public-persona he so much desires in his memoir and is consequently experienced and visualized by the reader as an "absence". Similarly, he fails in his attempts to textually produce and concretize warrantable statements about himself, Malays, Chinese, Indians and UMNO. All this is because in writing his memoir he engages with/in language, a system of transaction that he has no control over because he is just a tool spoken or written by or over it. This is the validity

of Royle's (2003) assertion that "the "I" of the narrative is just as much created by the narrative as she is the creator of it" (277). He is thus caught in the web of endless play of signification that is the hallmark of all writings. This endless play only leaves feeble traces of   him in the memoir.

CHAPTER 4: THE GANDHIAN METAPHYSICS OF IDENTITY IN *MY EXPERIMENTS WITH TRUTH*

4.1   Preamble.

This chapter looks at how Gandhi constructs his identity in his autobiography *My Experiments with Truths.* The chapter among other things focuses on the narrative strategies he employs in encoding his story. In this regard the chapter critically examines how he constructs his identity by purporting to represent the interests of the marginalized among the Indian subaltern groups living in both India and South Africa. The central argument of the chapter is that Gandhi's autobiography is a text that in the process of framing its narrative inadvertently objectifies the Indian masses. The chapter claims that Gandhi objectifies this subaltern group by his employment of negative tropes to describe their attitudes especially towards cleanliness and environmental sanitation. The chapter further claims that by portraying the subalterns as dirty and unamenable to change in issues of personal and environmental hygiene he indirectly creates a binary opposition between himself and the subalterns. The chapter observes that in spite of the unabashed display of solidarity with the subalterns Gandhi has subtly demonstrated that he is everything that the subalterns are not. He thus uses the subalterns as a palimpsest on which to inscribe his identity by creating a Hegelian dialectics of difference between him and the subalterns thereby portraying a favourable identity of his self. In this sense he uses the identity of the subalterns as a surface on which to bounce off his own subtly constructed and contrasted superior identity. The chapter also looks at how Gandhi objectifies the native Africans in his narrative. In this regard the chapter interrogates the interchange between vision, visualism, and textual re-presentation as processes of identity manipulation in autobiographical writing. The chapter therefore pays attention to how in the course of narrating his experiences as an autobiography Gandhi perhaps unintentionally elided as well as negated the corporeality of the native Africans by

choosing not to "see" their presence even though he had spent over two decades in their midst in South Africa. The argument is that by treating the native Africans as a mute presence in his text Gandhi is inadvertently negating their identity thereby stripping them of all agency in a moral and natural environment in which they are undoubtedly the majority. The chapter concludes that by acting in this manner Gandhi is indirectly reinforcing the negative attitude of the South African racist regime at a period when he himself is engaged with fighting the same system with regards to the rights of Indians in South Africa.

4.2   Introduction.

Sidonie Smith (2001) has noted that from the earliest time "travelling has always been […] situated within complex social, cultural, and historical forces" (xiii). In this sense people travel out of their environments to new locations either in search of adventure, wealth, peace, or all of the above. On yet another plane they also migrate as a result of the interplay of several operational dynamics in the social and political spaces they occupy. In this regard scholars such as Kath Woodward (2002) have delineated two factors responsible for the movement and migration of people across the globe in the modern period. She terms these factors broadly as "the compulsion of 'Push' and the draw of 'Pull' factors". She further explains the "Push" factors as migration closely linked to wars, violence, famine, disasters, poverty, and other catastrophic events. Hence the brooding incursion of such push factors ultimately results into forced migration. The "Pull" factors on the other hand are "the outcome of voluntarily made decisions" strongly allied with an immense desire for economic prosperity (52).

Echoing Woodward, Judith M. Brown (2006) has also observed that some migrants in the world are "lured by hope" for a better future while others are "driven by fear" of a disastrous present (1). On the whole, then, there is reason to observe that migration is

very important to collective existential human development because it facilitates the global movement of labour, goods, cultural practices, and ideas. Centrally important in this observation is that when people move to new environments they create new communities. Such communities are constitutive of what is generally referred to as the "Diaspora"[1] a term "used […] to describe all kinds of population shifts" (Younger 10). Migration thus plays a very important role in the visual and spatial re-creation of diasporas such as the Indian community in South Africa.

4.3 Biodata.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born on 2 October 1869 in Porbandar, Gujarat. After university, he went to London to train as a barrister. He returned to India in 1891 and in 1893 accepted a job at an Indian firm in Durban, South Africa. During his 21 years in South Africa he challenged the apartheid regime several times and was in and out of prison on that account. By 1920, he was an influential figure in Indian politics. His ideas transformed the Indian National Congress to a formidable force in colonial India. He challenged the hegemony of the British in India by initiating a programme of peaceful resistance that included the economic boycott of British made goods. As a consequence of his clash with the British Raj he was sentenced to six years imprisonment in 1922. He was however released after two years when the British feared the repercussions if he were to die in prison. In 1931, Gandhi attended the Round Table Conference to discuss Indian independence in London, as the sole representative of the Indian National Congress. He however later resigned from the party in protest at its deployment of non-violence as a political rather than moral tool.

During his lifetime he invested a lot of energy towards improving the worsening Hindu-Muslim relations in India. He was not very successful because by the time of independence in 1947 the single nation he envisaged never came to be as India was

divided into India with a Hindu majority and Pakistan with a Muslim majority. The division of India angered some right-wing Hindus who blamed Gandhi for his conciliatory gesture towards the Muslim minority. He was subsequently assassinated by a Hindu fanatic on 30 January, 1948 in Delhi while attending a Hindu function. He married Kasturba at the age of thirteen and they had four sons.

Gandhi's autobiography was "originally written in Gujarati in the mid 1920s" (Mishra, "Foreword to 2007 Edition" 5). He wrote the autobiography at a time when India was under the imperial rule of the British Empire. During this period there were deep-seated resentments toward Indians by the colonial authorities in India. One notable example of these resentments was the widespread assumption among the white colonial officers that the Indians are naturally dirty and are thus not bothered about keeping their environment clean. To this end, several conferences were held by the British Raj on how to find solutions to the poor sanitary condition that most often resulted in the outbreak of diseases. One such conferences was held in London in 1866 (Gilbert 183). In fact, the colonial authorities, more often than not, defined the Indian landscape as "permanently dark, diseased, and barbaric" (Gilbert xix). In addition, the Indian environment was also considered as "guilty of disease production" (Gilbert 183). In short, the Indian colonial landscape was considered as "the unhealthy and barbaric colony", the direct antithesis of England's "metropolitan civilization" (Gilbert xix). Gandhi was fully aware of these allegations against the Indians. He was equally perturbed by unmindful behaviour of his compatriots especially in matters of personal hygiene and environmental sanitation. Consequently, Gandhi responds to these allegations through the medium of his autobiography. In fact, a substantial part of his autobiography was devoted to demonising the absence of personal hygiene and environmental sanitation consciousness amongst the Indian masses. This issue is also one of the focus areas of this thesis.

Gandhi's autobiography is divided into five parts, with each section covering wide range of topics such as: "Birth and Parentage" (page 19), "Child Marriage" (page 21), "In London at Last" (page 54), "Preparing for South Africa" (page 103", "The Birth of Khadi" (page 439), etc. The narrative ends with a section titled "Farewell" in which Gandhi declares that, "The time has come to bring these chapters to a close" (452). He goes on to say: "My life from this point (i.e. 1920) has been so public that there is hardly anything about it that people do not know […]. In fact my pen instinctively refuses to proceed further" (452).

In the "Foreword to the 2007 Edition", Pankaj Mishra has noted that Gandhi's autobiography "doesn't cover his political life in the 1930s and 40s, when his experiments […] took the form of political gambles" (9). In short, the story in the autobiography covers from his birth in 1869 to the period of his engagement in the activities of the Congress Party in its agitation for self-rule or Swaraj especially in 1920. In this regard, Gandhi narrates how at the September 1920 Calcutta All-India Conference as well as the Nagpur Conference shortly after, the gathering demands for Swaraj from the British Raj: "In the constitution that I had presented, the goal of the Congress was the attainment of Swaraj within the British Empire if possible and without if necessary" (450). It is with this demand that Gandhi brings the story of his experiments with truth to a close. Gandhi later lived to witness the Swaraj or "Home-rule" that he and other Indian nationalists fought and struggled for.

In his study of the autobiographies of M.K. Gandhi (1869-1948), Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964), and Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938), Javed Majeed (2007) has noted that for these three, the template of autobiography, "given the colonial context in which they lived […] had an obvious appeal as a written articulation of self-discovery and self-assertion" (1). In other words, the genre of autobiography provided a space for these nationalists to

advance their political as well as ideological agenda especially in their fight for the independence of their nations and equal rights for their people. Thus, we see the articulation of a self-hood that is tied to a larger nationalist platform in Gandhi's *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (1927-1929), Nehru's *An Autobiography* (1936), and Iqbal's *Jāvĩd Nãma* (1932). Specifically, Javeed also notes how Gandhi appropriates "autobiography as a Western genre" to push his agenda for "self-rule as a return to the pre-modern and religious civilisations of both India and Britain" (213). In other words, Gandhi uses the template of autobiography to argue that both India and Britain have strong traditions that predates their colonial contact. In fact, he persuasively argues in his autobiography, especially during his stay in South Africa, that the British Raj should treat the Indians as equals rather than subordinates because both are old civilisations. It is along these lines that Majeed argues that Gandhi uses "South Africa as a site of self-definition" in his autobiography (141). There is indeed enough evidence to suggest that Gandhi had started his political apprenticeship in South Africa. In fact, he created concepts such as *Satyagraha*, *Ahimsa, Brahmacharya,* and *Hind Swaraj* during his sojourn in South Africa. He later deployed these concepts to maximum effect in his agitation for independence from the British Raj in India.

Even more, a persuasive case could be made that Gandhi remains relevant to us today because he was an ardent supporter of "freedom of the individual" (Ramakrishnan 8). A person who openly declares that "I detest autocracy. Valuing my freedom and independence I equally cherish them for others" (*Collected Works* Vol.21, 45) could not but influence other seekers of justice and equality in the world. As a matter of fact, Gandhi's elitism was never destructive but benevolent; a source of courage and power to freedom fighters such as Martin Luther King Jr., Kwame Nkrumah, and Nelson Mandela, to mention but a few examples. He equally had a persuasive influence on the first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru.

4.4   The Indian Diaspora in South Africa.

Alleyen Diesel (2003) has pointed out that "Indians started arriving in South Africa in November 1860" (34). In this sense the Indian diaspora in South Africa could be linked to the emergence of the industrial boom as well as the ascending power of the British Empire at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This industrial boom invariably created a huge demand for raw materials to be used in factories located in various parts of the United Kingdom. More significantly, these raw materials were sourced from sugar, palm kernel, tea, coffee, and cotton plantations as well as mineral mines scattered in various parts of the British Empire. Of course during the boom period of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade labour on these plantations, farms, and mines was essentially provided by slaves from especially West Africa. The abolition of slavery at the end of the nineteenth century however, particularly fuelled the demand for the replacement of slave labour in such plantations and mines scattered across the British Empire. In response to this urgent demand for labour replacement the superintendents of the British Empire created a new form of slavery called "indentured labour"[2] that specifically targeted the Indian population. An indentured labourer, therefore, is a person that enters into a five-year contract under the Imperial watch of a British capitalist to work mostly on sugar, coffee, or tea plantations in far-flung places such as the Pacific Island of Fiji, the Caribbean Islands of Guyana and Jamaica, and South Africa. The indentured labourer is then transported free to their place of assignment and is kept under the close supervision of his European master. The indentured labourer is normally free after serving the period of their contract. The majority of Indians that relocated to South Africa were from this group. There were of course other groups of Indians that travelled independently by paying their own fare. This group consisted largely of the merchants who travelled to establish businesses selling mostly Indian-sought-after goods to the indentured and/ or settler migrants. In fact Gandhi himself has noted that the Indian diaspora in South Africa

consists of largely these "indentured labourers" brought to work mostly in the sugar plantations of Natal (*Experiments with Truth* 109). The other group he pointed out, consisted of "the traders and educated Indians who […] were very few" in number (ibid 265). Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi is among these few educated Indians in South Africa during the closing decade of the nineteenth century.

4.5   Travelling to South Africa.

In the month of "April 1893" Gandhi travelled to South Africa as an agent of Capital and Capitalism (*Experiments with Truth* 106). He was invited or rather employed by the Company of Seth Abdullah, a successful local Indian merchant in Durban, to represent the interest of the Company in a commercial dispute involving another local Indian merchant Company based in Pretoria. He subsequently lived in South Africa from 1893-1914, a period of twenty-one years. During his sojourn in South Africa Gandhi had travelled from Durban to Pretoria and Johannesburg several times. It is indeed during one of these journeys that he experienced racism for the first time when he was thrown out of the first class train compartment he was travelling in even though he had a valid ticket:

> On the seventh or eighth day after my arrival, I left Durban.
>
> A first class seat was booked for me. It was usual there to pay
>
> five shillings extra, if one needed a bedding. Abdullah Seth
>
> insisted that I should booked one bedding but, out of obstinacy
>
> and pride and with a view to saving five shillings, I declined. [. . .]
>
> The train reached Maritzburg, the capital of Natal, at about 9 p.m.,
>
> a passenger came next, and looked me up and down. He saw that I
>
> was a 'coloured man'. This disturbed him. Out he went and came in
>
> again with one or two officials. They all kept quiet, when another
>
> official came and said, 'Come along, you must go to the van compart-

ment.' (*Experiments with Truth* 113)

Gandhi of course resisted this harassment by refusing to voluntarily relocate to the van compartment by explaining that he had "a first class ticket". But the racist officials were also adamant and unrelenting in their insistence:

'You must leave this compartment, or else I shall have to call a police

constable to push you out.'

'Yes, you may. I refuse to get out voluntarily.'

The constable came. He took me by the hand and pushed me out.

My luggage was also taken out. I refused to go to the compartment

and the train steamed away. (ibid 113)

This incident crystallized in his psyche and subsequently became a launching pad for his crusade for a better life for the Indian population in South Africa.

In his autobiography Gandhi nostalgically recalls how he was invited to go to South Africa to serve capital and profit:

In the meantime a Meman firm from Porbandar wrote to my

brother making the following offer: 'We have business in South

Africa. Ours is a big firm, and we have a big case there in court,

our claim being £40,000.00 [. . .]. If you sent your brother

there, he would be able useful to us and also to himself. He

would be able to instruct our counsel better than ourselves.

And he would have the advantage of seeing a new part of the

world, and of making new acquaintances. (*Experiments with Truth* 104)

Gandhi is further enticed with monetary incentive when the firm offers to pay him "'a first class return fare and a sum of £105'" for his services (105). With this 'juicy' offer Gandhi admits to being a "servant" of Capital in South Africa. He could thus comment:

"This was hardly going there as a barrister. It was going as a servant of the firm… I closed the offer without any *higgling,* and got ready to go to South Africa" (my emphasis 105). It is my opinion that in travelling to South Africa to represent Capital, Gandhi was following in the footsteps of other key Victorian writers such as Joseph Conrad, Rudyard Kipling, and E.M. Forster. These writers had at various times travelled to different parts of the Empire seeking for wealth, fame, adventure, or both. In an almost similar fashion Gandhi "full of zest" sails from India to South Africa, a country that was under the firm grip of an autocratic White minority towards the end of the nineteenth century to "try my luck"*,* as he puts it (106). Needless to say the demographic geography of South Africa consisted of the majority native Africans, Asians mostly Indians with a sprinkle of Chinese, the Coloreds, and the Whites who were the rulers operating an authoritarian system of government whose policy was tailored towards dis-empowering the other races in general but native Africans especially.

It would be useful to recall that under the apartheid system of government in South Africa the Whites were the supreme lords who had to be obeyed and respected by the other racial groups. Apartheid is a colonial system built on the concept of racial difference based on the visual differentiation of skin pigmentation. Of course, under this system of racial paternalism, the "lighter" the skin is, the better. In this sense, it is important to note that there is an essential symmetry between skin colour and access to political as well as economic privileges under apartheid. On the whole, therefore, the system is a brutal terror machine that aims to marginalize and dehumanize especially the native Africans, the Coloureds and the Indian communities in South Africa. In particular, however, I want to point out that the system was by far more brutal towards the native Africans than to any of the other racial groups. Undoubtedly, in this system the native Africans were totally ignored and completely marginalized. They were thus reduced to a cipher in their native land. Consequently, they were denied both voice and agency by the severe and punitive

laws put in place to daily police and regulate their life. For instance, they were required by law to carry special passes given by the White minority government in order to move from one part of their country to another. On this evidence it can be rightly argued that the native Africans were paradoxically both a *presence* as well as an *absence* in the South African political configuration as at the time Gandhi was there.

It is indeed crucial to clarify that they were a *presence* in the sense of being a corporeal reality but an *absence* at the same time because they were denied voice, participation, representation, and recognition in the South African politscape. They were simply the marked *other* "in an institutional space that…invokes colonialism" and valorises racial difference (Castle 243). Indeed it is my opinion that it is this selective attitude that Gandhi inadvertently and perhaps unintentionally reinforces in his autobiography by conspicuously eliding the presence of the native Africans in his narrative. In fact, even a cursory survey of *My Experiments with Truth* will reveal that in contrast to the generous presence of the Indians, the native Africans only appear very minimally as textual signifieds in the tapestry of the text. It is my contention that by thus rendering them *invisible* in the way he does in his autobiography he compromises their identity through a process of textual elision. Their identity is in fact negated because as Linda Martin Alcoff (2006) has rightly noted, "In our excessively materialist society, only what is visible can generally achieve the status of accepted truth…all else that vies for the status of the real must be inferred from that which can be seen" (6). It will not be an exaggeration to say that the native Africans are not "visible" in Gandhi's autobiography even though he had stayed for a considerable period of time in their midst. It is my observation that by concealing their presence, the native Africans are thus marked as *subjects* and *objects* of difference in Gandhi's text. They are thus the *invisible* "other" to the *visible* Indians in the world of the text.

4.6   Gandhi, Autobiography and the Act of Seeing.

It is pertinent to note that within the template of twentieth century modernity, *vision, visualism,* and *visuality* are core components for cognition of both the self and its other. In fact Martin Jay (1988) has aptly noted how from "the Renaissance" right through "the scientific revolution" the cognitive map of modernity "has been normally considered resolutely ocularcentric" (3). As a matter of fact vision is very crucial in objectifying the non-self or the racially and/or culturally different "other" especially in narratives of hegemonic self-valorisation. Commenting on the significance of ocular power in textual production of personal narratives such as autobiography, Spurr (27) has elegantly argued that in the textual generation and signification of otherness "the visible is…a mode of thinking and writing wherein the world is radically transformed into an object of possession". In other words, the different other is more often than not deliberately created, nourished, and sustained through a discriminating visual power of an assumed racial or cultural difference.

Several scholars have attempted to differentiate between the concepts of vision, visualism, and visuality in social discourse. For instance, Hal Foster (1988) has suggested that *vision* normally "suggests sight as a physical operation", whereas *visuality* suggests "sight as a social fact" (ix). By physical operation Forster means that vision is an embodied act that is located in the materiality of people's body. Conversely, visuality is socially and historically embedded in spaces and cultural practices. Viewed in another way, vision could be said to deal with "the mechanism of sight" itself whereas visuality entails "its historical techniques" i.e. the conditions governing "how we are able, allowed, or made to see, and how we see this seeing or the unseen therein" (ibid). Indeed vision or seeing is a social and physical act that is located in time and space.

It is pertinent to underline that there is indeed a power differential at work in the mechanism of seeing between the "seer" and the "seen". The balance is unarguably tipped decidedly in favour of the "seer" to the detriment of the "seen". The implication of this is that, as Buchan and Ellison (2012) have rightly observed, within the configuration of modernity's epistemology, "both power and possibility are primarily conveyed visually" from the perspective of the seer or viewer (5). In an important sense, in modernity's epistemology "the sound of power was subordinated to the power of vision" because "Power was to be registered through the eye, by seeing and by making visible" (4). In other words, seeing will most of the time result in a proclamation, textual or otherwise, by the "seer" about what he has seen. Indeed, this power to see invariably comes with a lot of authority especially when it is deployed to reflexively monitor the perceived *other* in social discourse.

Echoing Buchan and Ellison, Martin Heidegger (cited in Levin 1993) has noted how modernity has poignantly ushered in a "new epoch" in which "the ocular subject has finally becomes the ultimate source of all being and reference point for all measurements, all calculations of the *value* of being" (6 italics original). Viewed in this way the eye has undeniably become the ultimate sovereign in the mapping of its scopic territory or field of vision. More significantly, it is the testimony of the eye that is most often recounted in narratives such as the autobiography.

The cumulative effect of this is that vision and visuality are thus very important to the autobiographical act because autobiography is a *lebenwelt*, or a record of the experiences of the writing-subject as seen in the past and retrieved from memory at the time of writing. Indeed Pierre Jacob and Marc Jeannerod (2003) have noted how "Sight, visual experience or visual perception, is both a particular kind of human experience and a fundamental source of human knowledge of the world" (ix). In fact, it is my view that most of the

content of autobiographical narratives such as Gandhi's is derived from visual observation or experience rather than tactile or olfactory experience. In this regard, then, the visual or what Johannes Fabian (1983; cited in Bello-Kano 61) has called "visualism" is very fundamental in re-creating and re-presenting experience through autobiographical textual encoding. In fact visualism plays key role in organizing the story in autobiography into a coherent narrative. Even more important, it is vision or visualism that furnishes the writing-"I" in autobiography with the observable details she describes in her text. Thus far, the writing-"I" in autobiography, is, to quote Bello-Kano (2005) "the writing-seeing "I"" that depends on the efficacy of visual comprehension to re-create and narrativize his or her text (59). It is at least reasonable to suggest that in autobiographical narratives the writing-seeing "I"/eye must see before he or she observes, recognizes, and textually reports. Seen in this way it is difficult to ignore the power of vision and visualism in autobiographical acts. It is indeed not difficult to observe that in most social interactions between individuals and/or groups, primacy is always accorded to vision and its resultant seeing.

But yet "vision" and its attendant "seeing" is not an innocent activity because most of the times it is "situational" in the sense that it is anchored on the "social location" of the seeing-"I"/Eye (Alcoff 96). In this regard it is my point that vision or seeing is a resolutely subjective activity that mostly depends on the ideological and/or political perspective of the writing-seeing "I"/Eye. More often than not, what we choose to see is historically and politically conditioned by the power dynamics at play within the social ecology we are operating. It is thus not easy to escape the trappings of what Michael Levin (1993) has succinctly described as "the hegemony of vision" in the textual encoding of our experiences (5). In fact this is the import of Nash and Kobayashi's (1996) formulation that the eye is "a rationalizing, singular observer who judges and polices the truth" (85). On this score, what we choose to "see" most of the time is hijacked by "the gaze of a

social order" that manipulates and controls our visual perception as well as individual perspective (Levin, *The Opening Vision* 35-36). Yet seeing has its own concomitant problems because as Norman Bryson (1988) points out, in the field of vision, "Everything I see is orchestrated with *a cultural production of seeing* that exists independently of my life and outside it" (my emphasis 92). In this sense it can be rightly argued that vision and seeing are always tainted with ideology.

What is manifestly clear in the preceding observation is that every seeing is implicated and embroiled in what Bryson has aptly called "the politics of vision" (107). Going by this then, human seeing will always be politically and ideologically over determined. It is indeed a deeply unsettling reminder that no seeing is or will be free from the politics of its environment. Arguing along these lines Moyo Okediji (2010) further underscores the meddling influence of the politics of vision and seeing by revealingly demonstrating that in textual and artistic recollections of past events, most often "historical contradictions form layers of veils that separate the viewer from what is viewed and dismember the object on view from the subject that is viewing it" (235-236). In this sense the viewer's pre-beliefs and pre-knowledge plays an important role in his or her visual cognition. What we know is most often pre-figured and pre-conditioned by our social and political environment. Moreover, the point to note in all this is that there is a deep connection between seeing, politics, and ideology. It would be nearly impossible to disentangle the act of seeing from the prevailing politics and ideology operational in the seer's or viewer's environment. In fact, this is the insight of John Berger's observation that "the way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe" (8).

Having said this, it is noteworthy that there are times when the power to see will be used to conceal what was seen for political and/or ideological reasons because as Levin has cannily observed, it is "The body politic" that "shapes our vision, structures our gaze"

(*The Opening Vision* 127). In this sense, then, what is seen will be totally ignored and as such will go unacknowledged or unreported especially when it conflicts with our pre-beliefs, pre-knowledge, and/or political interests. This is the situation that the native Africans find themselves in the autobiography of Gandhi where they are textually silenced. This has a far-reaching ideological consequence especially for the native Africans in South Africa because as Martin Alcoff has aptly noted, in social and political discourses "what cannot be 'made totally visible and clear' may disappear altogether from consciousness" (198).

4.7   Gandhi and the D/elision of the Native African.

Kenneth Saunders has described Gandhi as "the long-life champion of the poor against prejudice and oppression, and the man of color against injustice and insolence" (202). He also noted that even though Gandhi is far from being the quintessential perfect human being, he nonetheless commands huge respect in spite of "his queer limitations and certain beliefs which seems strange to us"(209). It is indeed my opinion that part of Gandhi's "queer limitations and […] beliefs" that may seem strange to many is his situational silencing of the native African in his autobiography. Even though Gandhi does not in any way suggest South Africa as a *terra nullius* in the sense that the White Australians consider Aboriginal land for instance, he hesitates to acknowledge the presence of the original inhabitants of the land as it were. Intimately related to this is how he chooses to conveniently ignore the ubiquity of the native Africans in his autobiography.

It is my contention that the othering process in its manifold forms and applications more often than not, exhibits a penchant to isolate and exclude certain people or groups that are perceived to be different. These people and groups are also most often perceived as a threat to the existential comfort of the seeing-"I"/eye and hence are perniciously excluded from actively participating in social discourses. Even more significantly, this

process invariably leads to the reification and objectification of that "isolated" and "excluded" other. My point is that the alienating effect of this process is vigorously at work in Gandhi's autobiography especially in connection with the ontological presence of the native Africans.

For instance, at the level of practical reasoning one would assume that having spent over two decades in South Africa the native Africans would form a substantial part of Gandhi's narrative in his autobiography. However this is not the case because the native Africans are totally ignored. Thus in Gandhi's autobiography the native Africans are the repressed "other" that are suppressed, elided, concealed, and marginalized. They are thus cancelled and erased as individuals; rendered almost completely invisible in the text as a collective entity. For instance, aside from the brief mention of the Zulus and their revolt against the apartheid regime in Natal, Gandhi is mute about the presence of the native Africans. He thus narrates how their "Indian Ambulance Corps" is drafted to nurse the wounded Zulus during the rebellion:

> At any rate my heart was with the Zulus, and I was delighted,
>
> on reaching headquarters, to hear that our main work was to
>
> be the nursing of the wounded Zulus. The Medical Officer in
>
> charge welcomed us. He said the white people were not willing
>
> nurses for the wounded Zulus, that their wounds were festering,
>
> and that he was at his wits' end. He hailed our arrival as a godsend
>
> for those innocent people, and he equipped us with bandages, disin-
>
> fectants, etc., and took us to the improvised hospital. (287-288)

Indeed one important fact that is discernible from Gandhi's autobiography is that there is a total absence of the *individualized* native African. There is not a single reference to the native African as a person throughout the text. There is also no name attached to any

native African "body". In addition the native African is also not allowed to speak in the text (a lá Conrad in *Heart of Darkness*). Whereas individual Indians such as Balasundaram, Abdulla Seth, Seth Abdul Gani, Rustomji, Mr Paul, Mr Subhan Godfrey, and a host of others are given voice and allowed to speak and dramatize their existence, no single native African is accorded that opportunity throughout the text. Thus when viewed against the ubiquity of the Indians in the text, the native Africans are not even a *supplement* but an *absence* in Gandhi's narrative. In fact, to paraphrase Mrinalini Greedharry, in Gandhi's autobiography the native African "is a necessary, but necessarily invisible figure" (41). The native African is necessary to the enduring force of the narrative because it will be practically illogical to discuss South Africa without mentioning its inhabitants even if minimally or in passing. This is what Gandhi has to struggle with in his autobiography. He resolves this dilemma by foregrounding their presence as a negative presence (i.e. as a source of benevolent concern as well as a mass of wounded bodies to be laboured for by the "Indian Ambulance Corps" during the rebellion). Similarly Vijay Mishra (cited in Pandya 45-46) has noted how in Gandhi's autobiography the "Africans are conspicuous in their absence". In fact, as noted elsewhere in this chapter, their presence is only acknowledged in adversity such as during the "Zulu 'Rebellion'" in Natal when Gandhi and his "Indian Ambulance Corps" volunteer to take care of the wounded among them (287). This is the only time and place we see Gandhi interacting with the native Africans throughout the text as the Indian Ambulance Corps is with "the wounded Zulus […] for nearly six weeks" (ibid). We are told that the Zulus are enthusiastic to receive the help of the Indian Ambulance Corps:

The Zulus were delighted to see us. The white soldiers used

to peep through the railings that separated us from them and

tried to dissuade us from attending to the wounds. And as we

would not heed them, they became enraged and poured unspea-

kable abuse on the Zulus [. . .]. Gradually I came into close con-

tact with these soldiers, and they ceased to interfere. (288)

Even here the wounded native Africans are mute because their presence is recorded only as inert wounded bodies to be dressed and sometimes moved around on "stretchers" by the Indians (289). By subtly representing the native Africans as a mute presence in his text Gandhi inadvertently reifies them into *subjects* whose existence seems to have no value. In other words he turns them into *objects*. Indeed Gandhi's silence on the presence of the native Africans in his autobiography is an attempt to negate their existential possibility through textual elision. It is my opinion that by textually eliding their presence Gandhi has pushed them to the periphery of social existence in the world of the text. While Gandhi and the Indians occupy the center of this world, the native Africans on the other hand are pushed to the edges of the same world. The native Africans are objectified as an index of docility in his narrative. In addition their individuality is suppressed and hence, unlike the Indians, they have no specific social markers such as name and address attached to their persons. This is in fact very curious and makes one to ponder on the implications of such an act by a revolutionary character with the credentials of Gandhi.

For the moment I should like to make the case that Gandhi ignores the native Africans in his text for political and economic reasons. In this respect it is my contention that Gandhi avoids embroiling himself with the problems of the native Africans because associating the Indian cause with that of the Africans will attenuate the little privileges and concessions the Indians enjoy under the apartheid system. These privileges include among other things the right to operate businesses as well as the right to vote (franchise) in regions with substantial Indian population such as Natal (*Experiments with Truth* 137). It is noteworthy that the Africans are not in any way allowed such concessions.

There is indeed evidence to suggest that Gandhi was deeply concerned with the plight of the settler Indians in South Africa. For instance, Anne Schraff (2008) has noted how, "Gandhi […] could see how the Indians were abused. But, he could not see how the black majority was even more cruelly treated" (38). Moreover, having experienced racial discrimination during his travels, Gandhi concludes that the average Indian living in South Africa must be experiencing a far more serious discrimination on account of their lack of education. In view of this observation, Gandhi therefore focusses his attention to studying the problems Indians face by reaching out to the various groups that constituted the Indian community in South Africa. He sets himself this task with the aim of confronting these problems in an engaging manner. His modus operandi was, as he puts it, to make "an intimate study of the hard condition of the settler Indians, not only by reading and hearing about it, but by personal experience" (*Experiments with Truth* 130). This task was necessary, as he observes, because "South Africa was no country for a self-respecting Indian" under the apartheid regime (150). He thus mobilises the Indians: "merchant class, Colonial-born Indians and the clerical class, the unskilled wage-earners, and the indentured labourers" (ibid 150), with the aim of uniting them under a single organisation that could effectively challenge the hegemony of the Whites especially in Natal.

A major issue that necessitated the coming together of these diverse Indian groups was the "Indian Franchise Bill" that was sent to the "House of Legislature" with the aim of depriving "the Indians their right to elect members of the Natal Legislative Assembly" (*Experiments with Truth* 137). He points out to the Indians that: "This Bill, if it passes into law, will make our lot extremely difficult. It is the first nail in our coffin. It strikes at the root of our self-respect" (ibid 138). Gandhi subsequently galvanises the support of the Indians and wrote a petition to the Natal Legislative Assembly opposing the passage of the Bill by arguing that the Indians "had a right to the franchise in Natal, as we had a kind

of franchise in India" (ibid 141). In the end the Bill was abandoned and the Natal Indians retained their right to the franchise.

The success of the fight against the "Indian Franchise Bill" culminated in the formation of the Natal Indian Congress on 22 May 1893 (*Experiments with Truth* 146). This organisation subsequently provides the platform on which Gandhi was to lead a fierce resistance to the oppressive policies of the apartheid regime. For instance, when the Natal Government "sought to impose an annual tax of £25 on the indentured Indians in 1894", the Natal Indian Congress under the leadership of Gandhi challenged the validity and appropriateness of the tax when the average income of the indentured labourer was not "more than 14s a month" (*Experiments with Truth* 154). In the end, the tax was reduced to £3. It was however, abolished twenty years later in 1914.

In fighting for the rights of the settler Indians in South Africa, Gandhi had also taken up cases of individual indentured labourers who were physically abused by their masters. One good illustration of these cases was the indentured labourer Balasundaram "who was serving his indenture under a well-known European in Durban" (*Experiments with Truth* 150). This master had physically assaulted Balasundaram causing him to lose "two front teeth" (ibid). Gandhi took the case and persuaded the master to "transfer the indenture to someone else" (150).This and several other cases in the text provides an alibi to the earlier claim that Gandhi was deeply concerned with the welfare of the Indians in South Africa.

As noted earlier the relative neglect of the native Africans by Gandhi could be attributed to several factors. Arguably one of these factors is the lingering fear of losing some of the privileges granted the Indians by the apartheid regime. Considering the fact that the native Africans are the apartheid regime's *bêtes noires*, it will be politically dangerous for Gandhi to allow the Indians to openly align with them. As a political pragmatist Gandhi wouldn't have gambled with these concessions by openly endorsing

the suffering of the native Africans or by incorporating their problems in the Indian struggle. It is my contention that Gandhi is not a racist and therefore couldn't have done that out of any feeling of racial superiority as suggested by some scholars. For instance, Brian M. Du Toit (653) cites Kogila Moodley as saying that while in South Africa Gandhi operates an exclusionary politics towards the native African because "his gradually widening circles of concern never quite succeeded in including the plight of the African". Similarly, Swan (cited in Du Toit 653) also suggests that Gandhi and the Natal Indian Congress espouse "an exclusive and self-serving ideology" that saw Gandhi advising the Indians "to keep their issues distinct from those of other non-white groups" especially the native Africans. A good illustration of this exclusionary politics towards the native Africans according to Huttenbach is when Gandhi vehemently opposes the 1904 attempts of the Johannesburg Municipality to allow native Africans to squat in the locations occupied by Indians. In this regard Huttenbach (cited in Du Toit 653) points out how Gandhi totally rejected this idea by writing to the authorities in a tone full of resentment: 'About this mixing of the Kaffirs with the Indians I must confess I feel strongly. I think it is very unfair to the Indian population, and it is an undue tax even on the proverbial patience of my countrymen'. Following this statement Huttenbach concludes that in rejecting this racial mixing Gandhi acted "more like an orthodox Gujarati Vaishya […] than the ecumenical egalitarian for which he is remembered" (ibid). There is indeed some substance in Huttenbach's claim when we consider how Gandhi uses the epithet "Kaffirs" in the quoted lines above to refer to the native Africans. This epithet is usually used by the racist white South Africans to derogatorily describe native Africans. Yet in his autobiography we see how Gandhi finds the use of the epithets *Sami* and "coolies" by the Whites to refer to the Indians in South Africa very distasteful (115; 264).

Even so, I still maintain my position that Gandhi is not a racist considering some of the laudable things he was reported to have said about the Africans. For instance, E.S

Reddy has reported that in an address to the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in South Africa in 1908, Gandhi had openly declared that "South Africa would probably be howling wilderness without the Africans" (n.p.). Elsewhere, he commended the efforts of an African leader John Tengo Jabavu for raising the enormous sum of £50000.00 as contributions from Africans for the establishment of an African college in 1906. In this regard, Gandhi writing in the *Indian Opinion* of March 17, 1906 declares that, "[T]he *great native races* of South Africa[…]are moved by something that has been described as very much akin to religious fervour. *British Indians in South Africa have much to learn from this example of self-sacrifice*" (cited in Reddy n.p., added emphasis). Yet again, in a speech at Oxford on October 24, 1931, Gandhi to the chagrin of his largely white audience, had sarcastically enthused that, "The mighty English look quite pygmies before the mighty races of Africa" (cited in Reddy, n.p.).Yet still, Gandhi had stressed the commonality of Africans with the Indians by noting that:

> Indians have too much in common with the Africans to think of
>
> isolating themselves from them. They cannot exist in South Africa
>
> for any length of time without the active sympathy and friendship
>
> of the Africans. I am not aware of the general body of Indians
>
> having ever adopted an air of superiority towards their African
>
> brethren, and it would be a tragedy if any such movement were
>
> to gain ground among the Indian settlers of South Africa. (cited in Anil Nauriya 10)

These views concerning the Africans as expressed by Gandhi at various fora provides an alibi for my earlier claim that Gandhi is not a racist. My contention is that his apparent neglect of the presence of the native Africans in his autobiography is hinged on other factors but not racism.

For example, I want to stress that the apparent absence of the native Africans in the story recounted in Gandhi's autobiography highlights the abysmal race relations between the Indians and the native Africans in South Africa during this period. Unarguably, the relationship between these two contending groups was anything but cordial. Evidently, the visible invisibility of the native Africans in Gandhi's autobiography was symptomatic of the antagonism between these groups during this period of political agitation. In this regard, there is evidence to suggest that the relationship between the Africans and the Indians was strained as a result of mutual distrust engendered by subtle competition between them especially in the economic sphere. For instance, Paul Younger (2010) has pointed out that by the time of the Boer war (1899-1922) the Zulus had already started encroaching into the economic territory of the Indians by "taking over the work on the plantations" (134) in Natal.

Echoing similar sentiment, Ashwin Desai and Godam Vahid (2010) note that at the time Gandhi was in South Africa, there was a brewing tension between the Africans and the Indians brought about by lack of social contact between them. They further note that although the Indians and the Africans live side by side in the same *physical space*, they conversely occupy different *social spaces* thereby making it difficult for the two groups to have meaningful and mutual interaction. Consequently, the seeming distrust between these "subordinating groups" (Desai and Vahid 187) further alienate them to the extent that "where the indentured and African did meet, it was just to touch at the fingertips" (Desai and Vahid 188). Desai and Vahid also noted how Gandhi persistently rejected "any 'alliance' with Africans", justifying his opposition by pointing out that while Indians are "British subjects", the "African aboriginal natives" are not "subjects of the crown" (188). Presumably, the absence of the native Africans in Gandhi's text is also a reflection of this antagonism between the two groups. It will not be an unwarranted extrapolation to claim

that the obviation of the presence of the native Africans in Gandhi's autobiography is a continuation of this hostility in another form.

Unarguably the native Africans are a mute presence in Gandhi's autobiography. They are thus not in the "scopic regime" of Gandhi in the same way the Indians are. This situational silencing of the presence of Africans by Gandhi may seem to be unmistakably un-Gandhian. However it is my opinion that the near total effacement of the native Africans in Gandhi's text has traces of the process of objectification. In this sense, it bears noting that you can objectify a group of people by textually denying their corporeal existence. Objectification can be achieved or is achieved when a people living in a particular geographical and social space are effaced from that space through textual silencing as we see with Gandhi in his treatment of the native Africans in his autobiography. In fact the native Africans are treated as an "absence" in his narrative hence they lack any significatory power in his text. What needs most stressing is that there is a huge power differential between the mobile profile of Gandhi and the mute, docile, and invisible native Africans. In particular I would want to point out that Gandhi optimally utilizes this power differential to particularly negate the individuality of the native Africans in his autobiography. By thus choosing not to acknowledge their ubiquitousness in an environment in which they are undoubtedly dominant, I am compelled to conclude that Gandhi has subtly objectified the native Africans in his text. What is noticeably surprising is that Gandhi has attempted to strike-out the native Africans from his textual landscape even though he has lived for over two decades in their midst. In particular I should want to point out that you cannot separate the native African from his natural environment "any more than a dancer […] from the dance" (Said 92). Yet that is exactly what Gandhi attempts in his autobiography.

4.8   Gandhi and the Objectification of the Indian Masses.

In providing a foundational context of my discussion, I want to proceed from the notion of autobiography as a conjuncture of the private and the public, the individual and the communal. Viewed in this sense, autobiography is a narrative encoding of the experiences of the author-writer that most often involves the recounting of the nonself "other" or "others" (Marcus 273). As a narrative form, therefore, autobiography is inevitably implicated in ideological promotion of ideas and practices that may not be apparent at first glance. Indeed the narrative mode of representation, of which autobiography is one, has most often been a veritable tool that can be used to create "object" and "subject" positions for the characters that the autobiography is about. In fact many scholars (Barthes 1977; White 1984; Miller 1995) have noted the ideological character of narrative. For instance, Miller has argued that narrative and narrativity most often function as a reinforcement of "basic assumptions of a culture about human existence" (71). Similarly, Barthes sees narrative as something that is integral to human life and existence because it is "international, transhistorical, transcultural: it is simply there, like life itself" (79). Even more fundamentally, the efficacy of narrative in creating the "subject" of power and hierarchy (a lá Foucault) "capable of bearing the 'responsibilities' of the law in all its forms" is what, among other things, gives narrative its peculiar character as a bearer of ideology (White 13). As a matter of fact narratives are most of the time structured around a conflict "in which power is at stake" (Abbot 55). This struggle for power is mostly exhibited in the dialectical terms of either domination or resistance to that domination. It is pertinent to note that Gandhi's autobiography is also constituted around two basic features of power i.e. enforcement and resistance.

Objectification as used in this discussion implies the 'thingfication' of the nonself (the 'other') by attributing some negative qualities to it. The nonself/other in this sense become the object of the autobiographer's scorn, sneering, ridicule, and mockery. Even

more importantly, objectification as a concept used herein is viewed as a process of identity formation based on the taxonomy of difference in the social world of the author-narrator shaped by his or her desires and beliefs. Hence, it is my view that most often this narrative of difference is framed through a trajectory of overarching social hierarchies such as "them/us", "inside/outside", "good/bad", "clean/dirty". In broader terms, it is the contention of this discussion that objectification can be achieved through association of the objectified with certain qualities, traits, symbols, images, and events. Moreover these qualities, traits, symbols, and images are most often negatively presented from the vantage point of the author-narrator. It is in line with this that the present discussion examines how autobiography becomes a process of *objectification*. From this perspective the discussion focuses on how autobiography shifts from being the story of the self to that of others often with negative consequences or outcomes. In this regard the discussion is specifically concerned with how Gandhi deploys the dichotomous notions of "dirt" and "cleanliness" to objectify the Indian subaltern in his autobiography. Thus the central argument is that the autobiography of M.K. Gandhi is an identity-creation project that is anchored on the rhetorical strategy of difference. Thus in the text the writing-remembering-seeing "I" is concerned with creating a public identity through the textual encoding of his carefully selected, filtered, and structured experiences. Hence in trying to forge and give shape to these experiences in the form of a coherent narrative, he chooses to encode his text as an aesthetic ontology of difference. He largely achieves this through the deployment of a series of negative tropes as rhetorical tools for projecting and articulating his identity and that of the Indian subalterns[3].

It is indeed worth noting that "dirt" and "clean" are classificatory concepts that could be used to include as well as exclude groups and social formations. They could also be deployed to create class hierarchies and social boundaries in postcolonial narratives. Indeed contrary to commonly held opinions, "dirt" and "clean" are value-laden concepts

that could be used to create and enforce social order in societies. When this is taken together with Zygmunt Bauman's observation that "to classify means to set apart, to segregate" (1), the exclusionary thrust of classificatory concepts such as "dirt" and clean/lines" will begin to manifest. This view is also consequential for the very idea of difference between the "self" and "other" that we see again and again in autobiographical narratives such as Gandhi's. Indeed scholars such as Adeline Masquelier (2005), Suellen Hoy (1995), Elizabeth Shove (2003), Mary Douglas (1984), and Campkin and Cox (2007) have variously noted the ideological content of the concept of "dirt" in social discourse. For instance, Shove has argued that "describing people, things or practices as clean or dirty is not a socially neutral enterprise". She further points that whenever such "classificatory schemes" are deployed in social discourse they create asymmetrical distinctions "like those of class, race, gender, and age" (88). In a similar fashion, Campkin and Cox have noted the structuring power of dirt and cleanliness in social intercourse by arguing that "beyond the specific architectures of hygiene, notions of dirt and cleanliness can be said […] to influence the arrangement and occupation of all interior and exterior space, informing the minutiae of human behaviour and actively influencing relations between people" (4). Notice how "dirt" and "cleanliness" are in this sense important signifiers of class difference. In yet another formulation, Douglas persuasively argues that anxiety about dirt invariably involves anxiety about "the relation of order to disorder, being to nonbeing, form to formlessness, life to death" (5). In fact one suggestive insight provided by Douglas is that notions of "dirt" and "cleanliness" are central to enforcing social normativity in societies. In this regard, "dirt" and "cleanliness" are convenient mechanisms for labelling and enforcing exclusions especially against a perceived "other". This point is eloquently supported by Masquelier where she contends that "Because dirt often stands for deviance, anyone that cannot, will not, or should not fit into a particular social system or pattern can be defined as "dirty, polluting, or impure,

regardless whether that individual agrees with such a definition or even understands it" (10). The power of this conceptualization lies in its canny observation about the justificatory foundation of pernicious social exclusion based on the perceived or assumed "dirtiness" or otherwise of the different "other". In this regard, it does not matter whether the person being labelled is in agreement or not. Suffice to say that when notions of "dirt" and "clean" are used in this sense, they invariably become repositories of social as well as ideological differences. This much could be gleaned in *My Experiments with Truth*. It needs to be underlined that reading Gandhi's autobiography is like reading a philosophy manual. The discourse of the text sounds more like an excerpt from the works of Søren Kierkegaard, Rene Descartes, David Hume, Karl Marx, and John Locke. Indeed the story encoded in the text is that of a soul seeking for metaphysical, corporeal, ethereal, and spiritual transcendence. Fundamentally, Gandhi's narrative is a cerebral tale of exhortations and restrictions framed through the trajectory of self-denial and self-imposed moral discipline. But it is also a text that in the process of framing the story of its protagonist also incorporates the story of its "other". Indeed it is my thesis that the penchant to narrate the story of the "other" and in the process to create that "other" in our own image suggests a characteristically fashionable turn to objectification in autobiographical writings (for instance, recent examples are Mahathir's *A Doctor in the House* and Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom*). This can be observed from Gandhi's autobiography where he uses the subaltern Indian masses as a palimpsest on which to inscribe his identity. Using the economy of difference, he documents how his identity is in sharp contrast to that of the Indian subaltern groups he comes in contact with in both South Africa and India. He among other things uses the trope of "dirt" as an index of difference between himself and the Indian masses. For him "dirt" becomes one of the conceptual trajectories through which he emplots his narrative of identity construction. For example, there are numerous lamentations about the insanitary behaviour of the

Indian subalterns in his autobiography. He at various points in his narrative bemoans the lack of will among the teeming majority of the Indian masses to observe simple environmental sanitation. He cannot fathom how they could live "obliviously to the need or nicety of cleanliness" (Hoy 7). He could thus complain that "It was too much for people to bestir themselves to keep their surroundings clean" (205). This behaviour, according to him, is what made the insinuation that "the Indian was slovenly in his habits and did not keep his house and surroundings clean" difficult to dismiss (205). However, he made it abundantly clear that he is not part of these "ignorant, pauper agriculturalists" (265) by testifying to his perpetual "cleanliness, perseverance and regularity" in matters of personal hygiene, physical grooming and economic management (218). In fact Gina Philogene (2007) has aptly noted that "what defines individuals is their processing of difference with others on the basis of which they integrate their identity fragments" (32). By contrasting his image in this way, the image of the "other" i.e. "ignorant, pauper agriculturalists" is made to become a sign of essential difference between it and the besieging Gandhian-self, and through this constant manipulation of ascribed difference an identity is generated. The "other" in this sense has become what Bhabha (1994) describes as "the necessary negation of a primordial identity" (51). The point is that even though Gandhi is an Indian like the subalterns in his text, he is still different from them because of his status as an educated lawyer. It is thus easy for him to radically question their skittish revolt against change from the vantage point of a detached observer that wields enormous textual power over their lives.

As an educated Indian elite and an advocate of change with a revolutionary zeal to impact on the lives of his people, Gandhi must have been conscious of his privileged position vis-à-vis that of the Indian subaltern groups in both South Africa and India. By and large, Gandhi is an ardent believer in the search for a broader commonality among the Indians irrespective of ethnicity or religion. He is fired by a consuming desire to

reform the Indian masses in his own image. However he is largely unsuccessful in transforming especially the aesthetic consciousness of the Indian subalterns. It is not surprising that in the tapestry of the narrative he sees himself in the guise of a rejected "reformer" who gets nothing from his society but "opposition, abhorrence and even mortal persecution" (206). He endlessly complains about the collective will and passion of the subalterns to reject positive change in matters of hygiene and cleanliness. He detests this complacency by noting that "sanitation was a difficult affair. The people were not prepared to do anything themselves. Even the field labourers were not ready to do their own scavenging" (381). Again and again, we see this pattern of complaint about environmental and sanitary neglect being repeated in the narrative of *My Experiments with Truth* (165, 166, 212, 352, 381, and 386). It is my contention that Gandhi's overladen concern with "cleanliness" and "dirt" is a direct upshot of his middle-class consciousness. Indeed Suellen Hoy has rightly noted that "like other factors of progressivism, public sanitation and personal cleanliness retained a lingering middle-class, indeed upper middle-class tincture" (86). Viewed in this context it can be argued that Gandhi's attempts to structure the moral and physical landscape of the Indian masses are in line with his middle-class temperament.

It is evidently clear that in his autobiography Gandhi maintains a semantic authority over the body as well as the physical geography of the Indian subalterns. In the process Gandhi visually colonizes them through the textualization of their daily lives. In his text he is simultaneously the gazing body as well as the speaking-writing body assiduously documenting the movements as well as the social life of the subalterns. In fact the Biblical imagery of the shepherd can hardly be missed. Consequently, as the narrative unfolds the subalterns are objectified as an index of anti-aesthetic consciousness through visible nomination or "the nomination of the visible" (Spurr 27). For instance, in his train travels in India he observes how "Third Class Passengers" behave towards one

another. He bitterly complains about their "rudeness, dirty habits, selfishness and ignorance" (348). He also bemoans their insensitivity by pointing out that "they often do not realize that they are behaving ill, dirtily or selfishly" (348). In this light we come to see how Gandhi visibly screened the subalterns in the consummation of his narrative. By employing what Mary Louise Pratt (1992) calls "the Monarch-of-all- I-survey" view Gandhi deploys his powers of reflexive monitoring to exert enormous pressure on the shared social world of the subalterns. For him in addition to being empirical givens, the subalterns are also epistemologically transparent selves.

In particular I want to stress that Gandhi effectively uses the concepts of dirt in his text to stigmatise and eventually isolate the subalterns as the different "other". This is achieved by his constant reference to their rigidity and resistance towards personal and environmental hygiene (227, 348, 352, 381,). In taking this line I am following Bauman (67) who argues that stigmatization is most often achieved "when an observable---- documented and indisputable---feature of a certain category of persons is […] made salient by being brought into public attention, and then interpreted as a visible sign of a hidden flaw, iniquity or moral turpitude." Bauman further points out that the main reason for stigmatization is "to emphasize […] difference […] and hence justifies a permanent exclusion." However it is my contention that while Gandhi is eager to "emphasize difference" between his self and the subalterns he nonetheless never seeks to viciously exclude them from their shared social environment. In this sense he is more concerned with domination than exclusion; correction rather than isolation.

Now it should be clear from what has been said so far that Gandhi is able to classify and categorise the subalterns as "dirty", "abnormal", "retrogressive", and "rigid" because of the asymmetrical power relation that exist between him and them. It is my argument that the cultural capital he wields over them as a result of his privileged

education is what allows him to script their life as well as their existence in his text. It is thus easy for him to assert his command over the means of textual production to create them in his chosen image. Indeed, we might be tempted to ask why Gandhi is so averse to the "dirt" and unruly behaviour of the subalterns. A possible answer might be that it is because he sees himself in them or rather, as Merleau-Ponty might put it, he and they are "the obverse and reverse of each other" (83, 160). In fact seeing traces of the subalterns in him becomes a very uncomfortable experience for this "genuinely imperial figure" (Brown 3). He thus constantly castigates them for their recalcitrance and intransigence in order to distance and set himself apart from them. However he is largely unsuccessful in this regard because no matter how hard he narratively tries to contain the effects of their debilitating behaviour, they vexatiously keep coming back to his consciousness in the manner of the "repressed" in the Freudian sense of the term. Thus his constant distaste, dissatisfaction, and bewilderment with their conduct can arguably be explained as an attempt to recover his threatened positive image that is at the risk of distortion because of his shared social identity.

Fundamentally it is my argument that his attempts to create a profound gap between himself and the subalterns through the kind of textual framing and social semiotisation we see in his autobiography is an important touchstone in his identity creation project. For it hardly needs saying that the activity of writing demonstrably offers him avenue to objectify the subalterns. But having said all this I still want to stress that Gandhi needs the subalterns' identity for the construction of his contrasted identity. In fact as I have demonstrated so far it is easy to see that Gandhi and the subalterns are dialectically interdependent in this narrative of sharp binaries. Proceeding from that I want to argue that in this narrative of perpetual self-creation there is a deep connection between the existence of the subalterns and Gandhi. This cardinal insight suggests that the insistence and continuous presence of the subalterns in his narrative is a vital necessity

rather than a conscious choice because he could not possibly project his chosen positive image in the absence of a contrasting negative image which the subalterns symbolize in every respect.

4.9   Conclusion.

This discussion has underlined the puissant mixture of autobiographical representation, the objectifying phenomenology of visualism, and the concatenation of textuality in Gandhi's subtle re-presentation of the voice-less subalterns that occupy a prime space in his narrative. We have seen how the text, with its subtle deployment of negative tropes to represent this marginalized group, succeeds in their thingfication by a textual-aesthetic encoding of difference framed through a trajectory of overarching social hierarchies such as clean/dirty, obedient/revolting, normative/transgressive, liberal/conservative, rich/poor, etc. Through this penetrating characterization Gandhi is able to transform the subalterns into epistemological objects as well as subjects of difference. More noticeably Gandhi equally attempts to fold and flatten them into one huge mass using the differential markers of dirt and cleanliness. Undoubtedly there is a hierarchical power structure in the text. This arrangement places Gandhi at the apex position on the power pyramid whereas the subalterns occupy the marginal bottom place. Consequently his position at the apex of the power pyramid makes him to be the centre of narrative consciousness in this extended tale of existential emancipation. However being the center and/or at the center is not without its problems. This is because there cannot and will not be a center without a margin or a periphery; and the periphery always poses danger to the center. To put it in another way is to say that the margin always challenges the power of the center. This is the import of Parker's observation that "the margin is where the centre's ordering capacity begins to ebb" (8). This much can be gleaned in Gandhi's narrative where the subalterns constantly exhibit rigidity and

resistance towards his endless demands for moral propriety, personal cleanliness and environmental hygiene.

By thus objectifying the subalterns Gandhi succeeds in diminishing their unity-in-difference, their plurality, as well as their particularity as human subjects capable of normative self-actualization and positive agency. Indeed by describing the subalterns variously as dirty, retrogressive, revolting, transgressive, etc. he is perforce questioning their metaphysical integrity as well as interrogating their social normativity. And when we contrast all this with the projection of himself as clean, dutiful, responsible, sociable, reformist, normative, etc. we begin to see how easy it is for him to draw a stark dividing line between himself and the subalterns. Moreover it is evident that such favourable characterizations as opposed to the negative description of the subalterns provide him with a platform to articulate his chosen identity. Thus in spite of the unabashed display of solidarity with the subalterns Gandhi has subtly demonstrated that he is everything the subalterns are not.

In the same way, Gandhi's textual silencing of the native Africans is symptomatic of an overarching concern with the politics of difference operational within the South African politscape during the formative period of apartheid. It is thus easy to observe that the native Africans are doubly displaced in Gandhi's autobiography by denying them voice and visibility. By way of contrast, the metaphysical and ontological presence of the Indians is evident throughout the text; whereas the native Africans are manifestly conspicuous in their absence. A textual dialectic could thus be observed when the ubiquitous presence of the Indians is juxtaposed against the near-total absence of the native Africans. It could not have been otherwise because as Jackson and Mazzei have observed, in identity construction projects such as autobiographical writings, what is "made central" is always "at the expense of what is marginal" (7). Thus in Gandhi's

autobiography the collective identity of the Indians is reinforced through an epistemological scepticism about the presence of the native Africans. Hence the image of the visible, mobile, and ubiquitous Indians is subtly contrasted with that of the hidden, concealed, silenced, and invisible native Africans. Moreover whereas Gandhi's narrative has in a way fixes the reality of the existence of the Indians in South Africa, it paradoxically only registers the "presence of the absence" of the native Africans (Bello-Kano, *Travel* 63). In fact in Gandhi's autobiography the native African body is not even a palimpsest or a subscript but a trace. It is almost completely erased, effaced, and vanished because it neither bears any name nor has any address attached to it. Furthermore, it is denied agency as well as subjectivity and hence has no voice-consciousness. In short, it exists incognito without personality. There is no better way to objectify a people than to deny them social-markers such as name and address.

Thus in Gandhi's autobiography the individual as well as the collective identity of the native Africans is textually displaced into the political space of apartheid in that we are only informed about their existence as a consequence of their rebellion. This pernicious exclusion of the native Africans by Gandhi can be attributed to the existential demands of the Indian community in South Africa at that time. In fact during that period it is fairly easy to observe that Gandhi is more concerned with securing the rights of the Indians than with any other thing; hence this struggle dominates the tapestry of his narrative.

CHAPTER 5: AUTOBIOGRAPHY, IDENTITY, AND THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF VIOLENCE IN NELSON MANDELA'S *LONG WALK TO FREEDOM*

5.1   Preamble.

From the vantage position of the blacks, the South African Apartheid State was created on the principle of violence towards those with darker skins. In fact, the system of apartheid[1] was sustained and nourished through a brutal use of force against this majority by perniciously suppressing and negating their humanity. Consequently, for the time apartheid lasted, violence became the instrument through which the authority of the illegal state was enforced. State brutality was a common occurrence especially towards people and groups that sought to challenge the totalitarian attitude of the regime. In addition, there was also the violence that ensued between groups that had political and ideological differences from among the black liberation movements. A good illustration of this was the intractable violence that involved the African National Congress (ANC) and the Zulu dominated Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) immediately after the liberalisation of the South African political space in 1992. In fact the story of this black-on-black violence occupies a central space in Nelson Mandela's autobiography *Long Walk to Freedom*. This chapter, therefore, looks at how violence is used as a narrative trope in Nelson Mandela's autobiography. The chapter among other things focuses on how Mandela uses the trajectory of violence to construct his identity on the one hand and the identity of his opponents especially members of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) on the other. The chapter also examines how Mandela uses the motif of violence to objectify his opponents as well as those that do not identify with the goals of the African National Congress (ANC) in the liberation struggle in South Africa.

5.2   Biodata.

Nelson Rolihlahlah Mandela was born into the Madiba clan in the Transkei region of South Africa on 18 July, 1918. He lost his father at the age of 12 and was subsequently raised by the tribal King Jongintaba at the Great Place in Mqhekezweni.

He attended both primary and secondary schools in the Transkei before proceeding to the University College of Fort Hare for a degree he was not able to complete because he was expelled for student radicalism. After his expulsion from Fort Hare he and the King's son Justice moved to Johannesburg in 1941 in order to escape arranged marriages being forced on them by the King. While in Johannesburg he worked briefly as a clerk at a mining company where he saw first-hand, the suffering of the mine workers who are migrant blacks from the South African country side. Because of his ardent desire for education, Mandela enrolled at the University of South Africa (UNISA) and was able to complete his BA in 1943. He later joined the University of Witwatersrand for an LLB and by his own confession was a poor student and had to leave Wits without graduating in 1952. However, his determination to be a lawyer spurred him to enrol for the LLB correspondence course of UNISA and he graduated in 1989 a year before his release from prison.

It was during his articleship to become an attorney at the legal firm of Witken, Sidelsky and Edelman that he met Walter Sisulu who later introduced him to Oliver Tambo and Govan Mbeki. His association with these and other influential black leaders awoke an interest in liberation politics in Mandela. He thus joined the African National Congress (ANC) in 1944 and subsequently helped in forming its Youth League. He was also instrumental in establishing the armed wing of the ANC called Umkhuntu wa Sizwe (MK; The Spear of the Nation) and was its first commander-in-chief. As a result of his involvement in the liberation struggle through the activities of both the ANC and MK,

Mandela and some of his colleagues were sentenced to life imprisonment on 11 June 1964 and were to spend 27 years in prison as one of the longest-serving political prisoners in modern history. He was finally released from prison on 11 February 1990. In 1993 he and the then South African President FW de Klerk were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their roles in bringing apartheid to an end through a smooth political transition that saw a peaceful transfer of power from the whites dominated ruling National Party to the black dominated African National Congress. On 10 May 1994, Mandela was inaugurated as the first democratically elected President of South Africa after an election in which all races participated. He stepped down in 1999 after serving only one term.

Mandela was married three times in his life. He married his first wife Evelyn Mase in 1944. They divorced in 1957 as a result of some ethical and political differences between them. In 1958 Mandela got married to his second wife Nomzamo Winifred Madizikela a social worker. Winnie as she was popularly known was also deeply involved in the struggle against apartheid. Mandela and Winnie however got separated because of some irreconcilable political differences in 1996. In 1998, Mandela got married to Graça Machel, the widow of the late Mozambican President Samora Machel. They were to remain married until his death on 5 December 2013.

Mandela is an emblem of courage, a practitioner of the Gandhian principles of perseverance, tolerance, non-racialism and above all, forgiveness. While he lived, he never relented in his commitment to democracy, fairness, and equality for all races in South Africa. The late Cuban president Fidel Castro has described Mandela as a personality that was "unshakably firm, courageous, heroic, calm […] and intelligent" (cited in Boehmer 2). Similarly, Tan Sri Lim Kok Wing who had worked closely with Mandela during the first multiracial elections in South Africa has described him as a "living legend and an icon" who possessed traits "such as courage of conviction, vision,

tolerance, and wisdom in abundance" ("Passions Magazine". Vol. 53, 2013. Page 41).
Yet again, Elleke Boehmer (2008) avers that Mandela is "nationally and internationally
perceived as an ethical giant towering over the 20th century" (174). Elsewhere in her book
Nelson Mandela: A Very Short Introduction (2008), Boehmer describes the iconographic
qualities of his name by suggesting that "Mandela is second to only Coca-Cola as the
world's most recognizable name" (10).

Mandela began writing his autobiography surreptitiously in 1974 during his
incarceration on Robben Island. However, the copy of the manuscript was discovered and
subsequently confiscated by the prison authorities. After this incidence he and his
colleagues on Robben Island, notably Mac Maharaj and Isu Chiba, designed a clever way
of recovering the story by using the calligraphic skills of the two to restitute whatever
Mandela writes by condensing it to a few lines to be smuggled out of the prison to the
ANC members in exile. After some time, even this ingenious way was discovered by the
prison authorities forcing Mandela to abandon the whole process. He resumed work on
the autobiography in collaboration with Richard Stengel after his release from prison in
1990. In this regard, Stengel revised and edited the first part of the manuscript as well as
wrote the latter parts of the autobiography as noted by Mandela in the
"Acknowledgements" section of the autobiography.

Long Walk to Freedom is divided into eleven parts. Part one is titled "A Country
Childhood", whereas the last part bears the title "Freedom". The story in the text covers
from Mandela's birth and childhood to his inauguration as the first black African
President of South Africa in 1994.

The story in the autobiography opens with the birth of Mandela "on the eighteenth of
July,1918, at Mvezo, a tiny village on the banks of the Mbashe River in the district of
Umtata, the capital of the Transkei" (*Long Walk to Freedom* 3). Thereafter, the story

moves to the period of Mandela's formal education at schools, colleges and universities such as Fort Hare, Clarkebury, Healdtown, UNISA, and the University of Witwatersrand where Mandela says he was "the only African student in the law faculty"(*Long Walk to Freedom* 90). The story also tells us about Mandela's escapades in Johannesburg having run away from the "Great Place, Mqhekezweni, the provincial capital of Thembuland, the royal residence of Chief Jongintaba Dalindyebo, the acting regent of the Thembu people"(16). He eloped to Johannesburg in order to escape an arrange marriage being propose for him and the king's son Justice. Towards the middle of the autobiography we are introduced to how Mandela made the acquaintance of ANC stalwarts such as Water Sisulu, Gaur Radebe, Anton Lembede, and Oliver Tambo in Johannesburg. These personalities became influential in making Mandela to join the African Nationalist Congress (ANC). Thereafter, the story moves to the "Treason" and "Rivonia" trials to his eventual imprisonment on Robben Island. The story ends on 10 May, 1994, the day Mandela was inaugurated as the first African President of South Africa.

Several critics have written about *Long Walk to Freedom* assessing the text from different perspectives. My intention here is to sample some of these critiques about the text with the intention of establishing a critical thread with my own reading of the text. Taking the period of the writing of *Long Walk to Freedom* into consideration, Adetayo Alabi (2005) avers that "Mandela's autobiography is written as an anti-apartheid strategy" that establishes the fighting spirit of its writer (105).

Echoing similar sentiments, James H. Read (2010) views *Long Walk to Freedom* as a story of Mandela's "fierce determination and courage" to lead black South Africans into the sunshine of freedom (337). He goes on to assert that the text in addition to other concerns duly "analyses the racial power conflict in South Africa, and Mandela's role as a leader in that struggle" (317).

On his part, Stephen Brookfield (2008) reads *Long Walk to Freedom* as a text that renders Mandela's "life and work […] as an extended engagement with critical reflection" (95-96). He further argues that Mandela's autobiography "[…] is centrally focused on understanding the working of power and a continuous questioning of assumptions concerning the best way to usher in majority rule" (96).

Similarly, Michael Chapman (1995) sees Mandela's autobiography as a text that "[…] signals a triumph of humanity over inhumanity and vindicates Mandela's arduous commitment to ideas of hope and freedom" (49). Chapman further notes that one of the gratifying benefits of *Long Walk to Freedom* is that it is a text that looks "[…] beyond politics of blame to an integrative view of human community in […] South Africa" (51).

In a scathing review of *Long Walk to Freedom* in the "Weekly Mail and Guardian" of 11-22 December, 1994, Anton Haber has observed that although the book is a "riveting read […], the readable, matter-of-fact style offers no major revelations, the story is neither brilliantly written nor imaginatively conceived".

My intention in this chapter is to build on the works of Alabi, Read, Brookfield, and Chapman by looking at how Mandela uses his agential powers as a writer to objectify the nonself/other in the narrative tapestry of his autobiography.

5.3   Introduction.

Within the power politics of modernity[2], law and order are important bedrocks for sustaining social norms and maintaining political authority. In fact, modernity is cogently obsessed with *order* and its enforcement within social spaces inhabited by people. Stated more simply, the ultimate teleology of an ideal political state is the maintenance of law and order within its territory. Yet there is something ominously catastrophic and dangerous about the organising ability of order because its enforcement often entails

terror and brutality. As Terry Eagleton (2005) notes, "the urge to order is itself latently anarchic" because "the very force which is intended to subdue chaos is secretly in love with it" (12). This is why most of the time the enforcement of order comes singly or in combination through the direct use of force, threat of force, and/or coercion by the power or powers controlling the instruments of enforcement such as the military and the police. In fact, "routinised violence" is one of the key characteristics "of the modernizing state" (Broch-Due 1). Closely connected with the use of "official" violence to enforce order or its semblance in most societies is the use of "unofficial" violence by civil groups and organisations to subdue and dominate their opponents. It is important to clarify that "official" here means the violence that ensues when people resist the tyranny of the state for instance, and the state on its part mobilizes the instruments of violence at its disposable to deal with the situation. This violence is considered "legitimate" (Keane 9-10) because it is sanctioned by the laws of the enforcing state. Conversely, there is also another form of violence that is different from this. This is the violence of the people, by the people, on the people themselves. This violence is "unofficial" because it is the fury of the civil populace on itself. Even though there are times when the hands of the state may be visible in perpetuating this kind of violence, most of the time it is planned, coordinated, and executed by civilian groups and organisations that are competing for political power, economic supremacy, or a combination of both. This kind of violence on the other hand is considered "illegitimate" (Keane 9-10) because it has no *locus standi* in the laws of the state. Illegitimate violence is arguably more rampant in societies that have just emerged or are about to emerge from colonialism, totalitarianism, or dictatorship[3]. A good illustration of this was South Africa on the eve of the demise of apartheid and the conduct of multiparty as well as multiracial election that saw the African National Congress (ANC) forming the first multiracial government in the country's history. In fact during

this period there was "widespread political intolerance" (Minnar 390)[4] between different competing organisations that consequently degenerated into black-on-black violence.

5.4   Violence and the Modern Political State.

David Michael Levin (2001) has noted that "the modern self [. . .] is a self moved by the will to dominate" (20). This is especially true for "the modern self" that has power to control others. More often than not, this "self" glories in the control of other people by dominating them either totally or partially, physically or psychologically. The domination can also be open (through use of force) or hidden (through behind-the-scene manipulations as in the use of ideological instruments). This urge to dominate is perhaps at the root of the violence that persistently bedevils and beleaguers modern nations despite their claim to being civilisationally more refined than their predecessors. In these societies what the philosopher Slovaj ŽiŽek (2008) calls "subjective violence" (10) holds sway, destroying persons and communities through the actions of "evil individuals, disciplined repressive apparatuses" and "fanatical crowds" (ibid) that are always ready to unleash terror at the slightest provocation. In fact, the "death-dealing will" (Eagleton 108) of the actors in most political conflicts across the globe has resulted in the loss of innumerable lives of mostly innocent people that have little to gain in the political power-game of the elites.

To say that the foundation of the modern political state was built on violence may appear shocking to most supporters of liberal democracy. However, there are reasons to suggest that democracy, especially the variety practiced in many third-world countries, is organically intertwined with violence. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to suggest that the path of the history of human development that progresses from the early stage of human civilisation to the modern period is littered with violence in form of conflicts and upheavals as witnessed in the rise and fall of many empires across history. In this regard,

there is an observable link between human progress and violence, and the modern period in spite of its significant technological and scientific achievements is not shielded from the threatening force of violence. In this regard, the modern period has had to manage intractable conflicts in different parts of the world. The formation of the United Nations and the numerous Peace Keeping Forces/Missions under its supervision is clear testimony to the presence of intractable conflicts in this modern period. As Neal Curtis (2006) elegantly puts it, "violence is the persistence of that which modernity is charged with overcoming" (ix). He further suggests that "despite modernity's idealization as pacific progress, it is inextricably tied to [. . .] political revolution and the wars that issued from it" (ibid).

Earl Conteh-Morgan, on the other hand, avers that the march of human history is closely connected with "violent conflicts" (1) between groups competing for political and economic power. Unarguably, a vital contributory factor to the commonplaceness of violence in modern societies is the ego-logical disposition of the so-called modern self. The modern person is an "ego-logical subject"[5] (Levin 20) that is moved by the will to dominate both his and her environment and co-inhabitants. Connected to this is the contention that the average modern person is a self-centred, conscious personality that is ready to withdraw into the comfort zone of his or her race, ethnicity, nationality, or organisation with a view to exploit primordial kinship for the purpose of dominating the perceived 'other'. This is the import of Carolyn Nordstrom's (2004) observation that more often than not in conflicts involving different political interests, "[v]iolence is employed to create political acquiescence" as well as to institute "hierarchies of domination and submission based on the control of force" (61). In line with this observation, Vicenzo Ruggiero (2006) avers that "[p]olitical violence[. . .] is an attempt to give hostile out-bursts an organizational structure and a rational, calculable trend, so that uncoordinated hostility is slowly turned into military action . . . towards a predictable end" 105). This

much could be seen in *Long Walk to Freedom* where organized violence is unleashed on opposing political groups from amongst the black liberation movements such as the African National Congress (ANC), the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). In fact, during the transition to multiracial democracy in South Africa, each of these groups had employed violence as a tool of domination, coercion, submission and/or annihilation. Violence was also a tool employed for asserting a unique group and individual identity within these competing political groups. For instance, we can see how Mandela uses the concept of violence as a differentiating marker between the ANC and the IFP in his narrative. In this regard, he shows how the IFP was quick to use force of arms against the ANC thereby subtly constructing a contrasting image of a violent IFP as opposed to a meek and peaceful ANC. This is the sense in which Vigdis Broch-Due (2005)[6] argues that "violence" is central to people's "quest for identity, not only as a matter of categorical grouping but as a *process* of identification and differentiation" (original italics 17). Viewed in this light, violence is an important instrument for group cleavages as well as for exclusion of the perceived moral, political, economic, and social 'other' especially in the struggle for political control of nations. It is reasonable to infer from this brief review that violence is an integral part of the modern political state. It is therefore not surprising that the story of the use of violence in South Africa forms a substantial part of the political autobiography[7] of Nelson Mandela.

5.5   Identity and the Phenomenology of Violence in *Long Walk to Freedom*.

One of the central arguments of this chapter is that the autobiography of Nelson Mandela is an identity construction project that employs a combination of anecdotes, history, confessions, and lamentations to frame its narrative. It is a story that sought to recover the political history of South Africa especially the part that concerns the liberation struggle of the black majority. It is also a discursive retracing of the events that lead to multiracial democracy in South Africa. Beyond this, the story documents the distinction

between those that struggle for the attainment of liberation and those that work to undermine the struggle from among the black population of South Africa. In short, it is a story that has its heroes as well as villains. In this story Mandela made it abundantly clear that there are friends as well as foes, alliances as well as opposition. It is my contention that the tropological vehicle of violence is one of the ways by which Mandela draws this distinction between heroes and villains and friends and foes in his narrative.

The story is also about the disclosure of the faults of foes and villains as well as the concealment of their virtues. The reverse is equally the same for friends and heroes. In this regard, whereas the narrative assiduously documents the brutality of the foes and villains, it at the same time conveniently conceals the exploits of heroes and friends. For example, there are "significant omissions" (Holden 151) on the brutality of the ANC and its members in Mandela's autobiography. Their violence is deliberately rendered invisible in the text for very obvious reasons. Arguably, one of the reasons for this silence is to maintain the saintly image of the ANC constructed in the narrative. Conversely, the brutality of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and its members is revealingly shocking. This narrative strategy thereby clears the ground for the eventual demonisation of the IFP and its members in the text.

It is worth reiterating that within the social habitus of apartheid, political violence was a recurring phenomenon that foregrounds the everyday reality of existence for especially the black Africans. Indeed the social environment created by apartheid was organized around the dehumanization of the non-whites, especially the black majority, through the use of extreme force and violence. As Isma'ila A. Tsiga (2010) notes "the sardonic [. . .] environment" (260) engendered by apartheid was a fertile ground for violence to thrive. He equally notes that "the tragedy of South Africa is that it pushes everyone into a vicious roundabout [. . .] 'a dance of death' in which there is no creation, but only destruction"

(39). As a matter of fact this scenario of 'dance of death' was replayed over and over in the South African politscape during the period of transition to multiracial democracy. As this apartheid nation transitioned towards multiracial democracy, violence became rampant and sporadic especially in the townships of the KwaZulu Natal region. On a very broad level, the autobiography of Nelson Mandela is the story of this horrendous violence encoded in a mixture of melancholy, lamentation, and optimism. For example, the narrative rendered a detail account of the brutality of the IFP against the ANC during this period of transition. Curiously, the narrative at the same time is mute on the atrocities committed by the ANC thereby subtly constructing a Manichean opposition between the two organisations. As might be expected the negativity of IFP was textually encoded in the discursive matrix of the narrative through the lexicalization of violence as its acquired organisational trait. Conversely, the gentility of the ANC is packaged in the textual imagery of an organisation that is peaceful, kind, respectful, civilized, and morally upright. Without a doubt a sharp contrast between the two organisations is the intended desire of this textual strategy. At this point it is important to look at how Mandela uses the trope of violence to textually write the negativity of Inkatha Freedom Party while at the same time constructing the image of an ANC that is noblesse oblige.

5.6   The 'Evils' of Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP).

Even though Mandela cuts the figure of the personality that moves and binds the South African nation, he nonetheless displays a certain amount of bias in his autobiography in discussing the violence that engulfed South Africa during the dying days of apartheid. To be sure, Mandela in his text does not merely re-present the political turmoil of the period but reshapes and re-creates it in the way he wants. In fact, the wintry tone of Mandela's narrative in his discussion of the IFP and the PAC is a counterpoint to the autumnal tone used in talking about the ANC. For instance, Mandela's passionate commitment to the ANC had blinded him to the realities of the violence that plagued South Africa at the

time. Presumably, in every violence there is action and reaction from the feuding parties. In simple terms, in most violent confrontations there is blurring of the line between victim and victimizer because the two more often than not exchange places. Put in the perspective of South Africa at the time, it is my contention that there is a wave of reciprocal antagonism in the violence that suffocated the political environment. However, Mandela chose to focus only on the atrocities of the IFP while maintaining a studied silence on the barbarity of the ANC. In fact, reading through the text one gets the impression that it seldom matters to Mandela that the ANC too is adequately involved in this violence. A compelling observation is that Mandela has tarried too long with the fascination that the ANC is an epitome of peace and an emblem of civility. Indeed, it is easy enough to observe that within the hierarchic moral structure of Mandela's narrative, the ANC and its members are approvingly pristine whereas members of the IFP and the PAC are childish, skittish, diffident, brutal and mean. Centrally important in this observation is that Mandela always think of the IFP and the PAC in an adversarial light and hardly sees any good in these organisations.

More importantly, the illocutionary domain that surrounds violence and violent acts in Mandela's text provides a platform for articulating personal and group identity for him and his organisation the ANC. On this view, Mandela's rendering of the brutality of the Inkatha Freedom Party for instance is in tune with his sentiment and ideology of non-collaboration with the South African apartheid regime. Thus to Mandela and the ANC any 'perceived' or 'real' collaborator with the apartheid regime from among the black community is considered a traitor to the cause of liberation. This was why Mandela was disenchanted with the conduct of Chief Buthelezi who the ANC views as a saboteur because he "opposed the armed struggle" and has "campaigned against international sanctions" (*Long Walk* 574). In this regard it was of no importance that Chief Buthelezi might have his reasons for rejecting both the sanctions as well as the armed struggle

spearheaded by the ANC at the time. He simply must toe the line of the ANC, otherwise he is a traitor and a legitimate target of at the least verbal attack.

Certainly, in Mandela's autobiography violence is a "phonic and existential" (Bello-Kano 70) presence that finds expression in the graphic re-presentation of its brutality. In this regard Mandela vividly catalogues the results of violent clashes especially between the Inkatha Freedom Party and the ANC. He does this by showing the Inkatha Freedom Party as the guilty group in the conflict. In several places in the text the brutality of Inkatha Freedom Party is presented in shocking detail. For instance, Mandela details the barbarity of the IFP in the following: "In the meantime, Natal became a killing ground. Heavily armed Inkatha supporters had in effect *declared war on ANC strongholds* across the Natal Midlands region around Pietermaritzburg. *Entire villages were set alight*, *dozens of people were killed*, *hundreds were wounded, and thousands became refugees*" (my emphasis 576). Elsewhere in the text he rolls out statistics of the dead to support his claim of Inkatha Freedom Party's infringements on the ANC:

Violence in Natal worsened. Inkatha supporters were blocking our efforts to campaign in Natal. *Fifteen ANC election workers were shot and hacked to death* after putting up ANC posters [. . .] On March 28, thousands of Inkatha members, brandishing knobkerries, marched through Johannesburg to a rally in the center of town. At the same time, an armed Inkatha group attempted to enter Shell House, the ANC headquarters, but were repulsed by armed guards. Shots by unidentified gunmen were also fired in the city center, and *altogether fifty-three people died* (my emphasis 616).

Mandela also shows that the brutality of the Inkatha Freedom Party did not spare women and children: "On the night of June 17, 1992, a heavily armed force of Inkatha members secretly raided the Vaal township of Boipatong and *killed forty-six people*. *Most*

of the dead were women and children. It was the fourth *mass killing of ANC people* that week" (my emphasis 603). Note how in the above passages the casualty on the part of the IFP is rendered totally invisible. The focus is only on the loss on the part of the ANC, no more, no less. This strategy portrays the ANC as a passive receiver of the violence unleashed by the IFP. However this is far from the truth because as Gurr (cited in Gebrewold 81) notes, in all conflicts "violence inspires counter-violence by those against whom it is directed." Proceeding from that, it is easy to infer that the ANC too is actively involved in the violence described by Mandela because common sense dictates that they would at least try to defend themselves against the attacks directed at them. However this is not shown in the text because it would have contradicted the image of the ANC as a peaceful organisation that Mandela was trying to portray.

At yet another level, Inkatha Freedom Party is discursively ordered either as embodiment of sabotage or irremediable collaborationist of the apartheid regime with the specific intentions of derailing the peace process as well as undermining the achievements of the ANC. For instance, Mandela lamentably declares that:

Of all the issues that hindered the peace process, none was more

devastating and frustrating than the escalation of violence in the

country [. . .]. It was becoming more and more clear to me that there

was connivance on the part of the security forces [. . .]. *Many of the*

incidents indicated to me that the police, rather than quelling violence

were fomenting it. I was told of the police confiscating weapons one day

in one area, and then Inkatha forces attacking people with those stolen

weapons the next day. *We heard stories of the police escorting Inkatha*

members to meetings and on their attack. (my emphasis 587)

Mandela further supports his claims of police collaboration in the attacks launched by the IFP on members of especially the ANC by declaring that:

> In July of 1990, the ANC received information that hostel dwellers
>
> belonging to the Inkatha Freedom Party were planning a major attack
>
> on ANC members in Sebokeng Township in the Vaal Triangle on July 22
>
> [. . .] We asked the police to prevent armed Inkatha members from
>
> entering the township to attend an Inkatha rally.
>
> On July 22, *busload of armed Inkatha members, escorted by police*
>
> *vehicles, entered Sebokeng in broad day light*. A rally was held,
>
> after which the *armed men went on a rampage, murdering*
>
> *approximately thirty people in a dreadful and grisly attack* (my emphasis 587-588).

Again and again, we see how Mandela tries to create an endophoric relation between the IFP and violence in his narrative through copious references to body counts and statistics of lives lost.

At this point, it is important to take apart Mandela's claims that the ANC is a peaceful organisation because this will pave the way for a thorough understanding of the whole lexicon of his attitudes toward the IFP. My contention is that his studied silence on the atrocities of the ANC can be attributed to the desire to create a positive identity for himself. There is certainly a scale of moral values in operation in Mandel's narrative and one can track a continuum between the sublimity of the ANC and the bestiality of especially the IFP. Indeed, measured on an ascending moral scale of values that Mandela subtly employed in his narrative, the ANC and its members are placed at the top whereas the IFP and its members are made to occupy the lowest rung because of the bestiality and brutality ascribed to them. In short, Mandela cleverly uses the trope of innocence to absolve the ANC and its members of complicity in the political terrorism of South Africa.

Hence, like a sponge, the image of the peaceful ANC portrayed in the narrative absorbs all the atrocities committed by it in a single sweep.

Equally important is the observation that in Mandela's text there is a noticeable coupling of violence and virtue. If, as Boehmer has observed, "Mandela's life-story and character have been built up as icons of national progress and virtue" (17), the story of his opponents embedded in his autobiography conjures up the obverse and reverse side of this national progress and virtue. In this sense, violence conjures up virtue and vice versa. In fact, a moral dialectic is firmly established between Mandela and his opponents. In this narrative, for instance, one cannot simply see the graphic and intimidating violence of the IFP without also imagining the pristine innocence of the ANC. Additionally, Mandela's narrative is charged with metaphors and similes that signify the essential moral difference between himself and his comrades in the ANC on the one hand with Buthelezi and the members of his IFP on the other. Thus a paratactic display of the ANC and the IFP is very evident. In this regard, while the ANC and by extension Mandela's comrades are described with affection and veneration, there is nothing but disdain for his opponents such as Chief Mongosuthu Buthelezi and members of his IFP. For instance the ANC and its members are portrayed as multiracial, peaceful, civilised, rational, reasonable and civil whereas the Inkatha Freedom Party and its followers are seen as monoracial, irredentist, violent, barbaric, irrational, unreasonable and disordered. This premise in turn is used to legitimize the demonization of its members. For example, Mandela castigates Inkatha Freedom Party's Buthelezi as a renegade member as well as a betrayer of the ANC: "As a young man, he [. . .] joined the ANC Youth League. I saw him as one of the movement's upcoming young leaders. He had become chief minister of the KwaZulu homeland with the tacit support of the ANC, and even the launching of Inkatha as a Zulu cultural organization was unopposed by the organization. But over the years, Chief Buthelezi drifted away from the ANC" (575).

Elsewhere in the text Chief Buthelezi is shown collaborating with the extremist and secessionist white right-wing parties with the intention of scuttling the talks leading to multiracial democracy: "The Record of Understanding prompted Inkatha to announce its withdrawal from all negotiations involving the government and the ANC. The agreement infuriated Chief Buthelezi, who severed relations with the NP and formed an alliance with a group of discredited homeland leaders and white right-wing parties solely concerned with obtaining an Afrikaner homeland" (606). Here we are made to see the image of a selfish Buthelezi ready to form an alliance with the hitherto oppressors of the black Africans simply to spite the ANC.

As demonstrated in the foregoing examples, Mandela constantly inveighs against the violent attitudes of the IFP and its members. In fact, the IFP is portrayed as an index of violence and a byword for destruction. They are equally portrayed as a symbol of "chaos, dystopia and anomie" (Bello-Kano 71). However, it is my contention that as far as political violence in South Africa during this period was concerned, the ANC and the Inkatha Freedom Party are recto and verso of each other. In this regard, it is fair to suggest that there is a "horrified intimacy" (Eagleton 58) between the ANC and the IFP especially in terms of their disruptive violent practices. This is in spite of the fact that the responses of the ANC in all the attacks mentioned are deliberately muted or suppressed in the text. In fact, when Mandela's narrative is demystified we will begin to see where and why he omits important details about the political violence in South Africa. Specifically, we will notice how he conveniently and surreptitiously ignores the response of the members of the ANC in all the attacks he describes in his narrative. Indeed one of the observable blind spots of *Long Walk to Freedom* is that the fault of the ANC as an organisation is hardly acknowledged in its narrative design. Whereas the faults and 'sins' of the IFP are made very glaring, the misdeeds of the ANC are conveniently ignored, left out or covered. In fact, in Mandela's narrative the barbarism and cruelty of the ANC and its members are,

to quote Derrida, "placed in parenthesis, *suspended*, and suppressed for essential reasons" (original italics, cited in Norris 29). Nevertheless, the attempts to conceal the atrocities of the ANC in Mandela's narrative is not entirely successful because at the level of practical reasoning, one can infer from the examples given that the interactions between the ANC and the IFP are reduced to no more than a brutal exchange of blood and tears. More significantly, the image of the unruly IFP portrayed in the text also conjures or summons the equally wild and barbarous image of the ANC. Even so, Mandela chooses not to see the violence of the ANC whereas he is quick to point out the barbarity of the IFP. Thus as we have seen in the preceding examples, the brutality of the IFP is shown reflexively through the deictic and ostended references made to it by Mandela in his narrative. However, this is not to suggest that the violence described in the text did not happen. Far from it, it is only to indicate how in Mandela's narrative preference is given to the violent activities of the IFP while keeping mute on the expected response of the ANC. The narrative thus is full of absences and silences. This is the canny observation made by Philip Holden (2008) that Mandela's autobiography is full of "gaps and inconsistencies" (192) in its enframing of events. Holden also suggests that *Long Walk to Freedom* contains "parallelism of exclusion and inclusion" (157)[8].

Without a doubt, both the ANC and the IFP were guilty in the violence that bedevilled South Africa before the 1994 multiracial elections. For instance, Thomas A. Moriarty (2003) has noted that the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)[9] has in its report found both organisations guilty of participating as well as spreading violence during this period. For example, the TRC accuses Chief Mongosuthu Buthelezi of the IFP of "sponsoring hit squads" (Moriarty 177). It equally condemned Umkhonto wa Sizwe (MK), the armed wing of the ANC for targeting and "killing more civilians than security force members" (ibid) in spite of MK's claims to the contrary. The Commission also accused the ANC of condoning the killing of perceived "government

collaborators and members of the IFP" especially in the "late 1980s and early 1990s" (Moriarty 117).

At this point, it is important to note that the sustained description of the violent attitudes of the IFP on the one hand and the contrasting peaceful disposition of the ANC on the other is part of the identity construction strategy deployed by Mandela in his text. Mandela's narrative therefore is an attempt to create a Manichean divide between the ANC and the IFP with the intention of othering the latter. Viewed this way, the 'other' in Mandela's text becomes a trope for projecting a larger and positive self-identity. In this regard, the 'other' as portrayed by Mandela is no more than a "serviceable double" (Napier 72) for articulating a preferred positive image. We see the continuation of this strategy also in Mandela's discussion about the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), an organisation that breaks away from the ANC as a result of ideological and tactical differences.

5.7   The 'Irredentism' of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC).

In *Long Walk to Freedom* Mandela also employs rhetoric of disgust to describe the appalling attitude of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). In this regard the PAC is variously traduced, disparaged and anathematised. From the start the PAC is portrayed as a steadfastly exclusivist organisation that rejects the multiracialism of the ANC. It is an emblem of backwardness; a marker of human degeneration and a negative counterpoint to the urbanity and civility of the ANC. In the eyes of Mandela the PAC and its members are, to borrow a phrase from Godimer (28), "a litany of faults and inadequacies" in the same manner in which the natives are portrayed in colonialist discourse. For example, he bemoans the fact that: "[T]he Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) launched itself as an Africanist organization that expressly rejected the multiracialism of the ANC [. . .]. They disavowed communism in all its forms and considered whites and Indians "foreign

minorities" or "aliens" who had no place in South Africa. South Africa was for Africans, and no one else" (227).

Elsewhere in the text, members of the PAC are portrayed as selfish, unreasonable, inchoative, puerile and vindictive: "Many of those who cast their lot with the PAC did so out of personal grudges or disappointments and were not thinking of the advancement of the struggle, but of their own feelings of jealousy or revenge" (228). Further, in a tone full of resentment Mandela declares that, "I found the views and the behaviour of the PAC immature" (228).

Mandela severally accuses the PAC of sabotaging the strategy of the ANC in the liberation struggle: "While we welcomed anyone brought into the struggle by the PAC, the role of the organization was almost always that of a spoiler. They divide people at a critical moment, and that was hard to forget. They would ask people to go to work when we called a general strike, and made misleading statements to counter any announcement we would make" (229).

The PAC is also accused of advancing racial exclusiveness just like the then ruling Afrikaner dominated National Party (NP). In this regard they are portrayed as a racist organisation in contrast to the ANC's open door policy of accepting all races in its fold. Paradoxically, Mandela admits that the racialism of the PAC was what helped in bolstering its popularity amongst the militant black Africans who were dissatisfied with the reconciliatory attitude of the ANC. Thus for most black Africans the PAC embodies their aspirations for reclaiming the South African nation. The PAC was regarded by many black Africans as a nationalist organisation to the core. Mandela regrettably observes: "Our non-racialism would have been less of a problem had it not been for the formation of the explicitly nationalistic and antiwhite PAC" (303). He equally notes that the PAC was also seen by many leaders in Africa as an organisation that truly represents the

interests of the black South Africans better than the ANC. In fact, during his tour of African countries to solicit for help in the armed struggle of the ANC, Mandela was shocked to find out that the PAC and its leader Robert Sobukwe were by far more popular and acceptable than both Mandela and the ANC. He admits, "In the rest of Africa, most African leaders could understand the views of the PAC better than those of the ANC" (303). Similarly, Mandela also attests to the popularity of Robert Sobukwe the PAC leader in most African countries he visited. For example, he narrates that during his tour of Africa they touched down at Tunis and while there they "met with the minister of defense, who bore a striking resemblance to Chief Luthuli. But I'm afraid that is where the similarity ended, for when I was explaining to him the situation in our country with PAC leaders such as Robert Sobukwe in jail, he interrupted me and said, 'When that chap returns, he will finish you!'''(297).

To a certain extent one can sense a tinge of jealousy in the castigation of the PAC by Mandela. It would not be off the mark to say that Mandela and the ANC were intimidated by the popularity of the PAC. There was indeed a turf war going on between the two organisations during this period. In this regard both the ANC and the PAC were competing for the leadership of the black liberation movement. What was particularly disturbing for Mandela was the fact that the PAC offered the black Africans a diametrical alternative to the ANC. In this regard the PAC was more practical and sensitive to the needs of the black Africans during this period. Mandela admits that the PAC speaks in an idiom that the black Africans can easily understand: "The PAC echoed the axioms and slogans of that time: Africa for Africans and a United States of Africa" (228). Thus the militant lingo of the PAC was an emphatic contrast to the social and racial homogenisation policy of the ANC. This further enhanced the standing of the PAC within the black African community in South Africa. More significantly, the PAC was the first organisation that condemned as well as resisted the tyranny of the apartheid regime during

the Sharpeville massacre. In this regard Mandela interestingly salutes the valour of the lay members of the PAC even though he castigates the selfishness of its leadership:

> In spite of the amateurishness and opportunism of their leaders
>
> the PAC rank and file displayed great courage and fortitude in their
>
> demonstrations at Sharpeville and Langa. In just one day, they had
>
> moved to the frontlines of the struggle, and Robert Sobukwe was being
>
> hailed inside and outside the country as the savior of the liberation move-
>
> ment. We in the ANC had to make rapid adjustments to this new situation,
>
> and we did so. (238)

Elsewhere in the text Mandela links the popularity of the PAC to their actions during the Sharpeville massacre: "Among Africans, the PAC had captured the spotlight at Sharpeville in a way that far exceeded their influence as an organization" (295). It is perhaps unsurprising that Mandela maligns the PAC in his narrative. From the vantage position of Mandela and the ANC, the PAC is an irritant organisation that threatens, challenges and undermines their grand narrative. For instance, unlike the IFP that consists of predominantly the Zulu ethnic group, the PAC like the ANC is a multicultural and multi-ethnic political organisation. It also most of the time challenges the hegemony of the ANC within the politics of black liberation movement.

Thomas A. Moriarty (2003) has outlined two types of conflict that may result in political competition of the type we see in South Africa during the period of transition to multiracial democracy. In this regard, he declares that under such circumstances a conflict between opposing political groups can be either "violent" or "rhetorical" (3). He goes on to say that "violent conflict" usually occurs when two opposing groups have different "political realities". In other words, when two opposing groups with divergent political teleology cross paths, the resultant clash between them will be violent. Conversely, where

the two groups share the same "political realities" the conflict between them will be mostly at the level of ideas only. Put another way, their conflict will be purely "rhetorical" with hardly any physical attacks on one another. In fact, this observation made by Moriarty aptly captures the spirit of the conflicts we see between the ANC and the IFP on the one hand and that between the ANC and the PAC on the other as presented in *Long Walk to Freedom*. For instance, because the ANC and the PAC share the same political reality the conflict between them was most of the time limited to ideology[10]. In other words the conflict between them was mostly rhetorical in nature. The reverse was surely the case if we examine the conflict between the ANC and the IFP. Because these two competing groups have "dissimilar political realities" (Moriarty 3) their conflict was violent in nature often characterized by huge loss of lives[11].

5.8   Conclusion.

Lahcen E. Ezzaher (2003) has noted that in the discursive reconstruction of events and people, "there is no such a thing as an accurate and risk free representation" and at all times "representation of people and culture is charged with prejudice, ideology, and mystification" (102). This much can be gleaned from Mandela's autobiography where a "demonizing rhetoric" (Curtis 56) is textually deployed to objectify especially the IFP and the PAC. For example, in this story, to borrow a phrase from Michael Shortland, "text and image put into circulation" (cited in Bello-Kano *Travel* 71) the monstrosity of the barbarism of especially the IFP and to a lesser degree the PAC while conveniently concealing or downplaying the expected response of the ANC. This studied silence on the violence of the ANC is a clear indication of Mandela's politics of victimhood. Consequently, the ANC is presented as a passive receiver of the violence that beleaguered South Africa during its transition to multiracial democracy.

It is my contention that in Mandela's text violence becomes the lens through which the objectification of the 'other' is achieved. Thus Mandela's gaze does not find any trace of civility and sublimity in either the PAC or the IFP. In this regard, the IFP and the PAC are described as devoid of any sense or sign of maturity or refinement in their conducts. Whereas members of the ANC are seen as disciplined, courageous, and dedicated, the members of the IFP and the PAC are portrayed as irresponsible, undisciplined, selfish and blood-thirsty.

The argument with which this chapter started was that Mandela uses violence as a tropological vehicle to encode his story of political and moral difference. This in turn underscores the particularly dialectical nature of his discourse. In fact, Mandela displays a remarkable power of generating and manipulating images in his narrative. He does this through an antipodal collocation of disclosure, evasion, erasure and concealment, as the case may be. Similarly, a poignant aspect of his narrative is that the image of the "other" encoded in his autobiography, in this case the IFP and PAC, are in tune with his chosen ideology of negating the political and moral "other". For example, it is fairly easy to observe that within the teleological progression of his narrative, Mandela announces the innocence of the ANC with grandiose aplomb. Even more, Mandela's narrative is organised around a "rhetoric of civilization and barbarism, culture and anarchy" (Gilbert 172). In short, in Mandela's text "viciousness" is equated with "otherness" (Gilbert 172) and the degree of otherness on the other hand is measured according to the way in which the perceived 'other's' behaviour deviated from or is "discordant with the putative norm" (Deane 12) of the author-narrator. Additionally, a familiar topos in Mandela's narrative is the frequent use of the rhetoric of demonisation and Manichaean binarisms. In this regard, whereas the ANC is variously portrayed as an epitome of "decency, civility, and cultivation", the IFP and the PAC are portrayed as barbaric, wicked, uncultured and "a constant source of unease" (Eagleton *Nationalism* 33). However as Keane (2004) notes,

"Civility and barbarity are not contradictory opposites. They lie side by side on a down-spiralling continuum of violence" (67). In this sense, one can only be more or less civil or more or less barbaric. Moreover, the most reasonable observation of the reality of violence in *Long Walk to Freedom* is that it involves all the contending parties because in every violent action there is always a more or less reaction. In this sense, as might be expected in South Africa at the time, violence will presumably beget violence. When this observation is taken together with the apparent silence about the atrocities of the ANC, it can be inferred that there is an ideology at work in Mandela's narrative. For instance, his attempts to associate his opponents with violence, destruction, disruption, and sabotage are an encrypted strategy of demonisation and objectification.

What is useful and illuminating in this observation is that it is through this process that Mandela creates the impugned binary of "good" as represented by the ANC versus "evil" represented notably by the IFP. Moreover, we have seen how Mandela puts a negative evaluative accent on the activities of the IFP and the PAC while at the same time ignoring the atrocities of the ANC. Indeed, a more adequate and equilibrated response to the problems of violence in the text would have been to give sedulous attention to the atrocities of both parties in the conflict. In an important sense, the interlocking stories of the ANC, the IFP, and the PAC reveal that contrary to Mandela's strenuous attempts to exonerate the ANC in this orgy of violence, both organisations are guilty in the conflict. Along the lines drawn here then, an important sidelight to this observation is that there is reciprocal balance of terror especially between the activities of the ANC and the IFP. Even more fundamentally, the notable reality of the violence described in Mandela's autobiography is that it gives lie to his claims of innocence ascribed to the ANC. Proceeding from that, I want to argue that Mandela's autobiography is not a factual representation of events as they had happened but a reshaping and re-presentation of them in tune with the ideological beliefs of the author-narrator. The point will bear repeating

that in spite of the ring of realism in Mandela's narrative, it will be manifestly wrong to assume that it is a factual rendition of events as they had happened in real life. In short, the narrative remains a story that in the process of its encoding involves the danger of the failure of memory, selection, shaping, and organisation of events according to the ideological beliefs of the author-narrator. Viewed in this sense then, Mandela's autobiography is a literary artifice.

As mentioned earlier, Mandela's tactical and rhetorical recourse to the use of the trope of violence to construct his identity in the text is an important illustration of his attempts to demonise the "other" in this case the IFP and the PAC. Along these lines, if we take an inventory of the process of objectification in Mandela's narrative, we will begin to see how he uses affective verbs and adjectives to describe his friends in the ANC. For instance, Chief Albert Luthuli an ANC leader is described as "a man of patience and fortitude" (144). Another ANC leader Oliver Tambo is of "even tempered objectivity" (148) and has "wisdom and calmness" (245). Govan Mbeki another friend in the ANC is described as "serious, thoughtful, and soft-spoken" (186). In the same vein Walter Sisulu is "strong, reasonable, practical and dedicated" (95). Conversely, he uses negative qualifiers to describe his opponents in the IFP and the PAC. For example, Mandela describes Stephen Tefu a member of the PAC he met in prison as "a difficult fellow: dyspeptic, argumentative, overbearing", a person that "would fight everyone" including "his friends" (336). Similarly, the layered and ironic treatment of Chief Buthelezi of the IFP mentioned earlier is a good illustration of the othering process at work in Mandela's narrative.

By way of conclusion, it is my contention that Mandela's attempt to elide the atrocities of the ANC in his autobiography is a deliberate textual strategy of his identity creation project. Yet another strategy employed by Mandela is the use of rhetoric of demonisation

to describe the activities of the IFP and the PAC. In this regard, whereas the ANC is portrayed as an emblem of civility and tolerance, the two organisations are portrayed as violent and irredentist respectively. Consequently, the positive image of the ANC is textually contrasted with the negative images of the IFP and the PAC. In the final analysis a positive image of the ANC translates into a favourable image for Mandela since he was its leader and flag-bearer.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1   Conclusion.

From its status as a literature of questionable and doubtful genre in the nineteenth century (on this see Lang 1990; Gusdorf 1980; Olney 1980 and De Man 1979), autobiography is today an established field in literary studies. There is little argument about its position today as a corpus in its own right that is worthy of study. Autobiography is no longer on the margins of literary studies but has become accepted as a key area of/for critical interests. Its literary panache lies in its recognized status as occupying a position within and between both fiction and non-fiction. This in turn has helped in widening the scope of its analysis and interpretation because it most often supplies the connecting links between the "self" and its "Other". This is manifestly clear in the way its narrative frame can be used to simultaneously tell the story of the 'self' ('I') and that of the 'Other'.

The beginning of the autobiographical impulse can be linked to the revolutionary idea of upstaging the beliefs of the medieval and theocentric world that put God at the centre of everything in the universe. Instead autobiography offers a fresh possibility for people to put themselves at the centre of the world. They do this by turning "inward towards the self, rather than outward towards the divine" (Sean Ryder 15). This much could be seen in the earliest confessional autobiography of St. Augustine in the fifth century in which he tells the story of his relationship with God in a manner that puts him at the centre of the narrative instead of making God the fulcrum as was the tradition in the medieval period. In fact, most critics have traced the origin of modern autobiography as it is known and appreciated in the west to the Augustinian narrative of religious conversion that was to become the template of writing autobiography for a very long period of time in European societies.

Autobiography became possible also when the individual could talk consciously about a personal experience with special reference to the past. It is an anthropocentric means of inquiry into a person's experiences and his place in the social habitus. It is an individualistic type of expression that sought to connect several dimensions of the author-narrator's life. Yet still it provides writers with a platform to showcase themselves as "recognizable social constituent[s]" (Patten 62) with unique characteristics that have roots in personal achievement and individual merit. Even more, the "emotional register" (Ryder 28) of autobiography has made it a space for expressing hope and disappointment, achievement and failure, like and dislike, as well as political and ideological preferences of the author-narrator. It is an interesting genre that exposes the gap that exists between "created" and "actual" identities of the author-narrator. In this respect, while the aim of most autobiographies is to portray the identity of their writers as something that is fixed, the reality of the narrative reveals otherwise. This is because more often than not the narrative will work against this teleology by revealing the character and hence the identity of the textual "I" as multiple, varied, contradictory and in flux. The narrative undermines all attempts by the narrator to fix and codify an identity that has "an unchanging personality" (Ryder 15).

But it is also a mode of writing that could provide an opportunity for the author-narrator to script the life of others in their own way. This has a far-reaching consequence and has most often resulted in the objectification of those non-selves by the omniscient author-narrator as we have seen in the three texts studied in this thesis.

In fact, autobiography can be used "to fabricate the oubliette to which those who are rendered demographically and culturally *non grata* may be consigned" (original italic; O'Brien 219) as we have seen most especially in the memoir of Mahathir and the autobiography of Gandhi. The same could also be observed through a careful reading of

Mandela's autobiography where he sought to isolate both Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) from the domain of culture and civility through extreme demonisation of the two political groups.

This thesis examined how autobiography and its variants such as the memoir transformed from being the story of the writing-'I' to that of its other. In this regard, the thesis specifically looked at the way the writers under study turned their narratives into a process of objectification of the non-self "other" by framing their narratives through the trajectory of overarching social hierarchies such as us/them, clean/dirty, native/stranger, visible/invisible, peaceful/violent. This strategy enabled them to turn the autobiographical act into a space for accentuating differences between themselves and others. They turned the non-self into an object and subject of difference through ridicule, disdain, mockery, and demonisation. The main aim of this strategy is to objectify the non-self by ascribing some negative qualities to it. It is the contention of this thesis that objectification as it occurred in these texts, is in the main a process of identity formation based on the taxonomy of difference in the social world of the author-narrators shaped by their beliefs and ideologies.

Chapter 1 introduced the topic and proceeded to give an outline of the anticipated structure of the thesis. This chapter also offered working definitions of some important concepts used in the thesis. In this regard, concepts such as "autobiography", "self ", "identity", and "objectification" were explained. The chapter also teased out the relationship between these concepts as well as their importance in autobiographical narratives.

Chapter 2 reviewed the literature with the intention of locating gaps that the present thesis hoped to fill. The chapter highlighted how interest in non-fictional genres of autobiography and its variants such as the memoir, diary, and journal had generated a lot

of studies each with its particular concerns. In this regard, the discussion highlighted that some scholars have dealt with conceptual problems of genres (De Man 1979; Lejuene 1989; Gusdorf 1980; Olney 1980); others have tackled the problems of memory, representation, selection, and organisation of materials in autobiography (Ray 2000; Eakin 1985; Bruner 1990; Pascal 1960). The chapter also noted that feminist scholars see autobiography as a way to resist oppression through the use of narratives about the self (Buss 1993; Perrault 1995; Nueman 1991; Smith and Watson 1992; Friedman 1988; Benstock 1988; Gilmore 1990; 1994). Yet others view it as a conduit for expressing ideologies and national imaginaries (Holden 2008; Lionnet 1989; Bergland 1994; Huddart 2008). Scholars such as Derrida (1988); Lejuene (1989); and Barthes (1977) on the other hand have focused on the centrality of the reader in realising the autobiographical text as narrative. The chapter explained that the present study sought to draw on theoretical developments linking autobiography with identity formation processes by scholars such as De Man, Eakin, Gilmore, Anderson, Stanton, Bruss, and Smith and Watson, to mention a few examples, but it went further in that it explored how autobiography is used to narrate the story of the non-self which, in the process, is made to mutate into an object and subject of difference. The discussion further stressed that the present study will add to the conversation by examining how autobiography became a process of objectification of others. In this regard this thesis hoped to add to the understanding of autobiography by specifically looking at how its narrative template is used to objectify the non-self which in this case is more than the individual person but includes among other things competing ideologies, beliefs, and cultures.

Chapter 3 titled "Autobiography, grand narrative and the rhetoric of Self-fashioning in Mahathir Mohamad's *A Doctor in the House* explored how Mahathir used the trajectory of race to fashion out his identity through a chiasmic semiosis of "us" versus "them".

In this chapter I explored how Mahathir created his public identity through the textual encoding of his carefully selected, filtered, and structured experiences. The chapter argued that Mahathir sought to articulate his recalled experiences in the form of a coherent narrative by encoding his story as an aesthetic ontology of difference. The chapter also explained that part of the narrative strategy employed by Mahathir was the deployment of a series of grand narratives such as the concept of "Being Malay", the "New Economic Policy (NEP)", and the instrumentality of the "United Malays National Organisation (UMNO)" in realising his personal identity. In this regard, we have seen how "Malayness" became the positive image against which the constructed negative images of the Chinese and the Indians are contrasted in his narrative. In short, we have seen how Mahathir's descriptions of the Chinese and the Indians are saturated with parsimony of generalisations because he most of the time negated their individualism through extreme stereotyping. I have also highlighted how Mahathir disparaged important Malay personalities such as the first Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tunku Abdul Rahman whom he sees as compromising, naïve, and of low calibre. This chapter also focussed on the way Mahathir exploited the success story of UMNO to articulate a distinctive Malay identity for himself. Similarly the chapter has also discussed how Mahathir appropriated the NEP story to re-create a public persona that was outwardly brash and uncompromising thereby earning him the tag "Malay Ultra" a not too unpleasant appellation in a multiracial Malaysia where race is an important political benchmark. We have seen how he used emotionally charged language to bemoan the failure of the policy to achieve its desired objectives. The chapter also highlighted how Mahathir craftily used the liberationist narrative of NEP to etch his personality on the Malaysian political scape. The chapter also addressed how Mahathir objectified the racial "Other" by turning it into a surface on which to bounce off the contrasting positive image of himself. The chapter concluded by noting that the identity politics Mahathir invested so much energy to project in his memoir

was a manifest failure because of the series of challenges he faced from people that rejected his homogenising politics from within the "Malay race".

Chapter 4 titled "Autobiography, Identity, and the Phenomenology of Violence in Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom*" examined how Mandela has used the trope of violence to construct his identity on the one hand and the identity of his opponents especially members of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) on the other.

The argument with which this chapter started was that Mandela used violence as a tropological vehicle to encode his story of political and moral difference. This in turn underscored the particularly dialectical nature of his discourse. In fact, Mandela displayed a remarkable power of generating and manipulating images in his narrative. He does this through an antipodal collocation of disclosure, evasion, erasure and concealment, as the case may be. Similarly, a poignant aspect of his narrative is that the image of the "other" encoded in his autobiography, in this case the IFP and PAC, are in tune with his chosen ideology of negating the political and moral "other". For example, it is fairly easy to observe that within the teleological progression of his narrative, Mandela announced the innocence of the ANC with grandiose aplomb. Even more, Mandela's narrative is organised around a "rhetoric of civilization and barbarism, culture and anarchy" (Gilbert 172). In short, in Mandela's text "viciousness" is equated with "otherness" (Gilbert 172) and the degree of otherness on the other hand is measured according to the way in which the perceived 'other's' behaviour deviated from or is "discordant with the putative norm" (Deane 12) of the author-narrator. Additionally, a familiar topos in Mandela's narrative is the frequent use of the rhetoric of demonisation and Manichaean binarisms. In this regard, we have seen how the ANC has variously been portrayed as an epitome of "decency, civility, and cultivation", whereas the IFP and the PAC are portrayed as

barbaric, wicked, uncultured and "a constant source of unease" (Eagleton *Nationalism* 33). Moreover, the discussion demonstrated that the most reasonable observation of the reality of violence in *Long Walk to Freedom* was that it involved all the contending parties because in every violent action there is always a more or less reaction. In this sense, as might be expected in South Africa at the time, violence will presumably beget violence. The discussion further argued that when this observation is taken together with the apparent silence about the atrocities of the ANC, it could be inferred that there is an ideology at work in Mandela's narrative. For instance, his attempts to associate his opponents with violence, destruction, disruption, and sabotage were an encrypted strategy of demonisation and objectification.

The discussion has also stressed that what is useful and illuminating in this observation is that it was through this process that Mandela has created the impugned binary of "good" as represented by the ANC versus "evil" represented notably by the IFP. Moreover, we have seen how Mandela puts a negative evaluative accent on the activities of the IFP and the PAC while at the same time he ignored the atrocities of the ANC. The chapter noted that, a more adequate and equilibrated response to the problems of violence in the text would have been to pay meticulous attention to the atrocities of both parties in the conflict. In an important sense, the discussion highlighted that the imbricated stories of the ANC, the IFP, and the PAC has revealed that contrary to Mandela's strenuous attempts to exonerate the ANC in this orgy of violence, both organisations were guilty in the conflict. Along the lines drawn here then, an important sidelight to this observation is that there was reciprocal balance of terror especially between the activities of the ANC and the IFP. Even more fundamentally, the notable reality of the violence described in Mandela's autobiography is that it gives lie to his claims of innocence ascribed to the ANC. Proceeding from that, I argued that Mandela's autobiography is not a factual representation of events as they had happened but a reshaping and re-presentation of them

in tune with the ideological beliefs of the author-narrator. The discussion further stressed that Mandela's tactical and rhetorical recourse to the use of the trope of violence to construct his identity in the text is an important illustration of his attempts to demonise the "other" in this case the IFP and the PAC. We took an inventory of the process of objectification in Mandela's narrative and in the process demonstrated how he used affective verbs and adjectives to describe his friends in the ANC. Conversely, we saw how he used negative qualifiers to describe his opponents in the IFP and the PAC. The chapter concluded by noting that the various attempts of Mandela to downplay and conceal the atrocities of the ANC in his autobiography is a deliberate textual strategy for his identity construction project. In this regard we have seen how the paratactic display of the positive image of the ANC alongside the negative images of the IFP and the PAC indirectly created a favourable image for Mandela because he was the leader as well as the flag-bearer of the ANC. We also saw how Mandela's narrative craftily portrayed a positive image of himself through a surreptitious reference to the virtues of the ANC. In this sense, we have seen how Mandela wrapped his identity within the larger identity of the ANC. I have also stressed that Mandela never sought to create a separate self-identity but was rather contented with enfolding his textually created image within the template of the positive ANC identity he portrayed in his narrative.

Chapter 5 "The Metaphysics of Identity in M.K. Gandhi's *My Experiments with Truth*" explored how Gandhi deployed his powers of reflexive monitoring to objectify both the Indian subalterns and the native Africans in South Africa in his autobiography. The chapter argued that Gandhi used two different strategies to objectify these two different groups in his narrative.

In this chapter I looked at how Gandhi constructed his identity in his autobiography. The chapter among other things has focussed on the narrative strategies he employed in

encoding his story of class and racial difference. In this regard, the chapter critically examined how he constructed his identity by purporting to represent the interests of the marginalised among the Indian subaltern groups living in India on the one hand, as well as those domiciling in South Africa on the other. The central argument was that Gandhi's autobiography is a text that in the process of framing its narrative inadvertently objectified the Indian masses. The discussion attempted to demonstrate that Gandhi objectified this subaltern group by deploying negative tropes to describe their attitudes especially towards personal hygiene and public sanitation. The discussion further stressed that by variously portraying the subalterns as "dirty", "slovenly in habits" and resistant to change in particularly issues of hygiene and sanitation, Gandhi has indirectly created a binary opposition between himself and the subalterns. The chapter further observed that in spite of the profuse display of solidarity with the subalterns in his text, Gandhi still demonstrated that he was everything that the subalterns were not. The discussion also demonstrated how Gandhi used the subalterns as a palimpsest on which to etch his identity by creating a dialectic of difference between self and the "other". In this regard, we have seen how Gandhi used the negative identity of the subalterns as a surface on which to bounce-off his constructed and contrasted superior identity.

The chapter also discussed how Gandhi objectified the native Africans in his narrative. The chapter interrogated the interchange between vision, visualism and textual re-presentation as processes of identity manipulation in *My Experiments with Truth*. The discussion highlighted how in the course of narrating his experiences as an autobiography, Gandhi elided as well as negated the corporeality of the native Africans by choosing not to "see" their presence even though he had spent over two decades in their midst in South Africa. The argument was that by treating the native Africans as a mute presence in his text, Gandhi unwittingly negated their identity by stripping them of all agential powers in a moral and social environment in which they are undoubtedly the majority. The chapter

explained that the seeming neglect of the native Africans by Gandhi could be attributed to factors such as the abysmal race relations between the Indians and the native Africans in South Africa during this period. The chapter demonstrated that the relationship between the two groups was strained as a result of mutual distrust engendered by subtle competition especially in the economic sphere. This mistrust made it very difficult for the two sides to have any meaningful interaction. Consequently, even though the two groups were living side by side in the same *physical space*, they occupied different *social spaces* thereby making acquaintance very difficult. The discussion further noted that the absence of the native Africans in Gandhi's autobiography was a reflection of this antagonism in another form. One curious conclusion that has been drawn was that by textually eliding the presence of the native Africans in his autobiography, Gandhi has indirectly reinforced the negative attitude of the South African racist regime at a period when he was engaged with fighting the same system with regards to the rights of the settler Indians. The chapter concluded by noting that the attempted elision and silencing of the native Africans in Gandhi's autobiography in spite of his over two decades stay in South Africa is an example of the objectification of the non-self in autobiographical writings.

This thesis demonstrated that there are significant parallels between Mandela's system of self-representation and those of Mahathir and Gandhi. This system involved the othering of the non-self through objectifying and negating of its existential reality. They did this in order to bounce-off their textually created positive image against the blighted surface of the negative image of the perceived "other" created and sustained in their narratives. This strategy worked well for especially Gandhi and Mandela whose saintly images are universally acknowledged. However, one important finding of this thesis is that their attempt at self-representation through the otherness of the non-self revealed many gaps and silences in their narratives. This much has been severally demonstrated in the chapters that constituted this thesis.

By way of conclusion, it could be observed that in the autobiographies of Mahathir, Mandela, and Gandhi, the "other" was used as a narrative device to construct and project a chosen and preferred positive identity of the self. In this sense, the "other" became a trope for self-articulation and enunciation within the textual-world of each of these writers. Viewed in this way, the "other" became the surface created and sustained by the power of discourse on which to bounce off the contrasted image of the self. More importantly, the creation of this Manichean binary between the "self" as represented by Mahathir, Mandela, and Gandhi, and its "other" represented by the negated, maligned, ignored, despised, and silenced individuals, groups, ideologies and races in their texts is an example of the objectification process at work in autobiographical narratives that may not be apparent at first glance. Put another way, the objectification process at work in the texts studied in this thesis is subsumed as a subtext to the main narrative. Its unearthing therefore offers a fresh perspective for understanding life narratives.

6.2   Notes.

6.2.1   Notes for Chapter 1.

[1] Philippe Lejuene describes the "autobiographical pact" as a condition where the reader of an autobiographical text is convinced that there is a unity between the author, the narrator, and the subject in the text. This presupposes that the pronoun "I" in an autobiographical text must reflexively refer to the person whose name appears on the cover of the text (Lejuene 1982:193, 202). Thus for Lejuene this pact between the author-narrator and the reader is sacrosanct and inviolable. It is indeed the necessary condition for the existence of autobiographical texts. However, although his arguments are cogent, Lejuene has failed to take into cognizance Saussure's argument that the relation of the signifier to its signified is contingent and arbitrary rather than fixed. In this sense, then, there is no any inherent connection between the name on the cover of the autobiographical text and the nominated "I" that inhabits the textual world of the autobiography. This is the full implication of Roland Hayman's observation that [in autobiography] "…there is no fundamental connection between the name and the thing, between signifier and signified" (1980:3).See Philippe Lejuene. "The Autobiographical Contract". T. Todorov (ed). *French Literary Theory Today*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982. ; Roland Hayman. *Nietzsche: A Critical Life*. London: Penguin Books, 1980.

[2] "Reality" is a highly complicated concept. It is a concept that acquires meaning through individual usage and perspective. In fact the word "reality" is loaded with

meanings and thus has what Valentin Volosinov (1973; cited in Hartley 22) has called "multi-accentuality", a condition in which words and concepts are made to generate multiplicity of meanings. In this sense, then, "reality" as a 'sign' do not have a fixed internal "meaning", but only meaning potentials which can only be actualized in usage or context. Indeed the word "reality' is being cautiously used in this thesis because most often what is termed "reality" or the "real" is no more than the perspective of the observer making the observation. See John Hartley. *Understanding News*. London and New York: Methuen, 1982.

[3] It is my contention that most of the content of autobiographical narratives is derived from visual observation or experience rather than tactile or olfactory experience. In this regard, then, the visual or what Johannes Fabian (1983; cited in Bello-Kano 61) has called "visualism" is very fundamental in re-creating and re-presenting experience through autobiographical textual encoding. In fact visualism plays key role in organizing the story into a coherent narrative. Even more important, it is vision or visualism that furnishes the writing-'I' in autobiography with the observable details she describes in her text. Thus far, the writing-'I' in autobiography, is, to quote Bello-Kano (2005:59) "the writing-seeing "I"" that depends on the efficacy of visual comprehension to re-create and narrativize her text. It is at least arguable that in autobiographical narratives the writing-seeing "I" must see before she observes, recognizes, and textually reports. See Ibrahim Bello-Kano. "Travel, Difference, and Gaze: A Literary Economy of the Body in Joseph Conrad's *The Congo Diary*, *African Literary Journal* 2005, pp.57-78.

[4] It is indeed noteworthy that at the beginning of autobiographical studies scholars had to contend with the question of the status of autobiographical narratives. One of the central problems they had to struggle with was whether to study autobiography as fiction or non-fiction; factual or non-factual. One of the earliest writers on autobiography George Misch (1951) has noted this problem when he says that "Autobiography is unlike any other form of literary composition. Its boundaries are more fluid and less definable to form than those of lyric or epic poetry or drama, which, in spite of variations from age to age, from nation to nation, and from work to work, have preserved unity of form throughout their development…In itself it is a representation of life that is committed to no definite form. Hardly any form is alien to it. Historical record of achievements, imaginary forensic addresses or rhetorical declamations…letters, literary portraiture, family chronicle and court memoirs, explanatory or fictional, novel and biography in their various styles, epic and even drama---all these forms has been made use of by autobiographers…" George Misch, *A History of Autobiography in Antiquity*, 2 Vols. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University press, 1951) 1:4. Similarly, Rockwell Gray writing in the *Kenyon Review*, Vol.4, No.1 (Winter, 1982) describes autobiography as a genre that is "porous, elastic, and polymorphous" (32). In yet another sense, Laura Marcus in her *Auto/biographical discourses: Theory, Criticism, Practice (*Manchester and New York: Manchester UP., 1994) has described autobiography as a hybrid form of writing that "unsettles distinctions" between self and other; fiction and non-fiction; etc. She further describes it as "a destabilizing form of writing and knowledge…" (15-16).

[5] Objectification as used in this thesis implies the 'thingfication' of the non-self by attributing some negative qualities to it. Of course the non-self, as used in this thesis, refers to the 'not-'I' and the accentuated difference(s) between the not-'I' and 'I'. Objectification thus creates an unbridgeable gap between 'self' and 'other' (not-'I'). In fact, objectification creates a disharmonious 'I-It' relation, a situation in which the 'It'

(the non-self) is thingfied. That is to say that in this relation the true nature of the "It' (its otherness) is effaced, jettisoned, sacrificed and denied.

[6] Since its introduction into the discourse of psychoanalysis by Jacques Lacan, the concept of the "other" has found a niche in various discourses across many areas of knowledge. The concept is especially useful in understanding those discourses that are organised around issues of gender, racism, cultural difference, ideological disputations, etc. In this sense, the concept is very important in understanding postcolonial discourse because a sustained focus on it will help to unsettle the dialectic that frames narratives in the Manichean divide of "us" and "them" thereby exposing their constructedness. Peter Childs and Roger Fowler (2006) have noted how the concept of the "Other" exists in a complementary relationship with that of the "self" because the two are mutually interdependent. Put in another way, the "self" cannot exist without its "other", a surface on which it bounces all that it fears, and all that it assumes threaten its corporeal existence (164). Consequently, Childs and Fowler saw a direct connection between the othering process and identity formation. They however caution that the "other" is a "construct. . . a historically specific construction that is determined by the discursive practices that shape us into what we are. Thus, rather than representing the real and diverse qualities of any given group or entity, such constructions reflect the values and norms of the individual or group that constructs it" (164). Anthony Easthope (1990) on the other hand suggests that the concept of the "other" is a "structure rather than content----a relationship in which a first term privileges for itself an inside by denigrating a second term as outside" (131). (See Peter Childs and Roger Fowler eds. *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms*. London: Routledge, 2006; and Anthony Easthope. *Literary Into Cultural Studies*. London: Routledge, 1990).

6.2.2   Notes for Chapter 2.

[1] For further discussion of this see Benstock 1988; Bruss 1976; Smith and Watson 1998, 1992; Ashley et al 1994; Lionnet 1989; Gilmore 1994; Jelinek 1980; Mason 1980; Nussbaum 1988;; Buss 1993; Perrault 1995; Nueman 1991; Friedman 1988; and especially Julie Rak's book Auto/biography in Canada: Critical Directions(Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier UP., 2005) where she painstakingly traced the history of feminist critical scholarship about autobiography as a genre that provides a platform for female writers to question and subvert patriarchal ideology.

[2]For a full discussion of this see Dwight F. Reynolds' (ed) *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition*. (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2001), where he painstakingly traced the tradition of autobiographical writings in Arabic to the *Sira* ("life history") of Prophet Muhammad. He also highlighted the instability of the genre in terms of form. In this regard he pointed out that the autobiographical narratives ranges from personal letters, memoirs, diaries, travelogues, to full biographical accounts by the writing subjects themselves. Indeed he admitted that "The diversity of literary form demonstrated by Arabic autobiographies from different periods obviates the possibility of a single, simple description of the genre in formal terms, a situation similar to that which has emerged in the study of Western autobiographical traditions" (5).

[3] One of the interesting features of autobiography is that its writer purportedly exists almost simultaneously within the text and outside it. In this regard, the writing-"I" exists as the subject- of- writing as an author; and the object –of-writing as the protagonist in the narrative.

[4] Some scholars such as Gilmore(2001); Natalie Edwards (2011) have viewed the "I" in autobiography as a "discursive space" that is opened for the author to "do more than supply a history of her culture but to develop more intimate relationships with those beyond the ken of the solitary author" (Megahn A. Kuckelman, "The Phenomenology of the Reader in Autobiographical Poetry by Stein, Hejinan, and Scalpino" Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Kansas, July 2013, P. 14). The metaphysical position of "I" in discourse forms one of the preoccupations of the structuralist French linguist Emile Benveniste. Thus for him discourse provides a speaker with the capacity "to posit himself as a subject" who articulate himself as "I" (1971:224). Benveniste further points out that: "The form of *I* has no linguistic existence except in the act of speaking in which it is uttered. There is thus a combined double instance in this process: the instance of *I* as referent and the instance of discourse containing *I* as the referee. The definition can now be stated precisely as: *I* is "the individual who utters the present instance of discourse containing the linguistic instance I." …[Likewise, *you* is] the "individual spoken to in the present instance of discourse containing the linguistic instance *you*." (Benveniste 218; cited in Cohan and Shires *Telling Stories: The theoretical analysis of narrative fiction*, Routledge: London, 1988, P.104. Original italics).

6.2.3   Notes for Chapter 3.

[1]It is my contention that writing, whether ideographic or lexicographic, is a very important feature of modernity. It is a medium that can be used to puncture the silence that envelops the private experiences of people across generations separated by time and space. It is in this sense that Louis Renza (1977:5) has noted that, "More than speaking, writing is what 'explodes that darkness on which the memory draws.'" Writing also has "the capacity to unloosen and disrupts the coitions of words, images and events" (6).

[2] "the metaphysics of presence" presupposes the importance of speech over writing in Western Philosophical System because in speech the thought and its enunciator are both incidental i.e. when words are uttered or spoken directly, the receiver or listener can hear the words and at the same time can see the enunciator. In this sense, there is a direct link between the speaker, her words, and their receivers; this in essence guarantees presence. This is what is referred to as "phonocentrism". Another terminology used by Derrida to explain this phenomenon is *logocentrism* a word he derives from the Greek term *Logos*, meaning "word", and the connotative assumption of wisdom and rationality. In fact, *logocentrism* was hinged on the idea that reality can be directly projected to consciousness or to the human-subject without any mediation. However in his penetrating analysis of this phenomenon Derrida reverses this hierarchical order in favour of writing thereby exposing the weakness of the phonocentrist bias of speech by noting that rather than being the center or the originari starting point of self-presence, speech was indeed a derivative of writing. Consequently, writing is more likely to guarantee presence because of its iterability, iterativity, repeatability, and citationality. In this regard, John Storey (1997) has noted that "when presence is no longer guaranteed by speech, writing becomes a necessary means to protect presence" (91). For more on this see Cormac (2008:119-124); Klages (2007: 54-55) and Storey (1997:90-92).

[3] It is my contention that the distinction between autobiography and memoir is redundant. This is because in so far as they are both life-writings by a real person about her "truthful" experiences, they are governed by the same rules of first-person narration that centers on an "I" that narrates about those experiences. In this sense, then, it does not matter whether the story told is elaborate (as in autobiography) or anecdotal (as in memoir), what is important is their claim to share truthful experiences with their reader.

More important both autobiography and memoir are products of the writer's selected memories that are given shape through the act of narration. Thus the "I" in both memoir and autobiography cannot remember everything about its lived-life at the time of writing.

[4] See Renza, Louis A. "The Veto of the Imagination: a theory of autobiography." *New Literary History* (1977): 1-26. In this essay Renza contends that there are basically two ways of writing autobiography: the first mode is what he calls the "memoir-prone autobiography" that uses language "to declassify information" about the writer's "life"; the second mode is what he aptly calls "the confessional mode of autobiography" which is largely "the writer's performance of his textual project" (7-8).

[5] This is a self that is presumably whole, coherent, single, and unified. It is a self that was assumed in the Cartesian proclamation of "I think, therefore I am", a self that is the center of consciousness. However, as poststructuralists such as Derrida, Foucault, Barthes, Baudrillard, etc. have demonstrated this self is a fiction and an illusion because every self is by nature multiple, varied, heterogeneous, and discrete. For example, in life writings such as the autobiography and the memoir we can distinguish at least two levels of "I": the narrating "I" and the narrated "I" and despite appearance to the contrary because of referentiality, the two are not the same. This is because the person writing about his recollected experiences is not the same with the one at the initial stage of that experience. Indeed, Paul John Eakins (1999) has noted that "the subject of autobiography to which the pronoun "I" refers is neither singular nor first" because it "is defined by---- and lives in terms of----its relations with others" (43).

[6] In his book *Malaysia: State and Civil Society in Transition* (Boulder and London: Lynne Reinner Publishers), 2002 Vidhu Verma has noted that during his period as the Prime Minister "Apart from developing an ethnic Malay identity or Malay nationalism, and manipulating this to his advantage, Mahathir used the fact of Chinese control over the economy coupled with the official narrative of the Chinese "Other" in his control strategy over the various communities: while relying on the cooperation of the Chinese economic elite, he also relied on threats to disenfranchise the entire community" (65). Still commenting on the use of the New Economic Policy as a political weapon by Mahathir, Verma contends that 'its prime beneficiaries are drawn from the ranks of the politically connected Malay middle class and business communities that influence policymaking and implementation" (70). This was the beginning of the entrenchment of the culture of "patronage and reward" in the Malaysian polity (37).

[7] See Ibrahim Bello-Kano, "Travel, Difference, and the Gaze: A Literary Economy of the Body in Joseph Conrad's *The Congo Diary*", *African Literary Journal*, April 2005, pp.57-78. This point has also been taken and refined by Edward Said in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) where he aptly noted that, "The battle in imperialism is over land…but when it came to who owned the land, who had the right to settle and work on it, who kept it going, who own it back, who plans its future---these issues were reflected, contested, and even for a time decided in narrative" (xiii).

[8] I borrowed the concept of "Pillarization" from the Dutch sociologist J.E. Ellemers who used it to explain the balkanization of the Dutch society along religious denominational lines. The original word in Dutch is *Verzuiling* from which the concept of "Pillars" or *Zuilen* was derived. Ellemers (cited in Zima 2007: 25) describes the concept as "the organization of society along denominational, ideological, or ethnic lines

called *Pillars* (*Zuilin*). For more on this see Peter V. Zima *What is Theory?* London: Continuum International Publishing, 2007, p.25.; J.E. Ellemers, "Pillarization as a process of Modernization", in *Acta Politica* 1, 1984, 129.

[9] I borrowed this term from Roy Bhaskar 1993: 371). This is a shorthand for ambivalence. In this sense a writer is caught in a web of negation and affirmation at the same time. This can be seen in *A Doctor in the House* where Mahathir is caught in this contradiction when in one breath he describes the Malays as good, tolerant, open-minded, accommodating, etc. and in the next they are lazy, indolent, greedy, lacking of initiative and good work ethic, etc. This ambivalence was as a result of the fluidity of language and the absolute lack of control over it by the writer. Indeed, Derrida (1976) captures the situation more succinctly when he says that "The writer [author] writes *in* a language and *in* a logic whose proper system, laws, and life his discourse by definition cannot dominate absolutely. He uses them only by letting himself, after a fashion and up to a point, be governed by the system" (158; original italics).

[10] Race –based politicking is one of the prominent features of Malaysian politics. Several scholars have commented on this peculiar character of Malaysian politics pointing out that in spite of its Federal structure its politics is largely communal. For example, Mohammad Agus Yusoff and Jayum Jawan in their article "Political Parties in Malaysia: Peoples and Politics" pp.225-250 (in Abdul Razak Baginda ed. *Governing Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: MSRC, 2009) have argued that "Basic politics in the Peninsula is highly *communal*, based on Malay support for the *communal* UMNO in large part and for PAS to some extent, the majority of Chinese backing for the *communal* MCA and the Indian consolidation in the *communal* MIC" (my italics, 237). They also pointed out that the founding father of UMNO, Tun Onn Jaafar left the party after his attempt to open up its membership to other races was vehemently rejected by its Malay members. He had wanted to change the name of the party from United "Malays" to United "Malayan" National Organisation" (235). Similarly commenting on the impossibility of finding say a Malay politician in MCA or MIC, or an Indian or Chinese politician in UMNO, Goh Cheng Teik has argued that "It may appear to a politician from UMNO, MCA, MIC or another communal party that to invite him to consider accepting other races into the fold (of his communal party) is tantamount to asking him to think the unthinkable. It will be a radical departure from what is written in his party constitution and what he has been used to…."(25). See Goh Cheng Teik. *Malaysia: Beyond Communal Politics*, Petaling Jaya: Pelanduk Publications, 1994.

[11] By way of illustration, Shaharuddin Maaruf cited the contents of a book *Revolusi Mental* edited by Senu Abdul Rahman, the Secretary General of UMNO in 1971. The book comprises "of contributions from thirteen writers who are members of the Malay intelligentsia" (80). He noted that the raison d'être of the book was to "change the mentality of the Malays but ends up as a justification of feudalism and materialism" (80). On the whole Maaruf concluded that the content of the book is a disguised propaganda tool of the elite that cleverly hides "the vested interests it represents" by using "simplistic arguments to convince the Malays that the accumulation of wealth by individuals is advocated only for their interests' sake" (84). Thus, the book , "While claiming to be concerned about the Malay economic dilemma[…] casts its eyes only on the big business to be acquired by the powerful and the rich" (83).

6.2.4   Notes for Chapter 4.

[1]The concept of 'Diaspora' was first used to describe the dispersal of the Jews from their homeland in the Middle East to various parts of the world. However, the concept has acquired more semantic extensions over the years to cover any population that has moved out of its national territory. Gijsbert (2007) has noted that the concept is widely used to describe "any population considered "deterritorialised' or 'transnational', whose cultural origins are said to have arisen in a nation other than which they currently reside" (14). The diasporic population are also occupied with issues of identity, citizenship, power relation, alienation, and a host of other issues that are also postcolonial in orientation. In this regard, there is a close nexus between the 'diasporic subject' and his postcolonial counterpart. For more on this see Gijsbert Oonk (ed). *Global Indian Diasporas: Exploring Trajectories of Migration and Theory*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007; Paul Younger. *New Homelands: Hindu Communities in Mauritius, Guyana, Trinidad, South Africa, Fiji and East Africa*, (Oxford: O.U.P., 2010).

[2]The beginning of indentured labour could be traced to the nineteenth century and it was triggered by the labour shortage experienced in the Imperial economy as a result of the abolition of the slave trade and subsequently slavery. As a result of this, the African slaves that were working on the plantations and the mines abandoned those places putting the Imperial economy in serious peril. In order to salvage the situation, the British Imperialists specifically targeted Asia for the recruitment of labour to replace the Africans. They thus recruited Indians and Chinese in large numbers and subsequently deployed them to the plantations and the mines. In this regard, while the Indian indentured labour was deployed to the plantations, the Chinese were mostly deployed to work in the mines. Indentured labour has been condemned by M.K. Gandhi calling it a new form of slavery. In one of his writings in the "Indian Opinion" of 03.10. 1908, Gandhi vehemently opposed indentured labour and strongly suggested that "Indenture must be prohibited by law" and urged the Natal Indians "to adopt satyagraha if necessary" to "bring the system of indenture to an end". For a detailed discussion see P.C. Emmer (ed.). *Colonialism and Migration: Indentured labour Before and After Slavery*. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1986; Gopal Krishna Gandhi (ed.). *The Oxford Indian Gandhi: The Essential Writings*, (Oxford: O.U.P., 2008).

[3]The word "Subaltern" was first used as a critical term by the Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci to refer to the non-elite classes in European societies. The term acquired more purchase when a group of progressive Indian historians appropriated it to challenge the dominance of elites in colonial and neo-colonial Indian historiographies. In order to accomplish this, they constituted a Subaltern Studies collective with the intention of freeing Indian historiography from the dominating influence of the elite class by "writing histories from below" (Guha 3). They thus sought to restore the agency of the powerless masses in Indian historiography by giving them the chance to tell or narrate their history in their own voice. The actions of the Subaltern Studies collective were, however, challenged by scholars such as Gayatri Spivak who in her seminal essay "Can the subaltern speak?" dismisses the utopian goals of the collective by demonstrating the impossibility of restoring agential powers to the subalterns through discourses that are framed in Euro-elitist language that is totally inaccessible to the people it purports to serve. I use the term here to refer to the voice-less and dispossessed groups that lack interlocutionary power because of their limited education as well as their weak economic status in India as members of a minority ethnic community in South Africa. In his autobiography, Gandhi specifically describes them as people that require special protection from exploitation by educated and privileged elites like himself. For a fuller

discussion see Ranajit Guha, ed. *Writings on South Asian History and Society* (1987); Vinyak Chaturvedi, ed. *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial* (2002); and A. Dirk Moses, ed. *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History* (2008).

6.2.5   Notes for Chapter 5.

[1]Apartheid was a system of government that was introduced and consolidated by the Afrikaner dominated National Party (NP) in South Africa after their overwhelming victory in the whites-only general election of 1948. Philip Holden has noted that the "racialization of space in South Africa" (153) is tied to a "racial capitalism" that eventually transformed into "formal apartheid" (151). Similarly, Isma'il A. Tsiga has noted that the main purpose of apartheid "was to efface the individuality of the black man by imposing group characteristics on him" (284). (See Philip Holden. *Autobiography and Decolonization: Modernity, Masculinity, and the Nation-State*. Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2008 and Isma'il A. Tsiga, *Autobiography as Social History: Apartheid and the Rise of Black Autobiography Tradition in South Africa*. Abuja: Spectrum Books, 2010).

[2]There is indeed an important link between modernity and autobiography because both are human centred. As Martin Heidegger says the modern period "is defined by the fact that man becomes the center and measure of all beings" (quoted in David Michael Levin 3, *The Opening Vision: Nihilism and the Postmodern Situation*. New York: Routledge, 2001.

[3]A most recent example is South Sudan where violence breaks after its secession from the Arab dominated Northern Sudan. Sectarian violence broke out immediately between contending political forces struggling to control the machinery of government. The conflict is between those that support President Sylva Kier on the one hand and supporters of his Deputy Rick marcel on the other. This conflict is still raging.

[4]Anthony Minnar has noted that the violence that engulfs South Africa during the period of transition from apartheid to multiracial democracy was "a struggle for power and control of structures and resources" (390) from amongst the competing political players in the liberation movement. He also suggests that the desire to establish "territorial hegemony" (398) by especially the ANC and the IFP was another reason for the conflict. (See Anthony Minnar. "Political Violence in South Africa." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 6(3): 398-399 (1994).

[5]An "ego-logical subject", according to Levin (2001) is a self that has an "essentially anthropocentric vision of reason: reason as instrumental, pragmatic, practical" (4). The implication of this is that the ego-logical subject is fundamentally a self-centred entity motivated by passion and will to conquer and subdue the non-self. This desire to dominate is at the root of most conflicts in the world.

[6]In his book *Violence and Belonging: The Quest for Identity in Post- Colonial Africa* (New York: Routledge, 2005), Vigdis Broch-Due has noted how violence is used especially in political conflicts in multiracial and/or multi-ethnic nations to isolate and exclude the different 'other' from participating in the shared social habitus. In this regard he notes that "perpetrators deploy violence as a political weapon to force through their own desire to belong by destroying similar claims of belonging by the victims" (15).

Consequently, he notes that in Africa "violence and uncertainty underlay the contours of colonialism" as well as "the post-colony" (22)

[7]One of the characteristics of political autobiography is that "it conveys an image of the writer's life as shaped by the social and historical forces, whose balance he changed in turn through practically participating in the mass movements of his age" (Isma'il A. Tsiga 239). Philip Holden however has characterized Nelson Mandela's autobiography as part of a repertoire of writing he called "National autobiographies" (5). He explains national autobiography as a text "in which the growth of an individual implicitly identified as a national father explicitly parallels the growth of national consciousness and [. . .] the achievement of an independent nation-state" (ibid). In his text Holden cited M.K. Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Kwame Nkrumah, Kenneth Kaunda, and Nelson Mandela as example of leaders that wrote national autobiographies. (See Philip Holden, *Autobiography and Decolonization: Modernity, Masculinity, and the Nation-State*. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008).

[8]In his discussion of Nelson Mandela's autobiography Holden has pointed out that there are some gaps, omissions, silences and inconsistencies in Mandela's recounting of events. For example, Holden has noted how Mandela recounted the visit of "Progressive Party member of Parliament Helen Suzman" to Robben Island but failed to mention "the visit of Labour politician Denis Healey in 1970, despite the fact that Mandela had met Healey while in London in 1962" (157). He also noted how Mandela says very little about his separation from Winnie in his autobiography but he at the same time devotes more space to discuss inconsequential things like his return to Qunu "the scene of his childhood" (161). This is the line I take in discussing how Mandela elides and/or conceals the complicity of the ANC in the violence that engulfs South Africa during its transition to multiracial democracy.

[9]The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established through the "Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act No. 34 of 1995" with Archbishop Desmond Tutu as the "chairperson" (Verdoolaege 8-10). The main task of the commission was to investigate human rights violation during and after the abrogation of apartheid. Verdoolaege has noted how "The idea of a truth commission. . . first came from the ANC" (7).   The commission investigated human rights violation committed over a period of "34 years" (Wilson 71). [See Annelies Verdoolaege. *Reconciliation Discourse: Discourse Approaches to Politics, Society and Culture*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2008; See also Richard A. Wilson. *The Politics of Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa: Legitimizing the Post-Apartheid State*. Cambridge: C.U.P., 2001.]

[10]Even though Mandela did not mention that there was violence between the ANC and the PAC in his autobiography, there is evidence to suggest that that was hardly the case. For instance, Richard A. Wilson has noted that the establishment of an "armed 'anti-crime'" squads called the "Special Defense Units (SDUs)" by the ANC right from "the 1980s" fuelled violence across South Africa after the liberalization of the political space in 1990. Wilson notes that after "the unbanning" of the ANC and other political organizations in 1990 the "SDUs unleashed a random campaign of violence against the state security forces and the IFP, and against other anti-apartheid organizations (for example, the PAC which is well established in Sharpeville)." He further notes that "Between May and October 1992, Sharpeville SDUs were held responsible for 36 murders, 84 robberies and 21 rapes in the small township alone" (177). See Richard A.

Wilson. . *The Politics of Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa: Legitimizing the Post-Apartheid State*. Cambridge: C.U.P., 2001.

[11]There is no doubt that that the conflict between the ANC and the IFP resulted in more loss of lives than that between the ANC and the PAC. For example, Wilson notes that the TRC in its report has noted that in the 34-year period it covered "IFP members were responsible for nearly 4000 killings in KwaZulu-Natal alone (compared with 1000 perpetrated by the ANC)" (71). This buttressed my claim that the ANC is equally guilty in the violence that bedevilled this period. The ANC is not the passive receiver of violence that Mandela want us to believe.

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2. "Autobiography as Objectification: Re-presenting the Subaltern in Mohandas K. Gandhi's *My Experiments with Truth*." Journeys of/toward Identity: A Colloquium organized by The Department of English, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Malaya, 15 October, 2015.

3. "Autobiography, Metaphysics of Identity and the D/elision of the Native African in Gandhi's *My Experiments with Truth*." Languages, Literatures and Cultures: Engaging Threads and Trends. 9th Malaysia International Conference on Languages, Literatures and Cultures. Organized by the Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 16-18 August 2016.