THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF A NARRATIVE SPACE: A STUDY OF FACEBOOK AS AN 'AUTOFICTION' IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

(2006-2024)

Thesis Submitted by

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THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF A NARRATIVE SPACE: A STUDY OF FACEBOOK AS AN 'AUTOFICTION' IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT (2006 – 2024)

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CERTIFICATE FROM THE SUPERVISOR

This is to certify that the thesis entitled "The Birth And Growth Of A Narrative Space: A Study Of Facebook as an 'Autofiction' in the Indian Context (2006-2024)" submitted by Smt Rimi Nandy, who got her name registered on 21st December, 2018 for the award of Ph.D. (Arts) degree of Jadavpur University is absolutely based upon her own work under the supervision of Prof. Nilanjana Gupta, Rtd. and that neither her thesis nor any part of the thesis has been submitted for any degree/ diploma or any other academic award anywhere before.

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"Statement of Originality"

I, Rimi Nandy registered on 21st December, 2018, do hereby declare that this thesis entitled "The Birth And Growth Of A Narrative Space: A Study Of Facebook as an 'Autofiction' in the Indian Context (2006-2024)" contains literature survey and original research work done by the undersigned candidate as part of Doctoral studies.

All information in this thesis have been obtained and presented in accordance with existing academic rules and ethical conduct. I declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referred all materials and results that are not original to this work.

I also declare that I have checked this thesis as per the "Policy on Anti Plagiarism, Jadavpur University, 2019", and the level of similarity as checked by iThenticate software is 9 %.

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List of Publication

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Chapter I

Introduction

Narratives have been a pervasive presence in human society since time immemorial. Throughout history, narratives have served as a means of communication, cultural transmission, and connection among individuals and communities. Starting from the earliest form of cave painting and stories belonging to oral storytelling traditions. People create shared experiences, values, and beliefs by sharing stories, fostering a sense of belonging and understanding. Narrative "unveils fundamental culture-specific opinions about reality and humankind, which are narrativized in stories and novels" (Herman and Vervaeck 1). The field of narratology, built around the analysis of narrative texts and their various aspects, helps in situating narrative study within socio-cultural norms.

The journey of narratology, from its inception to its contemporary manifestations in new media narratives, traces a fascinating evolution in our understanding of storytelling and narrative structures. At its core, narratology delves into the mechanisms through which stories are constructed, conveyed, and interpreted across different media and cultural contexts. The origins of narratology can be traced back to the structuralist movement of the mid-20th century, which sought to analyse narratives as intricate systems of signs and symbols. Structuralists like Vladimir Propp and Claude Lévi-Strauss laid the groundwork for narratological inquiry by identifying recurring patterns and archetypes within folktales and myths, revealing the underlying grammar of storytelling across diverse cultural traditions.

In the decades that followed, narratology expanded its scope to encompass a wide array of literary and linguistic theories. Russian formalists such as Roman Jakobson and Mikhail Bakhtin explored the role of language and discourse in shaping narrative meaning, highlighting the interplay between narrative structures, authorial voice, and reader interpretation. The

structuralist paradigm gradually gave way to poststructuralist critiques, which challenged the notion of a fixed, universal grammar of narrative. Scholars like Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida emphasized the contingency and instability of textual meaning, foregrounding the role of readers actively participating in the construction of narrative discourse.

As the digital revolution unfolded in the late 20th century, narratology found new avenues of exploration in new media narratives. The emergence of hypertext, interactive fiction, and digital storytelling posed unprecedented challenges to traditional notions of linear narrative coherence and authorial control. Scholars like Janet Murray and Espen Aarseth pioneered the study of cybertextuality, examining digital media's unique affordances and constraints for narrative expression. In the age of social media and participatory culture, narratology continues to evolve in response to the proliferation of user-generated content and collaborative storytelling platforms. From fan fiction communities to transmedia franchises, digital narratives blur the boundaries between producers and consumers, inviting audiences to actively engage with and remix existing story worlds.

Narratology, as a field of study, has evolved with the ages. It has various subcategories to explain different types of narrative texts. What is considered to be a narrative also changes with the advent of technological complexities. Transmedia narratology is one such subcategory. The central assertion of this thesis is that with the rapid technological advances and the pervasive influence of social media platforms, narrative spaces have significantly been transformed. As a result, our understanding of personal identity, self-presentation, and narrative construction has undergone a profound transformation. The genre of autobiography is associated with the representation of the self through personal history. Traditionally connected to the category of non-fiction, autobiographies are expected to speak the 'truth'.

However, with the advent of postmodernism and the connected field of 'post-truth', the idea of 'truth' has been restructured. Post-truth[i] refers to the irrelevance of truth due to the large amount of data available. The culture of affect predominant in the contemporary age has resulted in the emotional response to any news has become critical to its reception. The concept of 'post-truth' became popular after Oxford Dictionaries declared it to be the "word of the year" in 2016 (McIntyre 1-2). The irrelevance of truth in the current age has led to blurring the lines between fiction and non-fiction. The thesis hinges upon the changing facets of autobiography studies concerning the concepts of postmodernism, post-truth, and the growing significance of the relevance of autofiction as a primary form of life narrative. Many studies have been undertaken to assess the binary ambiguity of fiction and non-fiction in the context of life narrative in the printed form. However, there appears to be a dearth of work on digital life narratives in line with social media narratives. The emergence of social media has influenced the growth of narratives that are traditionally not accepted as being literary and, hence, kept outside the bounds of literary studies. The thesis will, therefore, also concentrate on the concept of the literary. In the following chapters, we will systematically examine various facets of the hypothesis.

Within the ever-evolving digital landscape, *Facebook*, a social networking platform launched in 2004, has emerged as a global phenomenon, reshaping how individuals worldwide interact with technology to narrate their lives and construct their identities. Yet, the transformative power of *Facebook* extends beyond mere social networking; it has cultivated a unique narrative space where individuals become the authors and protagonists of their own life stories. This phenomenon, which we refer to as 'autofiction' within this study, invites a deep exploration, particularly within India's dynamic and diverse cultural tapestry.

Leading countries based on Facebook audience size as of April 2024 (in millions)

Country	Users
India	378.05
United States	193.8
Indonesia	119.05
Brazil	112.55
Mexico	92.7
Philippines	87.7
Vietnam	75.3
Bangladesh	55.6
Thailand	50.05
Pakistan	47.35
Egypt	46.25
Nigeria	38.65
United Kingdom	37.45
Colombia	37
Turkey	34.25
France	30.8
Argentina	28.75
Italy	27.1
South Africa	26.7
Algeria	24.9

Number of Facebook users in millions

Sources
We Are Social; DataReportal; Facebook; Meltwater
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Additional Information:
Worldwide; DataReportal; Facebook; April 2024; 13 years and older; Based on addressable audience only

Figure 1: Number of Facebook Users Country-wise (Source: Dixon, Stacy Jo. "Facebook Users by Country 2024." Chart. Statista, 29 Apr. 2024, www.statista.com/statistics/268136/top-15-countries-based-on-number-of-facebook-users/)

The birth of *Facebook* in 2004 marked a watershed moment in the evolution of digital communication. Subsequently, its introduction to the Indian subcontinent in 2006 ushered in a new era of connectivity, self-expression, and storytelling. Currently India has a total of 378 million *Facebook* users [Refer to Figure 1]. As evident from figure 1, India has the largest number of users in the world. These statistics shows the significance of the *Facebook* platform in the Indian context. With its widespread adoption, *Facebook* has become an integral part of the lives of millions of Indians, transcending geographical, social, and cultural boundaries. As users navigate this digital realm, they engage in acts of autofiction, consciously or unconsciously crafting narratives about their lives, relationships, aspirations, and identities. These narratives, in turn, are interwoven with the rich tapestry of Indian society, reflecting its traditions, values, and evolving socio-cultural dynamics. The rapid progress of *Facebook* users in India transformed into a popular platform for creating social engagement through personal narratives [Refer to Figure 2].
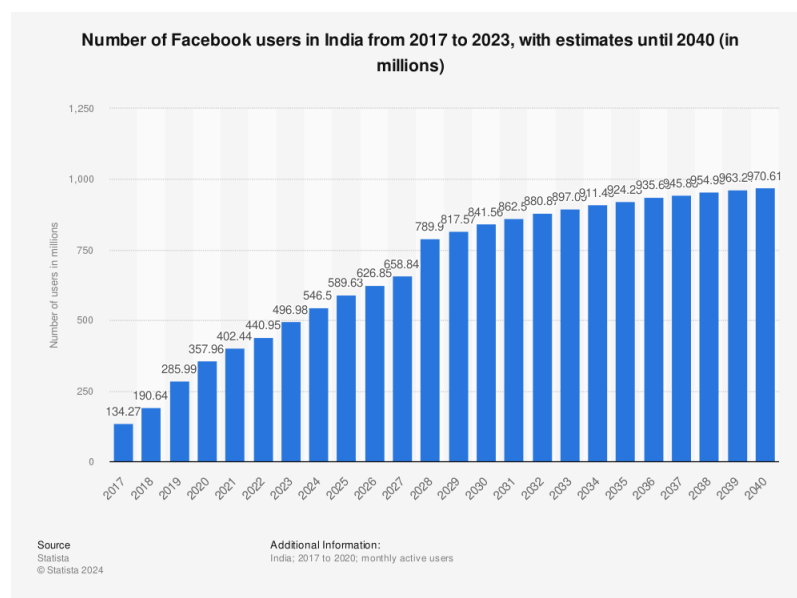
Figure 2: Number of Facebook Users in India (Source: 1. Basuroy Tanushree. "India: Number of facebook users 2040." Chart. Statista, 18 July 2023, https://www.statista.com/statistics/304827/number-of-facebook-users-in-india/.)

Based on the significance, relevance and popularity of the *Facebook* platform in India, this thesis thoroughly investigates the *Facebook* profiles and the engagement it creates on the platform as an autofictional narrative space in the Indian context from 2006-2024. This time period has been selected to provide a boundary and parameters for understanding the narrative practices on *Facebook*. It delves into how individuals employ *Facebook* to construct, reconstruct, and project their autobiographical selves. Through a multidisciplinary approach that draws from fields such as sociology, communication studies, cultural studies, and digital humanities, this research aims to unravel the complex interplay between personal narratives, social media, and the broader landscape of Indian nationhood. In doing so, it seeks to shed light on how *Facebook* has become a stage upon which the autobiographical selves of Indians are performed, negotiated, and, at times, reimagined.

Theoretical Framework

The conceptual underpinnings of this thesis draw from a multidisciplinary framework that combines elements of digital media studies, narrative theory, and autobiography studies. This eclectic approach is designed to illuminate the complex dynamics at play within the realm of *Facebook* platform as an 'autofictional' narrative space in the context of India.

Social and technological changes inspire changes in the production of newer forms of narratives and associated structures. Therefore, the study of *Facebook* profiles as a form of life writing makes narratology relevant as the primary framework for the thesis. At the heart of this research is digital media studies, which examines the intersection of technology, communication, and society. The study of social media platforms, such as *Facebook*, within this framework enables an exploration of how digital technologies shape human interactions, self-presentation, and narrative construction. As a ubiquitous platform, *Facebook* serves as an arena where individuals engage in self-expression and storytelling, making it a pivotal site for examining the evolving nature of online identity. The works of Manuel Castell, Zizi

Papacharissi, Sherry Turkle, Tiziana Terranova and Maurizio Lazzarato will be used to study and evaluate *Facebook* closely as a product of the birth of the information society. I will also be using Hans Robert Jauss' Reception theory to analyse the idea that the false-self being constructed on the *Facebook* platform is in sync with the readers' demands, which in turn is influenced by the socio-economic constructions of society. These constructions are born from ideological constructs that faintly reflect the subject's existence. In the context of autonarrative, the *Facebook* post can be seen as an act of self-storytelling, where the individuals curate and share aspects of their personal lives in relation to broader cultural and historical narratives. The choice of images and captions reflect a self-awareness and an engagement with history and individual identity.

This nuanced approach recognizes the layered experiences and the entwined personal and collective memories that are evoked through such "evocative objects.". In this respect, I will be referring to Louis Althusser and Salvoz Zizek. Althusser's model of Ideological State Apparatus can be applied to the *Facebook* platform to understand it as a framework of modern Ideological State Apparatus. Though the *Facebook* platform does not create ideologies, yet it reflects and reconstructs ideologies through user interactions and posts. This platform acts as a cultural and social Ideological State Apparatus that shapes norms, values, and beliefs. It does this through algorithms that dictate trend visibility, ad placements, and news feed content, ultimately influencing user behaviour and social norms. Althusser's idea that the Ideological State Apparatus' function to reproduce the existing class structure can be directly applied to how *Facebook* trends operate (Palmer 279-282). Those who dominate these trends often do so by leveraging significant social, economic, or cultural capital. This perpetuates a cycle where only certain ideologies are prominently displayed and normalized, marginalizing alternative viewpoints or dissent. *Facebook's* algorithms, which decide what is seen more and thus trend higher, can be viewed through Althusser's lens as tools that reinforce dominant ideological

messages. These algorithms are not neutral but are designed in ways that can prioritize content that keeps users engaged, which often means content that aligns with or reinforces existing dominant ideologies. The act of taking selfies and posting on *Facebook* is one of the most critical examples. In connection with the act of creating identities using the affordances of the *Facebook* platform and its algorithmic structure, the analysis of the digital identity as an integral part of a false self will be studied using the theories of D.W Winnicott, Joan Riviera and Karen Horney.

Narrative theory provides the foundation for understanding the construction of autobiographical narratives on *Facebook*. Drawing from narrative theory, this thesis explores how individuals employ storytelling techniques, character development, and plot arcs to craft their online identities. It also delves into the aspect of 'fictionality' and multimodal autobiographies with reference to Anthony Giddens's discussion of the self and modernity. The concept of 'autofiction,' which entails blending autobiography and fiction, is particularly pertinent here. In modern societies, traditional sources of identity such as community, religion, and social class have diminished in their ability to provide a stable sense of self. Instead, individuals must navigate a multitude of choices and possibilities, often leading to a fragmented and fluid sense of identity (Giddens 5). Giddens posits that the self becomes a "reflexive project," where individuals construct and reconstruct their identities through ongoing self-reflection and narrative formation. It invites a close examination of how users navigate the fine line between self-representation and creative narrative, constructing complex and multifaceted digital personas. Serge Doubrovsky's pioneering work on the genre of autofiction will serve as the narratological framework for the thesis[ii]. Doubrovsky used the term to signify a type of autobiographical novel in which the author and the protagonist share the same name. It is believed that the term was coined as a response to Philippe Lejeune's work *Le pacte autobiographique,* published in the year 1975. In this book Lejeune argues that to write an

autobiography is to enter into a pact with the reader, who is entitled to assume that the 'I' who narrates the autobiography is the same as the 'I' who wrote it, and that the autobiography is therefore both referential and truthful" (Dix 4-5). This thesis contends that the *Facebook* profiles are similar to an autofictional text. The concept of autobiographical pact and autofictional pact is therefore essential for connecting *Facebook* posts as a literary genre to autofiction. The concept of *Facebook* as an 'archiext' and a detailed study of the paratextual elements will also be used to delve deeper into the narratological aspects of the hypothesis.

The literary theoretical aspects of postmodernism and posthumanism will be discussed in relation to structuring the self in an age of diversity. The posthumanist elements found within the corpus of digital life writing will further enable a deeper understanding of a digital self and its interrelation with the material culture of the age. The theories of N Katherine Hayles and Donna Haraway will be studied in conjunction with the works of Christian Fuchs and Manuel Castell. Theories of digital memory studies will also be used to interlink narratology, digital media studies, and autobiography studies. Posthumanism defines the restructuring of the perception of memory and the human form. Memory is essential for gaining an insight into the autobiographical self. The process of remembering is affected by technological affordances. Through various phases of development, the characteristics of memory also experienced a shift. Hence, memory studies are critical to the conceptual framework of the thesis statement. Gerard Genette's concept of transtextuality and its categorisation is fundamental to grasping the principle of 'architextuality' expounded by Gustavo Gomez-Mejia et al.

The final section of the thesis title refers to *Facebook* in the Indian context, which is viewed through the lens of nationalism and nationhood. Benedict Anderson and Joseph Gellner are crucial for comprehending the idea of nationalism and its relation to autobiography. Michael Billig's perspective on 'banal nationalism' is intrinsic to the concept of performing nationality on social media platforms such as *Facebook*.

This discussion of the theoretical framework has laid the conceptual groundwork for the thesis. The interweaving of cross-disciplinary concepts constructs a robust scaffolding for elaborating and critically evaluating the thesis titled *The Birth and Growth of a Narrative Space: A Study of Facebook as an 'Autofiction' in the Indian Context (2006-2024).* The integration of narratology, digital media studies, autobiographical studies, memory studies, postcolonialism and studies of nationalism provides a holistic lens through which we will interpret and analyse the complexities inherent to our research inquiry. This framework serves as a compass and a lens that magnifies the nuances of the subject matter. The empirical investigation is founded on this theoretical framework to contribute new insights and extend the boundaries of knowledge in the field of autobiographical studies and narratology.

Literature Review

This thesis proposes to study the evolving pattern of narratology in the domain of life writing. It will discuss the changes in narratives and their structure under the influence of the internet society and the preference for new media narratives. The research will focus on the narrative style of life writing, specifically on autofiction. With the advent of postmodernism, the idea of a single sovereign self was no longer acceptable. Instead, postmodernism stresses the importance of the diversity of the self. Brian McHale delves into the nature of postmodern fiction in his work, *Postmodern Fiction.* This book is pertinent to this thesis as it sets the base for discussing the multiplicity of selves in autofiction and, as per my hypothesis, on *Facebook.*

A substantial body of work in the purview of social media studies has investigated the changing concepts of space and identity. Various theorists have critically reviewed the impact of the information society on the practices of human interaction and society. The primary one among them is Manuel Castells's *The Networked Society.* In it, Castells explores the multifaceted nature of social structures, communication, and power dynamics in an age defined by digital networks. His analysis of networked communication and the role of information technologies

in shaping social relations has been widely acknowledged as ground breaking. In this context, his conceptualisation of the "network society" has become a cornerstone for scholars exploring the dynamics of modern social systems. One of the central contributions of Castells' work lies in his examination of the interplay between technology and society. He argues that the networked society is not merely a product of technological advancement but a complex interrelation between technological, economic, cultural, and social factors. Jan Van Dijk's *The Network Society* also contributes to understanding new media, network concepts, and associated terms. He enumerates the effect of cyberspace on technology, economics, politics, culture and psychology. His arguments are based around the world's coming together through networks, specifically social networks. Closely connected to the developments in the digital sphere is the idea of the self and selfhood. In his work Digital Identities: Creating and Communicating the Online Self, Rob Cover critically evaluates the changing notions of self and selfhood in digital spaces, particularly social networking sites. Understanding the self's performance on social media platforms is crucial to this thesis' arguments. The digital spaces interact with cultural practices to depict an autofictional self. This form of interaction will be further elaborated upon in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

 As mentioned earlier, the enormous amount of data and 'information' shared through digital networks has culminated in the pervasiveness of post-truth. Coupled with the spread of postmodernism, the concept of the sovereign singular self is replaced by multiplicity. This is evident from the development of autofiction or fictional autobiographies where the element of truth is secondary. The *Handbook of Autobiography/Autofiction,* edited by Martina Wagner-egelhaaf, introduces and details the phenomena of writing fictional autobiography or 'autofiction'. It meticulously organises and thoroughly explores critical themes and theories within the realm of autobiographical writing. Wagner-Egelhaaf and the contributing scholars have crafted a resource that surveys the historical evolution of these genres and interrogates

their contemporary relevance and complexities. The handbook serves as a critical juncture for scholars, researchers, and students seeking to navigate the blurred boundaries between autobiography and autofiction. An in-depth analysis of the genre of autofiction provides a theoretical background to Serge Doubrovsky's notion of autofiction and its interconnectedness to the postmodern space.

Stories help individuals construct and express their sense of self by providing a framework to understand and make sense of their experiences. Personal narratives allow individuals to reflect on their lives, create meaning, and share their journey with others. Moreover, collective narratives, such as myths, legends, and historical accounts, shape the identity of communities, nations, and cultures. They provide a shared understanding of history, values, and aspirations, promoting a sense of unity and cohesion. Throughout human history, storytelling has acquired various forms. From oral literature to multimedia narratives, storytelling has been infused with evolving features along with time.

The onset of the digital landscape and online connectivity has shaped the current practices of life narrative. The element of interactivity provided through social media platforms has impacted how people express their identity. The literature on digital self-presentation and social media has extensively explored various theories and works of research based on constructing a digital self. The influence of society and its many aspects, namely gender, race, culture, and customs, on creating a parallel space in the digitally networked world has also been delved into in earlier works. Peter Joseph Gloviczki's *Mediated Narration in the Digital Age* engages with the impact of the digital space in creating the current trends of mediated narration. This autoethnographic text builds on the aspect of autobiography as an act of storying the self. He emphasises how the digital medium, characterised by multimodality, determines how and what is written about the self. He further explains how the existing power dynamics of the society

are transferred onto the mediated narration as well. This book helps build the hypothesis by setting the stage for connecting *Facebook* to the autobiographical genre of autofiction.

Marlene Kadar, in her work *Essays on Life Writing: From Genre to Critical Practice,* explores the umbrella term life writing, referring to different forms of autobiographical writings, namely, journals, memoirs, and autobiographies. *Writing the Self: Essays on Autobiography and Autofiction* by Shands W Kerstin et al. provides a detailed discussion of the contemporary literary culture of autobiography and autofiction. One of the central arguments presented in the book is the coming together of the modes of writing, Autobiography and Fiction. This is a collection of essays deciphering different aspects of autobiography and how fiction is woven with facts to create a narrative that gives a newer form of expressing the narrative of life. In the context of the broader literature on autofiction, *The Autofictional: Approaches, Affordances, Forms,* edited by Alexandra Effe and Hannie Lawlor, contributes a unique perspective on the various aspects of the literary genre of autofiction. The book helps in understanding the relation between the self and fiction. In *Emerging Vectors of Narratology,* Per Krogh Hansen, John Pier, Phillippe Roussin, and Wolf Schmid explore the ever-expanding field of narratology.

With the rising complexities of life and lifestyle, newer forms of narrative are becoming very common. The study of the latest developments in this field is crucial to understanding narratives of life writing. Concepts like implied author and transmedial narratives are studied in relation to their social and historical context. Studies conducted in Western contexts have provided valuable insights into the interrelation between narrative structures, new media and the construction of self through an evolved pattern of life writing. Christian Fuchs, in his books, dwells on locating social media features within the paradigms of digital culture. In his book *Social Media: a Critical Introduction*, Fuchs illustrates the various aspects of social media platforms and the culture built around digital networks. From *Facebook* to Blogs, From Social Revolution to Surveillance, the book discusses concepts such as digital labour and participatory

culture. It gives a comprehensive understanding of the sphere of social media. He also discusses the upcoming and contemporary sphere of Information capitalism in his book *Critique, Social Media and the Information Society*. It studies the various aspects of the networked space. The book contains critical essays on the concepts of labour in the Digital Age, Marxism in the Digital Age, Social Media Ethics and the idea of time in cyberspace. The significance of Fuchs' contribution to social media studies can be witnessed in one of his seminal works, *Social Media: A Critical Introduction*. This book holds a significant place within the larger body of research on social media, complementing and extending the findings of other scholars.

In another of his books, *Digital Labour and Karl Marx*, Fuchs discusses the changing form of labour in the digital age. He traces the movement from consumers to prosumers. He also discusses labour exploitation concerning mineral extraction and unpaid labour on social media platforms. Another critical work in this field is Tiziana Terranova's *Network Culture: Politics for the Information Age.* This book delves into the various aspects of the culture built around a networked society. The author has divided the book into five sections, each of which discusses the concepts of information culture, aspects of the network, Free labour, and Control and Biopower, respectively. Together, all five sections give a complete insight into the nature of network culture.

Scholars have delved into how individuals utilise social media platforms for autobiographical storytelling. Ruth E. Page's *Stories and Social Media* dwells on their affordances and the resulting effects on narrative structuring and perception. Another essential work on social media and its narratological aspects is *Quantified Storytelling: A Narrative Analysis of Metrics on Social Media,* edited by Alex Georgakopoulou, Stefan Iversen and Carsten Stage. This book inspects the role of quantifying data on narrative elements in social media. It also provides theoretical frameworks and approaches of narrative theory, data analysis methodologies, and

communication theories. The focal point of this work is to discuss how metrics, analytics, and data are used to measure, evaluate, and shape narratives on social media.

The study involves exploring the features of *Facebook* and examining how Indian users employ this platform to blur the lines between fact and fiction, self and society, and tradition and innovation. Through a nuanced analysis of user-generated content, profiles, status updates, photographs, and interactions, we aim to decipher the intricate narratives that have emerged in this digital realm. This research seeks to contribute not only to our understanding of the evolving relationship between technology, personal identity, and narrative but also to the broader discourse on the role of digital platforms in shaping contemporary Indian society.

In the subsequent sections, the researcher will critically evaluate the current autobiographical practices compared to the traditional form. This evaluation will then be connected to social changes and technological affordances. The framework of *Facebook* will be evaluated through textual analysis of *Facebook* posts and exchanges to enunciate the representation of selfhood, which is both a creation and a reflection of the multifaceted narratives woven by individuals within the Indian context. This study aims to provide insights into the birth and growth of this narrative space, unravelling the complex ways *Facebook* serves as an autofictional canvas for Indians to paint their stories, aspirations, and identities in a digital age marked by connectivity and self-expression. *Facebook* functions as a medium for self-representation. The information a user shares while registering on *Facebook* interacts with the legality of a digital identity while breaking the bounds of legal expectations. Such interactions are deeply rooted in the cultural productions of a particular place. India, with its multicultural population and belief systems, enables the creation of several different forms of identity that are mercurial in nature. In the early 2010s, *Facebook* gained widespread popularity in India, providing a virtual space for users to connect, communicate, and share content. The platform's arrival coincided with a significant increase in internet penetration, primarily through mobile devices. Understanding

the cultural context is crucial, as *Facebook* has become a digital extension of existing social practices, such as storytelling and sharing experiences within close-knit communities. The existing storytelling traditions combine with the digital space to create a narrative that is coloured by the nuances of India's socio-cultural, political and economic milieu. *Facebook* disrupted traditional modes of communication, introducing a dynamic where individuals could share personal narratives beyond their immediate physical circles. This shift marked the beginning of a new era in which users began to weave intricate digital narratives about their lives, aspirations, and cultural affiliations. *Facebook's* multimodality ensures self-representation through audio-visual and verbal elements by sharing carefully curated 'posts'.

The platform's reach facilitated connections across geographical distances, enabling individuals to share their stories with a broader audience. This interconnectedness resulted in the creation of a digital diaspora where narratives transcended regional boundaries, reflecting the diverse cultural tapestry of India, which in turn creates an idea of "Indianness" that is abstract and problematic. Whether the notion of "Indianness" is to be restricted to geographical boundaries or also include the Indian diasporas as well becomes highly debatable. While users may seek to celebrate and affirm their cultural heritage, the digital realm also amplifies tensions and debates surrounding authenticity, representation, and appropriation. Discussions about cultural authenticity, diasporic experiences, and the politics of representation often surface in online interactions, challenging simplistic narratives of identity and belonging.

Moreover, the algorithmic curation of content on *Facebook* shapes the representation of Indianness, reinforcing certain stereotypes and erasing diverse experiences and perspectives. As users navigate through personalized newsfeeds and targeted advertisements, they are exposed to curated narratives of Indianness that may privilege certain voices and marginalize others, perpetuating hegemonic discourses of identity and culture. These encounters are acutely reflected in the 'digital diasporas' enacted through content creation and consumption on social

media platforms. Though there exist multiple diasporic experiences across the world, specific nationalistic markers become more prevalent. The posts depicting the annual celebration of Indian Independence Day in different parts of the world are one such marker. The visual and verbal texts in the posts showcase nostalgic memories connecting national identities of the past to the present diasporic experiences. This aspect will be discussed critically in Chapter 6.

The thesis will also discuss the significance of nationhood and nationalism in the perception of selfhood. Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* is a seminal text in the field of nationalism studies. In this book, Anderson enumerates on the idea of nation and nationalism. He argues that nations are socially constructed entities based on the collective imagination of some form of commonality binding the citizens together. Anderson expounds on how print capitalism and the spread of the vernacular language induced the birth of nationalism, which in turn created nations. This book, therefore, provides the theoretical parameters for connecting the narrative instances of *Facebook* to the concepts of selfhood and nationhood. As mentioned earlier, the thesis will focus on autofiction and its transformation in the digital space with respect to *Facebook* use in India. Reicher and Hopkins' work *Self and Nation: Categorisation, Contestation and Mobilisation* discusses various aspects of nation and nationalism pertaining to psychology, history and political facets. The multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach to the concept of nation and nationalism makes this book crucial for the argument of this thesis.

Tim Ederson's *National Identity, Popular Culture, and Everyday Life* considers the idea of national identity as a component of performance. The research also intends to study the nuances of the virtual communities vis-à-vis physical communities. Understanding the architecture of *Facebook* and categorising it in relation to the structure and characteristics of an autofiction is the core idea presented in this thesis. *A South Asian Nationalism Reader,* edited by Sayantan Dasgupta, is a collection of seminal essays on nationalism and a commentary on individual essays. Prominent among them are Ernest Gellner's "What is a Nation", Benedict Anderson's

"Cultural Roots", Partha Chatterjee's "Whose Imagined Community?" and Rabindranath Tagore's "Nationalism in India". These essays play a pivotal role in the context of this thesis. Rohit Chopra's *Technology and Nationalism in India: Cultural Negotiations from Colonialism to Cyberspace* provides an understanding of the Indian digital milieu, offering valuable insights into the intersections of technology, personal identity, and narrative in a rapidly evolving socio-cultural landscape. Tracing the evolution of technological spaces in India from the colonial period to the age of information, the book captures the dynamic idea of nationalism in the Indian context.

This section provides an overview of the existing body of literature on autobiography studies, autofiction, narratology and nation and nationalism. The extant literature on life writing form autofiction deals with traditional textual autofiction. Digital life writing has also been illustrated in relation to personal weblogs, websites and social media platforms. However, the theoretical paradigm of autofiction has not been associated with such forms of digital life writing. Serge Doubrovsky's *Fils* first ventures into contemplating a newer genre of autobiographical writings. Situated within the canon of French Literature, Autofiction slowly gained prominence and furthered its influence on global literary traditions. Also, *Facebook* and its role in autobiographical self-expression have primarily centred on Western contexts, with limited attention directed toward the unique dynamics and cultural nuances within the Indian context. While studies have explored the concept of 'autofiction' on various social media platforms, a significant research gap remains in comprehensively examining how *Facebook*, specifically in the Indian context from 2006 onwards, serves as an autofictional narrative space. This gap is particularly salient in light of India's diverse sociocultural landscape, marked by a rich tapestry of traditions, values, and evolving digital behaviours, all of which intersect in the realm of online self-presentation and narrative construction. Since no literature directly deals with the study of *Facebook* as an autofiction, the research has been approached in association

with various aspects of autobiography studies. In connection with this study, there is a need for the core ideas of narratology, nation and nationalism to be contemplated as elements of digital autofiction and the construction of the narrative self. The following section enumerates the methodology used for the present research, interconnected with the available corpus of literature on the concepts discussed so far.

Methodology:

This section outlines the research approach, data collection methods, and analytical framework employed in the investigation of *Facebook* as an autofictional narrative space in the Indian context from 2006-2024. The research design for this study adopts a mixed-method approach that integrates qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted phenomenon under examination. However, the research focused more on the qualitative aspects than the quantitative aspects. The quantitative analysis is used to enhance the understanding of the various narrative practices on the *Facebook* platform. This methodological approach is chosen to capture the richness of individual narratives while also allowing for broader statistical insights. The more comprehensive framework of the thesis follows the structure of narrative research coupled with an auto-narrative approach that centres around the researcher's *Facebook* profile. Astrid Ensslin and Samya Brata Roy propose a postcomparative approach to engage with electronic literatures. To achieve such a method, Roy uses auto-narrated case studies to address the need for a methodology to study non-traditional literary practices. According to Ensslin and Roy, "Acts of historicising are always perspectival. Hence, they cannot and should not claim to be definitive and instead need to frame their positionality in the broader discourse as deliberately incomplete – not in the sense of rigour but in terms of points of view. All forms of identity and intersectional questions, including academic backgrounds and epistemic and methodological preferences, factor into our lived experiences and determine how we construct the field around us. This epistemic humility

underscores the following review and autonarrative case study"(Ensslin and Roy). This statement depicts the importance of a subjective approach in the act of historicization.

Exploring and historicizing within the realm of *Facebook* as autofiction means analyzing the personal stories shared on social media platforms to grasp how individuals shape their identities and personal histories in the era of digital communication and social media. This process reflects on the subjective nature of personal and collective memory, showcasing how *Facebook* can serve as a platform for creating and sharing autobiographical stories that blur the lines between fact and fiction. Through these digital narratives, users engage in a form of self-historicization, documenting their experiences and viewpoints in ways that highlight the fluidity of identity and memory in online spaces. By placing the researcher's profile at the centre of the study, the study can speak of the narratological practices acted out on the *Facebook* platform. User engagement and interaction within my network of "Friends" provide a view of the practices in a given sociological and academic space. The thesis proposes to study *Facebook* as an Autofiction. For this purpose, a single existing methodology will not suffice. Hence, as mentioned earlier, a mixed methodology approach is being undertaken to provide an in-depth analysis of *Facebook* using quantitative and qualitative data. Since the autobiographical elements and their interaction with narrative elements are at the crux of the thesis, incorporating a self-reflexive auto-narrative component will enable a critical view of the narrative process of constructing the self on *Facebook*.

The limitations of the research methods employed in this thesis are critical for indicating the position of the data. The data collected through various surveys are non-representative. The role of the quantitative data is not to represent a percentage of the available demographic. Instead, it provides valuable insight into *Facebook's* standard narrative practices. The privacy constraints imposed on social media platforms like *Facebook* make it difficult to extract any form of data directly from user profiles. In order to work around this constraint, the researcher

has chosen to refer to selected posts focusing on the form rather than analysing representative data from all profiles within the researcher's network. The collected data is mainly centred around the researcher's profile and network. The study also incorporates surveys conducted through snowball sampling. The data is also approached through passive analysis of various posts on *Facebook* profiles. *Facebook* is a data-rich environment running on user-generated content. The primary focus of this thesis is the pattern of the content rather than the content itself. In the context of this study, the researcher's personal Facebook profile, henceforth referred to as the 'researcher's profile,' is utilised as a data source. The rationale for employing the researcher's profile as a primary data source is rooted in its accessibility, which enables a first-hand exploration of the autobiographical narratives constructed on *Facebook* within the Indian context.

The researcher's interactions with other users become a microcosm of the larger *Facebook* environment, allowing for the study of social relationships and community dynamics within narrative practices. This approach aligns with the broader research objective of examining how individuals employ *Facebook* for autofictional storytelling through the analysis of the architectural aspects of a *Facebook* profile. Using the researcher's profile serves as a methodological choice to gain insights into the multifaceted nature of *Facebook* as an autofictional narrative space while ensuring adherence to ethical considerations. Employing autonarrative elements in tandem with auto-netnography, the data from the researcher's profile provides a rich, personal account of the cultural practices and storytelling methods on *Facebook*. It allows the researcher to reflect on their own narrative practices as data points. It allows for the systematic analysis of publicly accessible content and interactions without infringing upon the privacy of other users or the need for consent beyond the researcher's own account. In cases where posts from other users are used, consent has been sought for the express purpose of the research. It is important to note that the researcher's profile will be employed

exclusively for data collection and analysis, and no personally identifiable information of other users will be disclosed. All data collected from the researcher's profile will be anonymised, and pseudonyms will be used, except in cases where the user has requested to be cited by name when citing or quoting specific content to protect the privacy of individuals represented within the data. The research approach involves passive analysis of *Facebook* profiles through snowball sampling, which is a standard method in social media research. Snowball sampling allows researchers to identify and analyse relevant content by following links and connections between users and their content. The study's primary focus is on content patterns rather than the content itself. This approach reflects a broader interest in understanding how users construct narratives and engage in self-presentation on social media platforms, which aligns with the objectives of many studies in the field. The researcher's personal *Facebook* profile is utilized as a data source due to its accessibility, enabling first-hand exploration of autobiographical narratives within the Indian context. This approach allows the researcher to examine content and interactions without infringing upon the privacy of other users or requiring additional consent.

The autoethnographic approach is coupled with a quantitative analysis of the trends and practices based around the writing of the self on *Facebook*. For this purpose, three different questionnaires were prepared and shared among acquaintances in three different temporal spaces. The "Friends" in my network further shared the form among their acquaintances, using a snowball sampling method.

The first questionnaire was prepared and circulated on the 21st of November, 2015 and was active till the 18th of November, 2015. This questionnaire was targeted to collect data related to Digital Confession Cultures on *Facebook* in India. The questions sought to qualitatively and analyse the popular trend of anonymously posting on *Facebook* confession pages in India. This questionnaire received only thirty-six responses by employing the snowball sampling method.

Though it provided a specific understanding of the trend, it could not be considered to be representative data for a more in-depth analysis. The questions included are as follows:

1. What is your gender

   Male/Female/Others

2. Age

   <15/16-25/25-40/40 above

3. Where did you hear about confession pages?

4. How often do you read the confession page?

5. Why do you read the confessions?

The results of the survey will be referred to in the following chapters.

A second survey was conducted on the 25th of November, 2024, to analyse the political discussions on *Facebook* during the Covid-19 period. This survey elicited 110 responses over a period of one month using the snowball sampling method. The questions included are as follows:

1. Email Address

2. Gender

   Male/Female/Others

3. Age

4. Education Qualification

   Graduate/Postgraduate/Post Doctorate/Others

5. Do you engage in Political discussion on *Facebook*?

   Yes/No

6. Do you think one should share political content on *Facebook*?

   Yes/No

7. How has your pattern of using *Facebook* changed in the last 1 year?

   Increased the number of hours spent on Facebook/ Shared more content about Covid-19/ Shared more personal content/ Engaged in more political discussion in comparison to Pre-Covid period/ Using *Facebook* to stay connected with friends and family during lock down

8. Do you follow any political parties/politician's *Facebook* profile?

   Yes/No

9. Do you think that *Facebook* is an important platform for citizens engagement with public issues?

   Yes/No

10. I generally post contents criticizing the Indian government's role in dealing with the Covid-19 crisis

    Linear Scale 1-5 (1-Never: 5-Very Often)

11. I generally post contents supporting the Indian government's role in dealing with the Covid-19 crisis

    Linear Scale 1-5 (1-Never: 5-Very Often)

12. What are your views about the role of *Facebook* as a political influencer?

    Linear Scale 1-5 (1-Never: 5-Very Often)

The results of this survey will be discussed in the following chapters.

A final study was conducted from the 14th of March,2024, to the 31st of March,2024. This survey received a total of 143 responses. The questionnaire is structured into four distinct segments: demographic data, data pertaining to *Facebook* usage, narrative perception, and

socio-cultural influence. The demographic data along with the data related to *Facebook* usage, narrative perception and socio-cultural influence, is used to quantify the life writing practices in the digital space through the interaction between the social media affordances like *Facebook* and the ethnographic characteristics of the online environment. Refer to the Appendix section to see the Google form questionnaire shared among various users through the researcher's social media network. The survey findings will be examined in the subsequent chapters

The questionnaire is designed to gather specific information directly related to the patterns of narrative construction on *Facebook*. It effectively targets key aspects of *Facebook* usage, narrative presentation, audience consideration, and socio-cultural influences, which are integral to understanding autofiction on the platform. The questions were framed after closely studying multiple profiles to list the standard practices. The mix of multiple-choice and open-ended questions allows for both quantitative analysis of user behaviour patterns and qualitative insights into the nuances of narrative construction, aligning with the ethnographic narrative approach that values storytelling and cultural context. Questions about societal norms and the potential differences in narrative practices among users from different parts of India or the Indian diaspora highlight the ethnographic interest in cultural nuances and variations.

By inquiring about the impact of societal norms and expectations, the questionnaire implicitly acknowledges the theoretical framework suggesting that social media narratives are influenced by and reflective of broader cultural dynamics, a key consideration in ethnographic research. This method posits that reality is shaped through social exchanges and storytelling. The questionnaire probes how users construct their realities on *Facebook*, fitting with the constructivist nature of narrative research which posits that individuals create meanings through their stories. This perspective emphasizes that individuals act based on the meanings things have for them, which are derived from social interaction. The research echoes this theoretical approach by asking users how they perceive and interact with narratives on

Facebook, assessing the meanings and actions associated with narrative practices. The results of the surveys can be found in the appendices. Though the results of all three surveys were not analysed within this thesis, yet they played a significant role in informing the researcher's motivation and perception of the *Facebook* platform as a narrative space connected to autofictional tradition.

One key aspect of this approach is the consideration of ethical implications. Using the researcher's profile as a data source is presented as a methodological choice that ensures adherence to ethical considerations. This choice enables the systematic analysis of publicly accessible content and interactions without infringing upon the privacy of other users. The statement emphasizes that this approach eliminates the need for consent beyond the researcher's account. This methodological approach, however, is not without its demerits. The use of the researcher's profile may not be representative of the broader population using *Facebook* in the Indian context. Individual profiles can vary significantly, and relying solely on the researcher's profile might limit the generalizability of findings. The researcher's own experiences, preferences, and network connections may introduce bias into the analysis. However, as discussed previously, a postcomparative approach focusing on the subjective nature of historicization is essential to narrative studies. Ensslin and Roy emphasize on the importance of acknowledging the subjective nature of historicizing and the influence of one's identity, background, and methodological preferences on their perspective. It advocates epistemic humility, recognizing that personal experiences and viewpoints inherently shape any review or narrative and should thus be considered one of many possible perspectives rather than a definitive account. This approach underlines the value of diversity in academic discourse and the construction of knowledge (Ensslin and Roy 145-171).

Facebook policies make data collection for research extremely difficult. Privacy policies influence the manner in which the researcher interacts with the platform for data collection.

Since the maximum data shared on *Facebook* is available only in the personal settings of the profile, it becomes essential to collect data from within the network of "Friends". This approach enables the study of methodological bias as a critical component of researching social media content on platforms like *Facebook*. The utilisation of the researcher's profile, although a methodological choice, does not entail any inherent bias or influence on the findings of this study. A subjective analysis is required to understand the architecture and textuality of the *Facebook* platform as an autofiction. The quantitative data collected will be used to enhance the qualitative analysis of the form and structure in association with selected content directly quoted from the profile pages. For the remaining study, the researcher uses a passive analysis of the content to understand user behaviours and the thematic agenda of the posts objectively and rigorously, adhering to established research methods and ethical guidelines. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, the content itself is secondary to understanding the pattern of content in relation to the architectural features of *Facebook*, such as the profile photo, cover photo, timeline, memories and the options for displaying pictures.

This methodological approach aligns with similar studies within the field of social media research, where researchers have employed their personal profiles to access publicly available data on social networking platforms. It offers a unique vantage point for the investigation while upholding the ethical principles of informed consent and privacy protection. Furthermore, the researcher's profile represents a single data source, including content analysis, surveys, and interviews, which contribute to a comprehensive understanding of *Facebook* as an autofictional narrative space within the Indian context. Alexander Georgakopoulou in his study of *Small Stories* uses his personal profile for analysis. Daniel Miller's work *Tales From Facebook,* offers an ethnographic study of *Facebook* users in Trinidad. Referring to various profiles, Miller tries to depict unique *Facebook* trends and cultures followed in Trinidad. The current thesis aims to provide a literary understanding of *Facebook* as an autofictional text within the Indian context.

Tracing the autobiographical traditions of India back to the colonial period enables the study of the various nuances of the term "Indian". Empirical examples from *Facebook* profiles will be used to substantiate and support the research hypothesis. The study will focus on the use of *Facebook* in India. The period to be studied in the thesis will be from 2006 onwards as *Facebook* was launched in India in 2006. The researcher's positionality further informs the trends within her network space. This mode of digital ethnographic study makes narrative analysis more informed and less cumbersome. The practice of auto-netnography extends the ethnographic study in the digital realm. Auto-netnography, a blend of autobiography and ethnography, adapted for the digital realm, will serve as a critical tool for exploring how *Facebook* as a platform influences the creation and reception of digital autofiction. This method extends traditional ethnographic techniques to study the cultures and subcultures that emerge within online spaces. It involves immersive participation and observation within digital communities, analysis of online interactions, and a reflexive consideration of the researcher's role. The emphasis on "imagined records" and the narrative function of archives in autofiction (Cho) aligns with auto-netnography's focus on the constructed nature of digital identities and narratives.

The thesis chapterisation includes seven chapters to elucidate the significance of technological advancements in narrative structures, forms of storytelling and the culture of digital memory.

Chapter 1 presents the subject of the thesis along with its associated objectives. It provides an overview of the structure of the thesis. A brief explication of the theoretical paradigm and a detailed literature review set the thesis's premise and help identify the research gap. This highlights the significance of studying *Facebook* as an autofictional narrative space in the Indian context. The introduction also discusses the structure of the thesis and the chapterization to provide an overview of the research.

Chapter 2, Consumer Culture and Narrativizing Computer-Mediated Communication sets the stage by exploring the role of consumer culture in shaping online narratives. Analysing the transformation of capitalism in the 20th century initiates the context for the growth of the network society and its influence on economic behaviour. The chapter offers a detailed examination of how social interactions relate to the sharing of information. It also lays the groundwork for locating social media within the sphere of digital narratives. A discussion of the phenomena of narrative turn, branching study of narrative beyond the narrow field of literary studies only helps build the research's central hypothesis.

Chapter 3, Autobiography to Autofiction: A Posthuman Understanding of Life Writing, plays a pivotal role in understanding the progress of life narratives from autobiography to autofiction. It introduces the literary genre of autobiography and explains the essential features of an autobiography. The chapter also compares the Western perception of autobiography with that of its Eastern counterpart. It makes a comparative study between autobiography and autofiction. The chapter focuses on defining the fictional aspects of life narrative and how postmodernism and posthumanism have reconstructed the idea of the one true sovereign self. For this purpose, the chapter explores key concepts and theories related to autofiction and life writing. The chapter essentially investigates the transition from traditional autobiography to digital autofiction.

Chapter 4, Digital Memory, Narrativity, and Interactivity, provides a critical perspective on the impact of the digital medium on the construction and perception of memory in shaping online narratives. It follows a comparative approach to assess the changing structure of life narrative through the recourse to digital devices for capturing and creating memories. This helps in gaining an insight into the functioning of narrativity in the digital realm. The interactive nature of storytelling on *Facebook* is studied in the context of multimodal autobiographies.

Chapter 5, Genre, Textuality, and *Facebook* Narrative, extends the overarching theme of self and narrativity in connection to the changing face of autobiography in cyberspace. This chapter explores the various genres and textuality found in *Facebook* narratives. A critical function of this chapter is to delve deeper into the architecture of *Facebook* and its narrative affordances. This enhances understanding user behaviour and the subsequent construction of online identities.

Chapter 6, *Facebook* in the "Indian" Context, aims to further elaborate on the research question. The discussions in this chapter are dedicated to substantiating our hypothesis through empirical data and analysis of *Facebook*. Focusing on the unique cultural and social factors that influence *Facebook* narratives, this chapter aims to study *Facebook* posts through the filter of a national identity. The concepts of selfhood, nationalism and nationhood are critically discussed to prove the central hypothesis of this chapter. The categorisation of *Facebook* as an autofiction can be said to be connected to the social construction of selfhood and nationhood. The abstract idea of 'nation' blurs the space between fiction and non-fiction. In turn, the identity of the self, connected to abstractions becomes akin to fiction due to its subjective quality. The data referred to in the chapter indicates the performative element and its connection to socio-cultural constructs.

Chapter 7 concentrates on the conclusions of the research. It summarises the essential findings and insights from the preceding chapters and reflects on the implications of studying *Facebook* as an autofictional narrative space. The chapter also explores the problems encounter while undertaking the current research and identifies fields for further investigation. In conclusion, the thesis consolidates the research contributions and underscores their significance in deepening our understanding of the interplay between digital technology, narrative, and culture.

Conclusion

This chapter provides a roadmap for introducing the study's overarching theme and context, setting the stage for an in-depth exploration. It contextualizes the research within the broader landscape of narratology and autobiography studies. An examination of the historical, theoretical and practical aspects of the research topic, 'The Birth and Growth of a Narrative Space: A Study of *Facebook* as an 'Autofiction' in the Indian Context (2006 onwards)', the introductory chapter aims to illuminate the broader framework within which the research work operates. By framing the research questions and presenting the objectives, this chapter outlines the specific goals the thesis aims to achieve. This clarity is vital, as it guides the research efforts and elaborates the purpose and direction of the thesis. The chapter tries to locate the relevance of the thesis in relation to the existing body of work in the field of new media studies. The introduction discusses how the work contributes to this dialogue to underscore its significance. The thesis addresses the gaps in the corpus of the existing studies. It emphasises the novel insights and advancements that the study proposes to bring to the field of new media studies and autobiographical practices. The following chapters will elaborate on the concepts introduced in this chapter. A thorough evaluation of the individual ideas and the interconnections between these concepts will be undertaken to prove the hypothesis.

Notes:

[i] Donald Trump's claims during election rallies and later proclamations of gaining the largest election victories after Ronald Regan, and having the largest supporters at his rallies at several occasions, being readily believed by his supporters without questioning the validity of such proclamations, is an example of the irrelevance of truth or fact checking.

[ii] The French author Serge Doubrovsky coined the term 'autofiction'. He used the term on the back cover of his novel *Fils* published in 1977.

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Chapter 2

Consumer Culture and Narrativizing Computer-Mediated

Communication

"Information exists. It does not need to be perceived to exist. It does not need to be understood to exist. It requires no intelligence to interpret it. It does not have to have meaning to exist. It exists" (Stonier 21).

Introduction

Modernity, in the words of Giddens, is most often believed to be a result of capitalism. With the transformation of the agrarian society into an industrial society, material goods and labour are commodified. Capitalism and consumerism work together to create a modern society. Understanding the development of consumerism as a part of culture is essential in the field of media studies. Regarding the commodification of culture, Theodor Adorno's *Culture Industry* is considered a seminal text. In his work, Adorno explains how capitalism worked towards integrating culture into the market space. He refers to how jazz music, as a cultural trope, is used as a commodity to evoke a sense of pleasure. According to him, the quality of music becomes secondary to the pleasure gained from the economic status, which enables the consumer to enjoy different forms of music. Adorno focuses on the commercialisation of jazz music.

A distinction between high and low cultures is created to form different types of consumers. He also discusses the standardisation of industry, leading to diminishing serious cultural value. Closely linked to this is the construction of mass culture and its role in creating a space for consumer culture. Mass culture, however, is not created by the masses. Instead, it is manipulated by a select few. The market economy creates demand for cultural goods. The value

of the product lies in its symbolic content. It is essential to study contemporary ideas of consumerism through the lens of digital capitalism. Historically rooted in industrialization and the rise of modern nation-states, capitalism fostered the growth of market economies, financial institutions, and labour relations based on wage labour and capital accumulation. Across the 19th and 20th centuries, capitalism witnessed a series of transformations, marked by phases of expansion, moments of crisis, and instances of regulatory intervention. These shifts played pivotal roles in moulding the fabric of contemporary society and economy, shaping the way we interact with markets, finance, and work.

The concept of consumerism transforms over time. A major factor responsible for the transformation of the nature of the product in the current period, is the introduction of computer technology and cyberspace. According to Manuel Castell, this has given rise to a 'network society'. The primary product of the 'network society' is information. Unlike, Marx, Castell explores the transformation of capitalism in the 20th century, emphasizing the role of information and communication technologies in reshaping economic activities. He highlights the significance of informational capital and the knowledge economy in the network society. However, Castell talks about network society long before the advent of social media. Platform economies function as the most essential characteristic of digital capitalism. Platforms such as *Facebook* provide vast amounts of data on user behaviour, interests, preferences and forms of interactions. The use of traditional critical theory in understanding social media texts from the aspect of classical narratology provides an incomplete analysis. The new media practices, though rooted in traditional media, are markedly different. The various nuances of new media narratives can be best analysed using contemporary theories based on consumerism in the digital age. New media platforms have transformed the ideas usually associated with the terms consumerism, labour, leisure and interaction. How products are consumed on social media

platforms is very different from the consumer practices prevalent in the pre-digital era. In fact, what the word product denotes has also been changed.

The Social Media platform *Facebook* is historically based on different forms of personal narratives. The term *Facebook* is based on 'facebooks' traditionally used in educational institutions in the forms of yearbooks with personal information of fellow students and faculty/non-faculty members. It acts like a directory of information. The term can be further broken down to the individual terms 'book' and 'face'. "Face" comes from the Latin "facies," meaning appearance or form, and entered English through Old French in the 13th century. "Book," from the Old English "bōc," has Germanic origins and has been used since the 9th century to refer to a written or printed work. ("facebook")[i]. The first version of the platform was named "Facesmash", later renamed to "The *Facebook*" which was circulated among the students of Harvard University. The use of the term *Facebook* therefore connects to the idea of directory of information but in the digital space. It therefore becomes a 'book' or 'written' work documenting personal narratives. The choice of the name "Facebook" reflects its function as a digital repository of personal stories, images, and interactions. It signifies a space where users craft and present their identities, blending the historical connotations of "face" as an aspect of identity and "book" as a medium of documentation. This etymological foundation underscores *Facebook's* role in modern autofiction, where users continually write and rewrite their life stories in a public, interactive format (Sajith)[ii]. The platform's ability to gather vast amounts of personal data enables targeted advertising, making it a powerful marketing tool. Users' personal narratives, interactions, and preferences are leveraged to create tailored advertisements, turning the digital yearbook into a marketplace. This dual function—serving both as a space for self-expression and a commercial platform—illustrates how the historical roots of "face" and "book" have evolved to meet the demands of contemporary digital and economic landscapes.

The market functions in the digital age through the exchange of information. The changes brought about by computer technology result in a new form of sociality, which Pramod K Nayar defines as 'network sociality' (Nayar 118). He also refers to it as 'techno-sociality', which will be discussed later in this chapter. The networks formed are based on personal information available in cyberspace. Personal information available in the form of numerous amounts of data has become an integral part of a newer form of self-narrative. Therefore, information has become a valuable commodity in the present age. The market economy is no longer restricted to concrete products alone. It also includes services and information. This in turn changes the concept of commodity. A commodity no longer refers to a finished product, instead it represents an ongoing process. The internet has created 'free labour' and non-material products. Closely associated with the same is the idea of immaterial labour. The introduction of computer technology has affected the divide between leisure and labour (Spracklen 94-112). In the era preceding the use of computers as an inseparable tool of the workforce, the office and the house were characterised by labour and leisure, respectively. This divide, however, is eradicated with laptops enabling workers to carry work home. The concept of the office is no longer restricted to the four walls of an office building. Instead, it has become a mobile space that does not have a specific location.

Similarly, accessing various social media platforms to create massive amounts of data contributes to manufacturing consumable information. The social media platforms function with the help of the user generated content. The amount of time and effort spent by the user while consuming the data on these platforms further creates more commodities. The distinction between a producer and consumer has been removed and, in its place, a newer form of agent known as a 'prosumer' has been created. According to Pramod K Nayar, "The New Media Age is the age of the bio-product, 'Bio-product' in the New Media age has two components: bio-(or life) narrative elaborations of objects and object elaborations of the self-life" (Nayar 34).

An individual is no longer a passive consumer of products instead one actively participates in creating and promoting oneself as a product. For example, *Facebook* and the affordances provided by the platform through its interaction between the digital devices and a user caters to creating life narratives. These narratives are centred around a user's posts and their representation of life events, likes and dislikes enabled by the digitality of new media platforms. People use various physical objects to define their culture such as technology. The process of "bio-narrative elaboration" involves attributing human-like qualities to objects and endowing them with symbolic significance derived from personal or collective narratives. For example, individuals may assign sentimental value to a digital photograph shared on social media, infusing it with memories and emotions associated with specific life events. The *Facebook* profile created with the use of digital photographs, videos, links and avatars is used as a storytelling medium. The materiality of these components helps in extending the self-narrative. The tagging of a geographical location, or a place such as restaurants, theatre halls, malls or any other public spaces depicts the materiality of the elements used to curate a particular identity presented on the social media platforms such as *Facebook*. Conversely, new media also enables the objectification of the self-narrative. The material objects are used to perform a particular brand of identity thereby commodifying the same. In summary, the self is directly connected to the device providing the affordances for mediated communication via technological gadgets such as mobile phones or computers and its various forms.

Genre and Promotion of Consumption

The narrative genre is an ever-evolving concept that transforms with context and the materiality of texts. The development of computer mediated communication has imbued "text" with a form of "fluidity" that enables the crossing and intermixing of the genre boundaries through "Copying, pasting, and hyperlinking" (Giltrow and Stein 2). The genre migrates from one form of medium to another, leading to the transformation of the traditional genre. The features

associated with a genre evolve in order to adapt to a new medium. In the context of the *Facebook* platform , traditional written autobiographies shift to dynamic, interactive *Facebook* posts, resulting in new ways of storytelling and audience engagement. In its evolved form, the genre of autobiography retains certain features, while conforming to newer features based on the expectedness from the *Facebook* platform and its affordances. The platform portrays itself as a networked medium that helps the users to "connect and share with the people in your life" (*Facebook)*[iii]. Traditional genre forms are greatly generalised. In contrast, newer genres in the internet are more local and specific. This gives the genres a fluid nature, such as the fluidity of genre boundaries in the *Facebook* platform, based on user interactivity. Miranda Burgess refers to N. Katherine Hayles concept of "media ecology" which talks of understanding mediated narrative genres in context of its respective interactions (Burgess 196). As per Burgess' understanding of Hayles concept, it is crucial to understand the genre in relation to the impact of the material properties of the media on its development and a reader's experience of it.
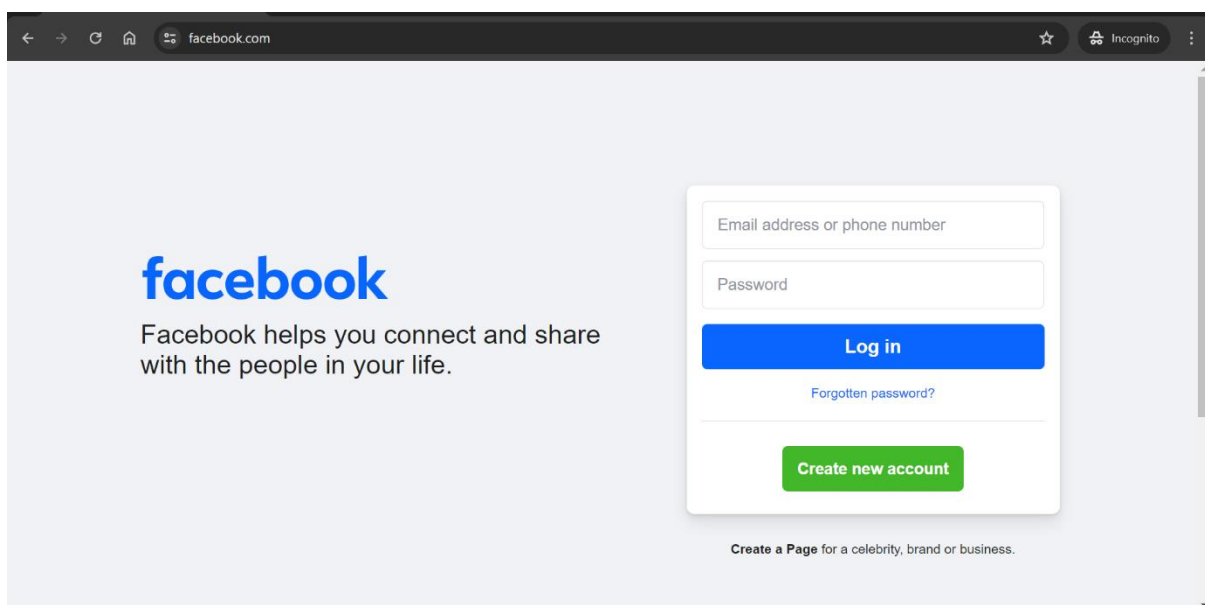
Figure 3: Facebook registration page (Sourced from https://www.facebook.com/)

In this manner of perceiving media, a *Facebook* profile resembles an autobiographical text in its feature of listing personal details and elaborate descriptions of past events through images,

videos, audio clips, and hyperlinks. The etymology of the term "facebook", depicts its close association to autobiographical texts. The *Facebook* profiles, therefore, can be considered to function as an archive of autobiographical memories. According to Richard Heersmink, autobiographical memories are essential to the construction of identity (Heersmink 1829-1832). Life events are structured in the form of a narrative of the self, which depicts a form of continuity. The architecture of *Facebook* reflects the use of different forms of lists and collections, which depicts the archival nature of *Facebook*. For example, the following image reflects how lists and collections are being integrated within the paratextual elements of *Facebook*.
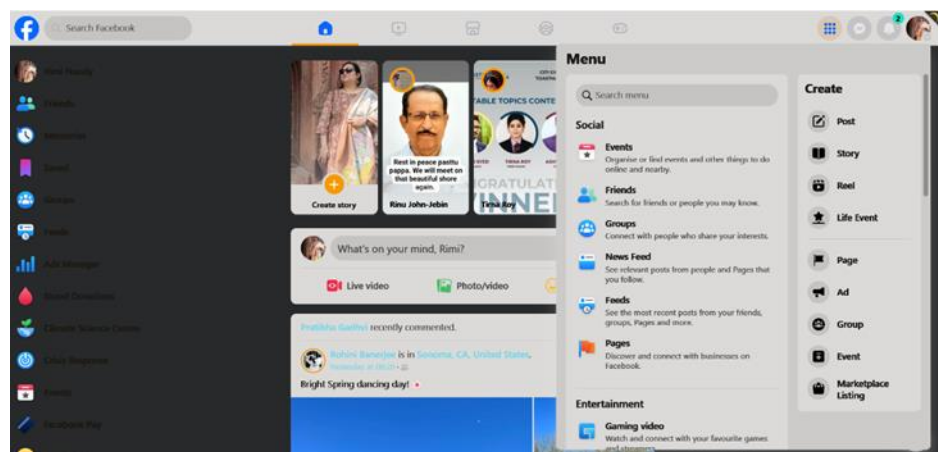
Figure 4: Facebook Profile Menu. Source: https://www.facebook.com/[iv]

The Menu section has been subdivided into different categories and subcategories and is made available to the users through a drop-down list. The "Social" section is categorised into lists of "Events", "Friends", "Groups", "News Feed", "Feeds", and "Pages". Each of these lists contributes to the construction of the self on *Facebook*.

The intentionality of *Facebook* users is crucial for comprehending the narrative interactions undertaken on the platform. *Facebook*, like other social media platforms, depicts the convergence of producers and consumers. Therefore, the position of the audience plays a significant role in the construction, and the perception of the data archived on *Facebook*. In

this context, reception theory helps to elucidate the complex dynamics of the 'prosumers'. However, the Reception theory predates the birth of social media. Therefore, the existing theoretical paradigms have to be reconstructed to represent the praxis of the digital age. Hans Robert Jauss' Horizons of Expectations can be used for depicting the intentionality of *Facebook* users and their cultural positionality. This will be discussed further in Chapter 5 of the thesis. As a way of introducing this theory the following figure represents the standard practices of *Facebook* users. The surveys demographic (Refer to Chapter 1 and Appendix III) aspect is secondary to the defining of the practices which depicts the reasons for using *Facebook* for the mediation of the self. The survey data shows that the most important function of *Facebook* for users is to document personal experiences.
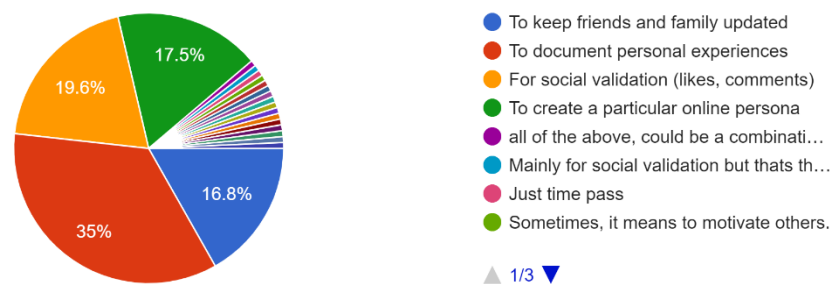
Figure 5: Piechart showing standard user intentions for posting on Facebook[v]

A total of 34.5 % of respondents selected "To document personal experiences" as the primary purpose of sharing personal narratives on *Facebook*. Followed by a total of 19.7% of respondents aiming "For social validation", closely followed by 17.6% of respondents opting for, "To create a particular online persona", and finally, 16.9% of respondents choosing to share posts on *Facebook* "To keep friends and family updated". The remaining respondents chose the option "other" and described their respective reasons for interacting on the *Facebook* platform. Refer to Appendix III for the reasons given by the respondents. Each of these acts is

performed through the sharing of photos, videos and other multimedia elements. In this respect, Sherry Turkle's concept of 'evocative objects' is essential in understanding the role of *Facebook* as an archive publicly remembered through objects that evoke memories and shared lived experiences by tagging friends.

Emplotment refers to how individuals construct meaningful narratives from their memories, linking disparate events into a coherent story. Sherry Turkle's concept of "evocative objects" suggests that certain items can trigger deep personal reflections and memories. In the context of *Facebook*, these objects become digitized—photos, posts, tags with friends—serving as cues that evoke past experiences and emotions. This platform acts as an archive of such objects, allowing users to publicly share and narrate their lives, with each tag or photo accompanied by text creating varied narratives and meanings.

Facebook, with its myriad functionalities, serves not merely as a social networking site but as a repository and display case for evocative objects, as conceptualized by Turkle. Sherry Turkle's concept of "evocative objects" explores the emotional and psychological significance of material artifacts in shaping individual identity, memory, and self-reflection. According to Turkle, these objects serve as repositories of personal narratives, memories, and emotions, eliciting deep and often complex responses from individuals. In the context of *Facebook* and digital culture, the notion of evocative objects takes on new dimensions, intersecting with the concept of bio-narrative elaboration. Turkle posits that objects we hold dear are imbued with personal significance, acting as mirrors reflecting our selves and memory chests preserving our histories. In the context of *Facebook*, these objects manifest as digital artifacts—photos, status updates, shared links, and comments—each carrying a piece of the user's story. These artifacts, curated and displayed on one's profile, become a digital extension of the self, a narrative pieced together through interaction with the material (digital) culture of *Facebook*. The following post

can be used to elaborate on the significance of Turkle's "evocative objects" in the context of *Facebook*.

Figure 6: Post from Agnibha Banerjee's Profile (Sourced from Agnibha Banerjee's Facebook profile.)

The post's caption, "Cliched Backdrops, Problematic Legacies, and Aesthetic Reclaimings," along with the images, can be interpreted in light of Sherry Turkle's concept of "evocative objects." These photographs, shared publicly on *Facebook*, serve as digital evocative objects, anchoring personal memories to shared cultural heritage sites while evoking reflections on their historical and aesthetic significance. The act of tagging and posting signifies a curated presentation of identity and narrative, embodying the complex interplay between personal experience and collective memory.

The computer mediation of the self has also transformed the narrative structure in use. The importance of narrative in the process of meaning-making has been substituted by archiving and digitalization. The traditional narrative structure with a beginning, middle and end has been replaced by database structures, which are unending and variable. The development of big data

has transformed how one remembers and how memory is structured. The evolving memory space working towards storing big data has reduced the need to select and store the most important events alone. Big data has enabled the development of a culture revolving around storing minute details of every moment. The notion of banality has become central to capturing a single moment. The numerical coding of media introduces concepts of variability and modularity into narrative structures, significantly transforming how stories are told and archived in the digital age. Digital data archives have revolutionized narrative forms, offering new ways of constructing stories that challenge traditional linear progressions. This shift is particularly evident in the reversal of narrative construction and the adoption of an anaphoric singulative mode (Van de Ven 320-338), where narratives are built retrospectively, focusing on singular events that gain significance through repetition and reference.

Karl Ove Knausgaard's work provides a compelling example of this archival style of writing. His narrative style is a reflection of the contemporary age's penchant for the digitalisation of the self through the listing of banal everyday incidents. His series "My Struggle" is characterized by exhaustive, detailed recounting of everyday life, blending autobiography with fiction in a manner that mirrors the archival accumulation of digital data. Knausgaard's approach to narrative construction resembles the process of compiling a vast, detailed archive of personal experiences, where the significance of events emerges through their meticulous documentation and the emotional resonance they accumulate over time.

Connecting Knausgaard's archival style to *Facebook*, we see parallels in how narratives are constructed on the platform. *Facebook* profiles serve as a digital archive where users document their lives through posts, photos, and interactions, creating a non-linear narrative that is continuously updated and revisited. Like Knausgaard's work, narratives on *Facebook* are built through an accumulation of moments, with the platform's algorithmic structure allowing for an

anaphoric singulative mode of storytelling. Posts and memories resurface, gaining new meanings in the context of the user's ongoing life story.

Furthermore, *Facebook's* modularity and variability, facilitated by its numerical coding, enable users to curate their narratives, selecting which aspects of their lives to highlight or conceal. This process mirrors Knausgaard's selective emphasis on certain details over others, constructing a narrative identity that is both fixed and fluid, archived yet constantly evolving.

In conclusion, both Knausgaard's archival style of writing and *Facebook's* digital narrative construction exemplify how numerical coding, variability, and modularity are reshaping storytelling. They demonstrate a move from linear narratives towards more complex, layered forms of narrative construction that reflect contemporary digital life's fragmented, interconnected nature. The anaphoric singulative mode of storytelling is a narrative technique that emphasizes the repetition and reference of singular events or elements throughout a story. This method is distinctive because it relies on anaphora, a rhetorical device that involves the deliberate repetition of words or phrases at the beginning of successive sentences or clauses, to create coherence, emphasize key themes, and enhance the emotional impact of the narrative. When applied to storytelling, this technique focuses on singular, often ordinary events, making them the centrepiece of the narrative structure.

In this mode, the narrative does not progress linearly from start to finish but rather circles back to these singular events, viewing them from different angles, contexts, or perspectives each time they are mentioned. This repetition, coupled with slight variations or expansions in each recounting, allows for a deeper exploration of themes, characters, and emotions, enriching the narrative's texture and inviting readers to engage more deeply with the material.

The anaphoric singulative mode is particularly effective in narratives that mimic memory and personal reflection processes, where certain moments or details become touchstones for

broader contemplations about life, identity, and relationships. It challenges traditional narrative arcs by suggesting that meaning and narrative coherence can be constructed through the accumulation and reinterpretation of singular moments, rather than through the resolution of a sequential plot.

This storytelling approach aligns with contemporary interests in exploring the multifaceted nature of experience and the non-linear ways we understand our lives and identities, especially in digital platforms like *Facebook*, where users continually curate and revisit personal moments, reshaping their narrative identity over time.

On *Facebook*, users construct and disseminate personal narratives by sharing digital artifacts, such as photographs, videos, and status updates. These digital artifacts serve as modern-day evocative objects, eliciting memories, emotions, and reflections within the online social sphere. Users curate their profiles with carefully selected images and posts, imbuing them with personal meaning and significance. The connection to bio-narrative elaboration lies in the process by which individuals attribute human-like qualities to digital artifacts, infusing them with autobiographical narratives and emotional resonance. Users craft narratives around their digital experiences, constructing virtual autobiographies that reflect their identities, relationships, and life events. For example, a user sharing an entire wedding album portrays his/her self-identity through the material objects visible in the photos and videos on one hand and on the other the comments, responses, and reactions create a complicated network of affect. A complex interaction between a user and the material object gives rise to a narrative set within a shared structure of meaning making. The following image can be read critically to depict the networked form of evocative objects, in relation to material culture and bio-narrative elaboration.
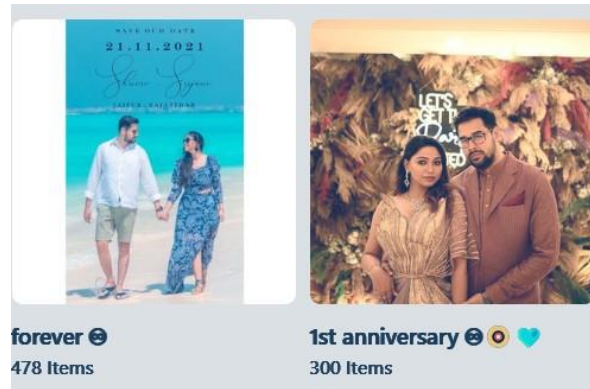
Figure 7: Facebook Photo Album (Sourced from Srijani Sen's Facebook profile)

The images in the album [Fig 7] are used to narrate an important life event. The images, captions, and emoticons help expand the life narrative to include the effects and effects resulting from the interaction between Srijani and the material objects within the space provided by *Facebook*. The first album titled "forever" with an infinity symbol depicts the walk ahead, symbolized by the walk on the beach. The pristine beach, the clothing and the postures deftly helps in building a bio-narrative, furthered by the materiality of each of the elements in the photograph.
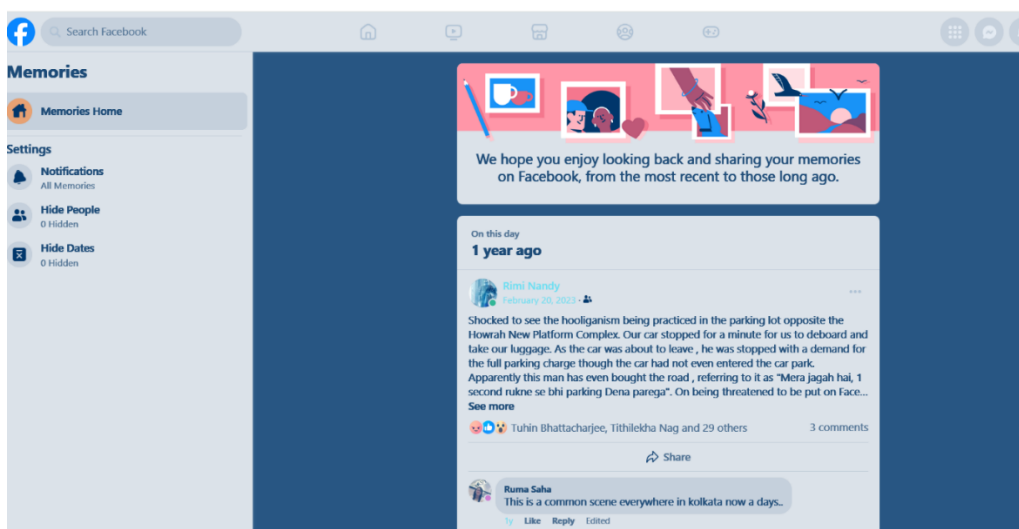
Figure 8: Facebook Memories (Sourced from Rimi Nandy's Facebook profile

https://www.facebook.com/memories/?source=bookmark)

The screenshot of a *Facebook* 'Memories' feature offers a rich context for analysis in terms of *Facebook* as a platform for autofiction and bio-narrative elaboration. The 'Memories' function on *Facebook* is a digital tool that curates and resurfaces past content from a user's timeline, inviting them to revisit and potentially reshare experiences from years prior. This revisiting of past memories connected to particular events is akin to the anaphoric singulative mode in storytelling. The following post [Fig 9] depicts how the narrative structure of *Facebook* posts simultaneously uses anaphoric and singulative modes to narrate one's self.
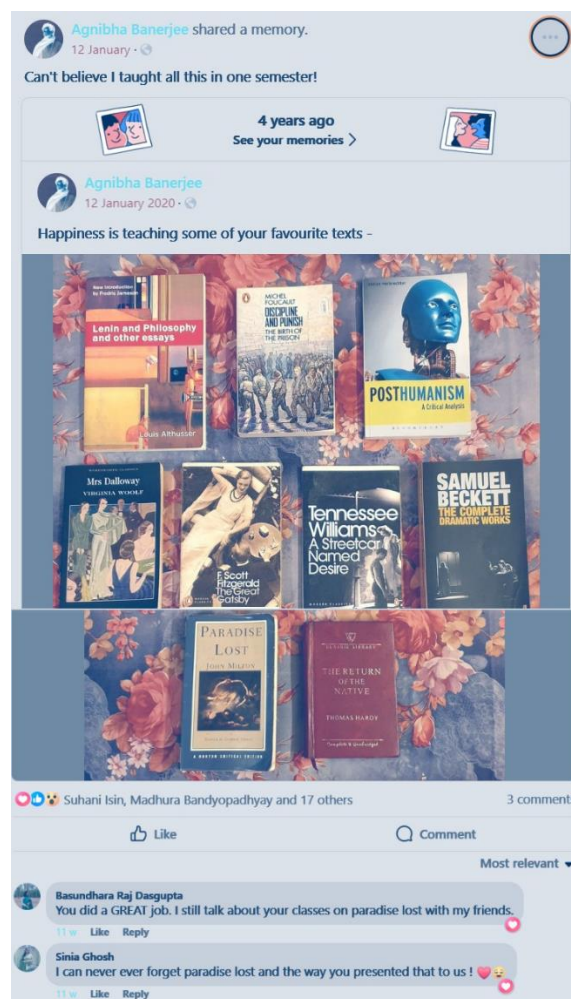
Figure 9: Agnibha Banerjee shared memory (Sourced from Agnibha Banerjee's Facebook profile)

The post depicts the act of revisiting a particular time period, a semester, alongside several texts which the user taught. This act of sharing a memory involves both singulative and anaphoric elements.

Singulative storytelling is evident as the post focuses on a specific, singular period—the semester when these texts were taught. The singularity of the event is emphasized by the books displayed, each representing a separate narrative that contributed to the unique experience of that semester.

Anaphora is present in the form of repeated reminiscences, as suggested by the comments, which indicate that this teaching experience has been recalled and discussed multiple times. The repetition of this memory, primarily through the annual "Facebook memories" feature, reinforces the significance of the event in the individual's narrative, similar to the way anaphoric repetition would work in a literary context to underscore a theme or idea.

This mode of storytelling on *Facebook*, where past experiences are brought up again in a recurring fashion, illustrates the digital manifestation of the anaphoric singulative mode. Users revisit singular moments from their past, sharing and reshaping them through the present lens. This can change the original context and invite new interpretations from the audience, in this case, the person's *Facebook* friends.

Analysing *Facebook* profiles through the autofictional lens helps in understanding the narrative space built inside the *Facebook* platform. Traditionally autobiography is associated with factual narrative. In contrast, autofiction blurs the line between fact and fiction. Gerard Genette closely looks at the differences between factual narrative and fictional narrative, while speaking of autofiction. He refers to Kate Hamburger and Philippe Lejeune's perception that factual narrative and fictional narrative cannot be differentiated with concrete narratological aspects. Genette states that "a fictional narrative is purely and simply a pretence or simulation a factual

narrative, where the novelist just makes believe ("pretends") that he is telling a true story without seriously asking the reader believe in it, but also without leaving in the text the slightest trace its non-serious, simulated character." (Genette 757). Therefore, an essential marker of fictional narrative is the prominence of subjectivity in the absence of justification. This subject representation of the self finds a parallel in the way individuals present their lives on *Facebook*. Users often curate their experiences, choosing what to share, how to phrase their narratives, and which moments to highlight or omit, constructing a narrative that is both personal and performative. The status update shown in the memory talks about an incident of "hooliganism" experienced by the user [Refer to Figure 10]. This post, which has been resurfaced by the 'Memories' feature, represents a moment in time where the user chose to narrate a particular event from their life, framed by their subjective perspective and emotional response. Chapter 4 undertakes a detailed discussion of autofiction as a narrative genre and its position in contemporary narrative practices in the *Facebook* platform.
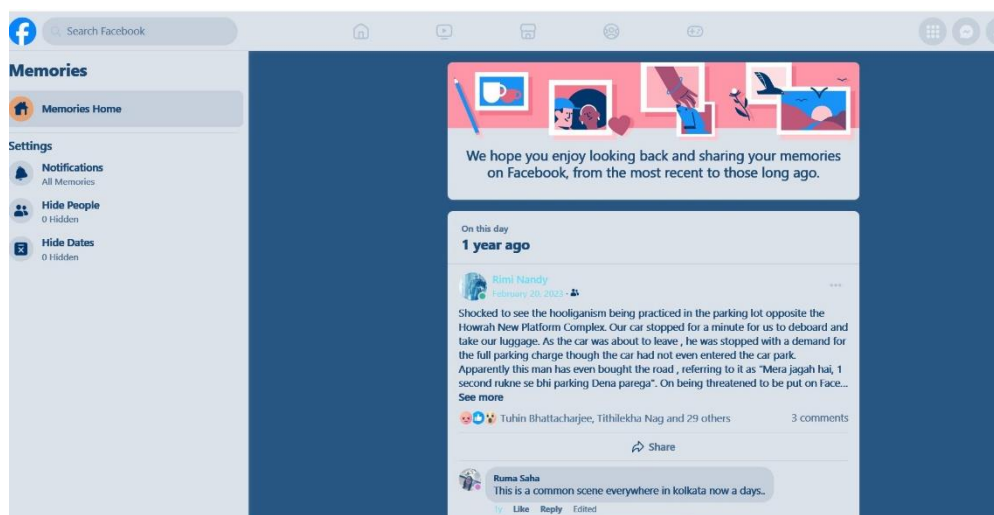
Figure 10: Facebook Memories (Sourced from Rimi Nandy's Facebook Profile)

The narrative is further elaborated through the reactions and comments from other users. These social interactions contribute additional layers to the story, as each comment or reaction can reinforce, question, or expand upon the original narrative. This collective engagement is a form

of collaborative storytelling, where the boundaries between the individual's narrative and the community's input become fluid, much like in autofiction where the author's narrative may interweave with fictional elements.

Moreover, the 'Memories' feature itself acts as a catalyst for bio-narrative elaboration by prompting users to reflect on their past and to recontextualize their experiences in the present. The act of remembering and the potential act of resharing are deeply interwoven with the construction of one's ongoing digital autobiography. The emotional indicators (such as the heart and shock emoji) and the engagement metrics (number of likes and comments) provide a quantifiable measure of the community's response to the shared narrative, further embedding the incident within the user's digital life story.

Facebook, thus, becomes a space where daily life is not only documented but also performed and re-performed through the memory feature, mimicking the iterative process of writing autofiction. It serves as a medium where the personal and the public, the actual and the perceived, the past and the present coalesce, enabling users to continually rewrite and reinterpret their life stories within a communal space. This dynamic process reflects the essence of bio-narrative elaboration, where the crafting of self is an ongoing, interactive, and networked endeavour.

According to Karl Marx, time is the most essential element of capitalism. The accumulation of capital is based on the creation of surplus value. In contrast, Castell focuses more on digital capitalism's impact and immediacy culture in the information age. Theorized during the early phase of capitalism, Marx is still found to be relevant in the digital age. The idea of capitalism has been evolved with time. Therefore, it is essential to deliberate the significance of Marx's theory in the age characterized by digital capitalism. Fuchs and Mosco refer to Dallas Smythe's argument of communication's role in altering capitalism. This argument focuses on how the

"rise of neoliberalism resulted in a turn away from an interest in social class and capitalism. Instead, it became fashionable to speak of globalization, postmodernism, and, with the fall of Communism, even the end of history" (Fuchs and Mosco 2). The development of a networked society has created a culture of speed. In the words of Marx the use of technology for the "annihilation of time and space" is essential in the development of economy. Cyberspace has led to the liquidation of boundaries, due to which the distinct categorisation of home (a space of leisure) and office (a space of labour) has become one.

The Changing Face of 'Labour' in the Networked Society:

In the age of Digital Capitalism, the conflict between labour and capital is gradually being reframed. The structured categorisation of 'play' and 'work' also becomes non-existent as the very idea of waged labour and unwaged labour undergoes a massive reconstruction. In an earlier age 'play' was conceived of as the opposite of 'work'. This however is no longer the case. On the social Media platforms and in game spaces, leisure hours are spent to create content which in turn becomes a surplus capital. Tizia Terranova , first speaks of 'free labour' as the labour put in by users of the social media platforms. The users of digital spaces like *Facebook*, Youtube, Instagram, to name a few, create content which are entirely user-generated. These very same companies survive on the status updates, comments, sharing and profiles. In the absence of the users' regular interaction to generate enormous amounts of big data, the companies would go out of business. The likes of *Facebook* and Instagram have substituted earlier platforms such as Orkut, Myspace, as they failed to sustain users to create content using the spaces provided. The 'free labour' provided by the users of social media platforms is a newer form of capitalist exploitation. McKenzie Wark in his Gamer Theory rightly quotes "work becomes play. Play becomes work." Leisure is still unpaid, but unlike in the non digital age, activities of leisure hour generates income. Maurizio Lazzarato talks about the 'basin of immaterial labour'. He explains the process of producing immaterial products which are not

confined within a factory space or a structure. Economic production today has shifted to a space without boundaries. Lazzarato shows how there are cycles of production that exist for a short period, beyond which the process is displaced and substituted by another. The transient nature of production is a result of information, knowledge and service products. The need to stay updated explains the very nature of the production process in the digital age.

The users of social media platforms spend their 'leisure' hour in creating data and information which is further commodified. Leisure refers to unwaged work, which does not play an economic role. The idea of labour in the Post-Fordist era has been closely connected to leisure. The immaterial labour catering to manufacturing data on social media platforms, are largely unpaid. These users are more concerned about their desire to create 'affective and cultural products'. Providing services has become an important aspect of the market economy in the digital age. Therefore, abstract emotions generated as an effect of actions and words become essential to 'affective labour'. The concept of 'leisure' and associated spaces are crucial to the construction of identity and the sense of belonging. Social networks are not an invention of the contemporary digital age. Imagined spaces such as families, religious groups, tribes and nation-states are all examples of a different form of social network. These networks work towards creating a sense of belonging which in turn is directly linked to identity construction. Spaces of social interaction in tandem with spaces of leisure function as platforms for performing one's identity. The implications of social media platforms in acting as spaces of leisure, depicting accepted social norms and the performing of a socially accepted role will be discussed later in this chapter.

According to Fuchs "The rise of computer technology and computer networks (such as the internet) has enabled the convergence of media and machines-the computer supports cognition. Communication and co-operative labour (production); It is a classical medium and a classical machine at the same time. Furthermore, it has enabled the convergence of production,

distribution (communication) and consumption of information – you use only one tool, the networked computer, for these three processes. In contrast to other media (like the press, broadcasting, the telegraph, the telephone), computer networks not only are medium of information and communication but also enable the co-operative production of information" (Fuchs 49). Computer networks are spaces of convergence bringing together different modes of communication as well as stages of production and consumption. As mentioned earlier, social network platforms function as performative spaces. The information produced by the users becomes an act of identity construction. Through user interactions, the information produced indicates the preferences of each individual. This helps in the creation of a social identity that is based on performing expected roles. Karl Spracklen compares such performances on social media platforms with Clifford Geertz's concept of 'web of significance', These webs or networks of meaning-making is essentially constructed by human beings in associating certain meanings to the minutest acts of daily lives. In this respect *Facebook* becomes an essential case study for critically evaluating digital capitalism and its connection to identity construction. The digital realm becomes a playground for economic activity, where the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services occur within the same digital ecosystem. Corporations leverage the power of computer networks to streamline operations, reach wider audiences, and extract valuable data for targeted marketing and consumer engagement. *Facebook* profiles are such spaces where information is produced, exchanged and consumed. These interactive acts form the basis for creating a fluid identity without a strict manifestation of selfhood. Performing identity takes on new dimensions within the digital landscape. Individuals curate their online personas, leveraging the affordances of computer networks to shape narratives of selfhood and belonging. Social media platforms such as *Facebook* provide an interactive space where individuals perform their selfhood while navigating the complexities of digital capitalism and asserting their place within the

interconnected web of relationships and interactions. In summary, the rise of computer technology and computer networks has enabled the realisation of Marx's concept of collective labour in new and unprecedented ways. It has provided a platform for individuals to collaborate, share knowledge, and organise labour collectively, thus achieving outcomes that would have been impossible to achieve individually.

In his book *Grandrisse*, Karl Marx predicted the emergence of an information society. He spoke about the idea of collective labour, which refers to the very nature of the functioning of the networked society. However, the concepts of 'collective labour' and the 'network society' are very different theories. Yet, they are similar in that both Marx and Castell acknowledge the role of technology in shaping social organisation. Marx argued that technology plays a crucial role in developing the forces of production, which can either facilitate or hinder the development of social relations.

Similarly, Castells emphasises the role of digital technologies in transforming social organisation, particularly the importance of networks in enabling collaboration and communication. "The Internet is a major site of the knowledge commons" (Yong Jina and Feenberg 53). User-generated content and social networking sites function as spaces that manufacture knowledge and simultaneously create audiences to consume this knowledge. That is, the knowledge is produced and consumed by the audiences. However, they do not receive any monetary benefit from this exchange. Instead, the companies that own the platforms profit by helping various companies create targeted advertisements based on the information acquired from the users. The labour involved in constructing user-generated content is a form of affective labour. The value generated by the user-generated content is based on the audience's emotional responses. Dallas Smyth refers to this form of affective labour as 'audience commodity'. According to the labour theory of value, the value of a commodity is determined by the amount of socially necessary labour time required to produce it. In the case of the audience commodity,

this labour time includes the time and effort expended by media and advertising industries in creating content that captures and holds the attention and emotions of audiences. The value of the user-generated content is derived from the "quantitative commodities", which refer to how user-generated content, such as videos or posts on social media, can be measured and monetised through metrics such as views, clicks, and likes. These metrics reflect the level of audience engagement and attention, which can be used to attract advertising revenue or other forms of value. The value of unpaid labour is also connected to the interactive nature of Web 2.0, which allows the users to become a part of the content production (Yong Jina and Feenberg 53-55). The capitalist outlook influences the commodification of the social media content. However, it does not change the content in itself. Instead, there is a form of homogenisation of the content through processes like data mining. The audience commodity theory of the mass media is roughly compatible with Marx's theory of commodification since not only is audience attention sold, its "content," the object toward which it is directed, is controlled and rationalized by capital.

The concept of 'hive mind', propounded by Kevin Kelly is closely connected to this idea Kelly talks about how the internet has allowed a collection of minds to come together to create a whole. Pierre Levy further defines the collective nature of creation of knowledge and information in a networked society. He focuses on how the information is always in flux, continuously growing with newer knowledge added to the collective minds to create a 'collective intelligence'. This has created a market where demand is transient, restricted to a very short time, only to be substituted with an enhanced knowledge system. As a result, the workers must regularly update themselves or be excluded from the ever-evolving market of the internet age.

Marx builds on the Hegelian dialectic of 'essence' and 'existence'. Hegel believed that the nature of the society is connected to its material conditions. As such, technology helps build an

efficient society. Marx focuses on the nature of profit maximization in a capitalist society. He uses Hegel's idea in order to explain how technology in the midst of capitalism becomes a hyper-exploitative tool. Technology in itself helps reduce labour costs and makes work more efficient. This helps in generating 'surplus capital' through the building of 'surplus labour'. The technological advancements result in extracting higher amounts of labour in exchange for a wage much lower than the commodity's price. This difference between the commodity price and the wages offered helps the capitalists accumulate higher profits.

Manuel Castell's *The Rise of the Network Society* is a seminal text dealing with this change in the form of capitalism. In this book, Castell investigates the nature of society, which developed around the birth of the internet. It talks about how the presence of a networked society has influenced identity and its construction. The author also elaborates on the aspects and nature of time, space and job in the cyberspace.

Locating Social Media

The development of the Information society, along with the growing consumer culture, has greatly influenced the burgeoning movement of social media platforms. The entire social media sphere is dependent on the transaction between the performer and the receiver. Big Data opened up the avenues for furthering the culture of consumerism. The information society is based on the production and dissemination of information. However, the nature of the information is no longer relevant in the present age. In the words of Theodore Raszak, in the information society, 'information' is without any semantic context (Webster 23). Information is transformed into a sign of an abstract presence. It is used to perform different roles in the 'network society'. Manuel Castells discusses the changing face of the society due to the presence of networking and globalisation. The 'information revolution' has affected every aspect of society, including communication. The manner in which information is created and exchanged in the real-time is possible only in a globalised space beyond the restrictions of physical boundaries.

Advancements in technology have transformed old media into new media. The term "new" associated with media depicts the change in the culture of interactivity. At the core of the 'new media culture' is the idea of 'networked thinking' (Fuery 29). In contrast to the old media forms which allowed only a one-way flow of information, new media provides the space for interactivity. The various forms of interactions taking place through the tools of new media, constructs a network of information created, shared and consumed thereby creating a new media culture. An important element of social media is its integration of various media convergence. Its potential for interactivity lies in the ability to incorporate different modes of communication, namely, audio-visual and transmedia communication methods. The relations between the subjects of new media and their process of interaction and be defined with the help of Foucault's theory of power/knowledge. The subjective position in relation to knowledge created through information is at the crux of interactivity, characteristic of new media.

New Media is proliferated with the conglomeration of different forms of media, namely, audio visual, film, text to name a few. Together, the various forms of media create a new text which is always in motion and is perpetually constructed and re-constructed. Social Media is the best example of this form of textual construction, which integrates different modes of communication. This research work focuses on studying social media, specifically *Facebook* as a narrative. *Facebook*, as a prime example of a computer network facilitating social interaction, embodies the convergence of production, distribution, and consumption of information within a singular digital space. The narrative constructed on social media such as *Facebook*, using varied tools of interaction, is in certain aspects similar to texts of old media form and the new media form. This can be best explained with the help of Roland Barthes' concept of readerly and writerly texts. Readerly texts come with a definite ending whereas the writerly texts is a continuous process with no definite ending (Fuery 35). In this respect *Facebook*, like the other forms of social media is at the same time readerly and writerly text.

In its affordance of allowing the users to become a part of the narrative and leaving at some point only to join back again, is proof of its being a writerly text. However even through this process of intermittent interaction, the audience is ultimately following the end desired by the 'author', in the form of pre-set algorithms. Critically examining *Facebook* within the context of digital capitalism reveals intricate power dynamics and ethical considerations. While *Facebook* ostensibly serves as a platform for social connection and information sharing, it operates within the broader framework of capitalist structures, driven by profit motives and market dynamics. The platform leverages user-generated content and personal data to fuel targeted advertising, monetizing users' interactions and experiences for corporate gain. The algorithms used in these platforms are garnered towards optimizing user engagement and maximizing revenue acquired through advertisements. This in turn shape the content creation and construction of audience expectations. The way the self-narrative pans out on *Facebook* is determined by the architecture behind the algorithms. This will be critically evaluated in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

The notion of self and selfhood, as mentioned in the introduction chapter, is influenced and transformed in tandem with the affordances of social media spaces. The self as a form of performance is not a recent development. It has existed within the socio-cultural spaces across the centuries, Ervin Goffman and Judith Butler focused on the element of performance in the construction of the self. However, both Goffman and Butler are writing in an age where social media platforms and the internet are still much further in the future. The importance of their work is in the fact that they create the base for the development of the interrelation between the self and performance in the context of socially acceptable roles. The connection between Butler's and Goffman's ideas lies in their shared emphasis on the performative nature of identity. Both theorists highlight how individuals actively shape and negotiate their identities through performance, interaction, and self-presentation within cultural and social frameworks.

While Butler focuses specifically on gender identity and its performativity, Goffman's framework applies more broadly to the construction of selfhood in everyday life. With the advent of social media in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, Butler's ideas about the performative nature of the self, gained renewed relevance and resonance. Social media platforms such as *Facebook*, Instagram, and Twitter provided individuals with unprecedented opportunities to curate and present aspects of their identities to online audiences.

Contemporary theories of selfhood in the age of social media build upon Butler's insights, emphasizing the ways in which digital technologies mediate and shape our understanding of identity and self-expression. The characteristics associated with the performance of the self and its perception have also changed with time. The perception of the self has transformed from the belief in the duality of the self in relation to "online" and "offline" spaces to the understanding of the self as a fluid construct entangled within and beyond spaces. Current research on the concept of self and the development of selfhood focuses on challenging the distinction between online and offline identities, arguing for a more integrated understanding of selfhood in the digital age. One key aspect of contemporary theories of selfhood in the age of social media is the notion of digital identity construction. Individuals engage in selective self-presentation, curating their online personas to reflect specific aspects of their identities while concealing or downplaying others. This process involves strategic decisions about what to share, how to present oneself, and with whom to interact within digital spaces. Furthermore, contemporary theories of selfhood in the age of social media highlight the role of algorithms, surveillance, and datafication in shaping online identities. This aspect of the construction of the self on *Facebook* will be further explained in Chapter 4 of the thesis.

 The algorithms create 'echo chambers' within which the receiver comes face to face with the performance they chose to enjoy. Such algorithms define the textualities of *Facebook*. Digital technologies as a whole have shaped the contemporary understanding of text and narratives.

The nature and form of literature has been transformed under the influence of digital technologies. The digital turn induces the practice of digital self-narrations. Such narratives are not entirely constructed by a 'real' person but through interaction with computer platforms and algorithms. Therefore, this practice of self-narrative necessitates a "posthuman pact", in contrast to Philippe Lejeune's "autobiographical pact". According to Kreknin, the digital space has replaced the traditional idea of self reality with a kind of referential reality. Therefore, the term autobiography can no longer define the new forms of autobiographical acts. Further, writing is no longer the dominant mode of narrating the self. The multi-modal nature of social networking sites, such as *Facebook*, brings together visual, audio and verbal modes of self-representation. Through these forms of representation, the self is commodified as data that provides social capital for the users as well as advertising companies. On *Facebook*, users curate their digital personas, carefully selecting content, photos, and interactions to portray specific facets of their identity. However, behind the scenes, algorithms analyse user behaviour, preferences, and interactions to tailor content and advertisements. As users engage with the platform, their preferences and behaviours are fed back into the system, influencing the content they see and the interactions they have.

This process effectively transforms the self into a commodity, as users' data and interactions become valuable assets to advertisers and marketers. By commodifying user attention and engagement, *Facebook* generates revenue through targeted advertising and sponsored content. Moreover, the accumulation of social capital - in the form of likes, comments, and shares - further enhances the value of the self within the digital ecosystem. Users leverage their digital identities to cultivate social networks, forge connections, and assert influence within online communities. The accumulation of likes, followers, and social endorsements enhances users' social standing and visibility within the digital landscape. The subsequent segment will provide a comprehensive examination of the trajectory pursued by the concept of the "narrative turn."

'Narrative Turn' and its Implications on *Facebook* Narratives

"Human beings are storying creatures. We make sense of the world and the things that happen to us by constructing narratives to explain and interpret events both to ourselves and to other people" (Rowsell and Pahl 397). Traditionally narratives were associated with literary texts alone. Only in the 1960's were narrative theories applied to both literary and non-literary texts. Gerard Genette discusses how fictional narratives were favoured in place of "universal narrative forms" such as "the practices of history, biography, diaries, newspaper stories, police reports, judicial depositions, everyday gossip". According to Philippe Roussi ,"The study of narrative gradually moved away from what were then the dominant semiotic or narratological perspectives, focused primarily on literary texts, and on to examining narrative as much in non-textual as in textual forms. It was increasingly acknowledged that narrative relates not only to cultural products but also to communication theory, sociology, therapy, politics, etc. The methods for studying literary and verbal narratives gave way to methods of investigation deriving from sociolinguistics, pragmatics, developmental psychology and the more empirical and quantitative branches of the social sciences". (Hansen et al 384). Overall, the study of narrative has moved beyond a narrow focus on literary texts, embracing a multidisciplinary perspective that recognizes the significance of narratives in various domains. This broader approach has enriched our understanding of narrative as a fundamental aspect of human experience and has provided new insights into its role in communication, culture, and society.

The rapid development of new media has also influenced the construction and reception of narratives. The easy access to the internet and the flourishing of Web 2.0 have enabled the rise of storytelling in the absence of advanced technological knowledge. Ruth Page suggests that digital technology has substantially impacted the evolution of narrative theory and practice in recent years. The emergence of stories that leverage the capabilities of digital media, which require computers for their creation and presentation, has offered a crucial new domain for

examining and enhancing narrative analysis techniques. Consequently, technological advancements since the 1980s have played a vital role in presenting an alternative to traditional print media narratives, enabling scholars in narrative theory to examine the process and reception of storytelling from a novel standpoint (Page and Thomas 1). The 'narrative turn' alongside the 'digital turn' has restructured reading and writing practice. Compared to the restrictive nature of print media, social media offers an open field for interaction and collaboration. The affordances of the social media platforms have transformed how narratives are written, read and shared. However, the importance of cultural context in the framing of narratives is similar in the digital medium as in the print medium. Though the idea of what is to be considered literature has changed, yet the cultural markers in characterizing narratives are still intact. A context-rich environment also characterizes social media platforms like *Facebook*. The complex and multilayered interactions and interactive elements are symptomatic of the cultural implications. A passive analysis of various *Facebook* profiles within the researcher's network, including the respondents to the three separate surveys conducted, helps in mapping the cultural practices contextualized within "India" and is reflected through the posts. Posts, comments, and discursive materials on the *Facebook* platform range from different religious festivals, rituals, and practices to the discussion of the existing and evolving political climate of India, which is in sync with the historical and colonial past of India. The following section will focus on tracing the network culture's features in India's context.

Consumer identity and networked culture in India

The birth and growth of digital space have restructured the concept of labour and the market economy. The 'internet' has broken the boundaries of a structured and materialistic idea of labour force. The workers are no longer restricted to the geographical positioning of a factory, neither are they placed within the four walls of an office workspace. The structures and ideas

set up during the Industrial Age have lost their distinctive features. The digital tools and networks have brought different spaces together and given them a fluid identity. Apart from the concept of space, the very notion of a producer and consumer has also undergone a remarkable redefinition. The idea of a product has also been transformed along with what is termed as 'prosumers'. Instead of a finished product, the networked society has substituted finished products with a product that is continually in motion, being transformed by the culture of collaboration. There is a considerable shift towards a service industry that considers a product a continuing process. In the words of Manuel Castells, the world has entered a new era of 'informationalism', where information is used to further process information (Bell 59). The informatization of India began under British Colonial rule with the help of Herschel and Edward Henry. The method of fingerprinting and other anthropomorphic data were collected to form the idea of India. This method was undertaken by the "British to classify, categorise and bound that vast social world that was India so it could be controlled (Cohn 5)". The rise of the information sector initiated the face of Modern capitalist India.

The collaborative culture has become an integral part of the network society. The mingling of varied information to create a new production process characterises cyberspace and the birth of the social media. The act of posting minute moments of life to make a quantifiable identity is at the root of the popularity of social media. The term associated with this practice of displaying one's life on social media platforms is "lifestreaming'. The personal information shared through 'the' 'lifestreaming' process further helps target marketing based on algorithms that transform the information into marketable raw materials. In Marwick's words, "Lifestreamers must see themselves through the gaze of others, altering their behaviour as needed to maintain their desired self-presentation. This constant monitoring against the backdrop of a networked audience creates anxiety and encourages jockeying for status, even as it brings forth new forms of social information (Marwick 207). Manuel Castells' concept of

the 'networked society' is based on Western life experiences. The most significant impact of digital innovations has influenced the nature and form of sociality. Like its Western counterpart, India's sociality has also been reformed in the digital age. The 'networked society' has restructured the public sphere. Unlike Habermas' notion of public sphere based on print capitalism, the internet and specifically social networking society has produced a collaborative public space based on sharing multi-modal content.

In the context of the social nature of social networking sites such as *Facebook*, Habermas' concept of the 'public sphere' is critical to understanding *Facebook* as a space of exchange and collaboration. Beginning in eighteenth-century England, coffee houses and salons created a public space for exchanging knowledge, information, ideas, and ideologies for all classes. However it was only restricted to white men belonging to various classes of the society. Therefore the idea of the public sphere has never been all inclusive. Habermas' notion of the public sphere emerged from an examination of the coffeehouses and salons of the 18th century European bourgeoisie. This historical context inherently carries class biases, as it excludes marginalized and working-class voices from the public sphere. Moreover, it often neglects the experiences and perspectives of women, reinforcing a gender bias in the construction of public discourse. He also emphasizes the importance of rational argumentation, which assumes equal access to knowledge and the ability to articulate one's ideas effectively. However, in reality, access to education, resources, and platforms for communication is not evenly distributed. This creates barriers for certain groups, such as marginalized communities, who may be excluded from participating fully in the public sphere. Habermas' notion of rational discourse tends to prioritize dominant, mainstream, and majority perspectives. It often marginalizes alternative voices, including those of racial and ethnic minorities, indigenous communities, and other marginalized groups. The exclusion of these perspectives undermines the goal of creating an inclusive public sphere that reflects the diversity of society. Habermas idealizes the public

sphere as a realm separate from power structures, but critics argue that power dynamics inevitably influence public discourse. Wealth, status, and social hierarchies can shape access to the public sphere and influence the agenda-setting processes. This can result in the reinforcement of existing power imbalances and exclusionary practices. The drawbacks of Habermasian notion of public sphere is clearly depicted in Michael E Gardiner's words- "many argue for a virtual abandonment of Habermasian-inspired notions of the public sphere in favour of a theory of 'counterpublics'. This call is meant to underscore the heterodox and pluralistic nature of such spheres, which are often in opposition to the procedures of the dominant public sphere, as well as to sensitize us to the wide variety of normative ideals that regulate interaction in different areas of sociocultural life" (Crossley and Roberts 29).

In the words of Pramod K Nayar, "The customization and custom represented by participatory culture ensures a new form of sociality, a techno-sociality. It enables vernacular creativity to be disseminated widely. It marks a cultural inclusion and cultural citizenship. And it induces a culturalization of the public sphere" (Nayar14). The techno-sociality evident in the public sphere also influences traditional forms of autobiographical practices and "and are located somewhere between traditional autobiographical poetics and the new possibilities offered by information technology (Kreknin 557). In order to understand the sociality expressed on *Facebook* in the Indian context, it is essential to locate the study of life narratives within the cultural milieu of India. The customs and cultural practices associated with India, influences the manner in which life events are shared on social media. The economic and socio-political aspects of the "Indian" society also shapes the face of self-narration on the digital platform. Chapter 6 will provide a detailed discussion on the idea of "Indianness" and its connection to Indian nationalism in the digital sphere.

Conclusion:

A close study of the cyberspace in tandem of the "real life" indicates a massive change in the social structure and social practices. Unlike the accepted idea regarding technological determinism, the change in the attitude and perception of the people, the technology is also enhanced. The works of Manuel Castells, Sherry Turkle and Donna Haraway illustrate how the concept of "real virtuality" is an amalgamation of the "real" and the "virtual", which has made the two indistinguishable. Daniel Bell refers to Marshal Macluhan's idea that "We are blurring boundaries between different kinds of technologies, different functions and uses, different stories (Bell 7). This chapter has focused on introducing the various elements of the digital space in association with the changing ideas of consumerism, informationalization and life narrative. The subsequent chapters will trace the evolving visage of life narrative and its relation with memory and fiction.

Notes:

[i] *Online Etymology Dictionary* defines "facebook" as "directory listing names and headshots, by 1983, originally among U.S. college students, from face (n.) + book (n.). The social networking Web site of that name (with capital F-) dates from 2004."

[ii] Sourced from blog post on Medium titled "The Evolution of Facebook: Unveiling the Origins and Significance of Its Name".

[iii] Quoted from the *Facebook* registration page.

[iv] Sourced from Rimi Nandy's *Facebook* profile.

[v] Sourced from the result of the Google Form questionnaire circulated by me to understand the narrative practices generally undertaken by *Facebook* users. The pie chart was made by using the inbuilt feature of Google Form in graphically representing the data acquired through the questionnaire.

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Chapter 3

Autobiography to Autofiction: A Posthuman Understanding of Life Writing

Introduction

The earlier chapter focused on the cultural aspects of communication and the role of technology in reforming the manners in which people communicate. Digital technology has also influenced the perception of reading/writing literature. As discussed earlier in Chapter 1, the role of "narrative turn" has been significant. It also discussed the changing features of and attitude towards the very notion of consumer culture. In the context of consumer culture, especially concerning literature, this chapter proposes to understand the nuances of postmodernism along with its role in the transformation of the literary genre of autobiography. Initiated as a medium belonging to the western canon of non-fiction, autobiography has now been transformed into a blended fiction and non-fiction genre. The transformation of the literary genre of autobiography into autofiction reflects a dynamic interplay between the form itself and the readers' understanding of the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction. Initially part of the Western canon as a non-fiction genre, autobiography has evolved, influenced by both cultural forces and shifting reader perceptions. In the context of postmodern consumer culture, readers have become more attuned to the constructed nature of narratives, both in literature and in the marketplace of goods and ideas. The reader's role has shifted from a passive recipient of a monolithic truth to an active interpreter who acknowledges the presence of fiction in purportedly non-fictional accounts. This shift is in part due to a growing awareness of the narrative strategies authors employ, blurring the lines between reality and invention. The form of autobiography as a genre has certainly expanded. It now includes works that intentionally blur the lines between the author's lived experiences and the creative liberties of fiction,

resulting in what we call autofiction. This change reflects both a transformation in the genre's conventions and an adaptation to readers' desires for complex, multi-layered narratives that challenge the veracity and authenticity of the autobiographical pact.

Moreover, the rise of digital platforms like *Facebook* has further complicated this evolution. Chapter 2 discusses the similarities and differences between autobiography and personal narratives. It also compares the narratives in *Facebook* profiles to the narrative form of autofiction. Users of *Facebook* craft their own autobiographical narratives through posts, pictures, and interactions, which are inherently selective and curated. This personal curation shapes the autobiographical form to suit the medium's affordances, where immediacy and performative self-expression prevail over the contemplative reflection traditionally associated with autobiography.

At the same time, readers' and writers' understanding of fiction and non-fiction has become more sophisticated. The audience today is more aware of the performative aspects of self-narration and the selective nature of memory, both in literature and in digital self-representation. This awareness has led to a more nuanced reception of autobiographical texts, where the expectation is not for a factual recounting of a life but for an expressive, authentic engagement with the complexities of personal experience. Thereby, autobiography can no longer be studied within the sphere of non-fiction alone but also integrates features of narrative fiction to be reborn as an entirely new form of narrative. In this chapter, the effects of postmodernism, poststructuralism, and posthumanism on the transformation of the autobiographical medium will also be studied alongside its development.

"Postmodernism with its levelling of 'high' and 'popular', or elite and mass culture allowed for a revalorisation of cultural media products and accelerated the development from an autonomous liberal humanist subject to a postmodern, multilayered individual and 'consumer'

of cultural meaning, which in a media consumer society is always necessarily transmitted by the media" (Herbrechter 181). Marie-Laure Ryan critically engages with the postmodernist revalorization of culture and the changing attitudes towards fiction and non-fiction genres. In postmodernism, the distinction between 'high' (elite) and 'popular' (mass) culture is levelled, acknowledging the value of cultural products previously dismissed by the elite as lacking intellectual or artistic merit. This revalorization is indicative of a broader shift in cultural consumption patterns, where the traditional hierarchical binaries are dismantled, and a more inclusive, pluralistic approach to culture is embraced. In this context, the autobiography genre has evolved significantly. What began as a factual genre within Western literature has now branched into autofiction. This evolution mirrors a shift in how readers interact with and interpret narratives. Postmodernism challenges the idea of a singular, coherent self and presents individuals as complex beings whose cultural consumption is shaped by media. Autobiographical works thus transform from mere life chronicles into tools for shaping and understanding one's identity amidst a plethora of media influences. Ryan's concept of panfictionality in postmodernism posits that all narratives are somewhat fictional, as they shape our perception of reality through language. The convergence of 'high' and 'popular' culture in postmodernism leads to a fusion of fiction and non-fiction, creating a unified field of narrative without clear distinctions. The removal of distinct dualities is also reflected in the primacy of subjectivity in the construction of an identity. Subjectivity within the postmodern philosophy is intertwined with the language one uses and the cultural constructs one inhabits. The meaning-making process is based on lived experiences and their perception by individuals. Postmodernism, with its emphasis on the subjective nature of reality and the rejection of grand narratives, has had a profound impact on the concept of self and identity in the digital age. It challenges the perception of the self as a unified idea. Instead, postmodernism believes in the fluid and fragmented nature of the self (Gubrium and Holstein 685-703). This aligns with the

idea of the datafication of the self, where personal experiences and attributes are translated into data points, contributing to the construction of digital identities.

Postmodernism in the digital age has led to a phenomenon known as the "datafication of the self," where personal identities and experiences are increasingly quantified and managed through data. This concept is deeply intertwined with digital technology and the vast amounts of personal information that are collected, analyzed, and used by various platforms and services. The emergence of a culture based around the concept of big data has led to the reimagination of narratives. Traditionally narratives have been used as tools of meaning-making. The presence of narrative closure has most commonly

The development of new media technologies furthers the lack of subjectivity in the postmodern age. The birth and growth of new media technologies have replaced one-way communication with "new forms of decentralised dialogue and creates new assemblages of human, media and (search) engines and thus also provides new forms of political agency, cultural production and sociality"(Herbrechter 185). Namely, in the absence of the anthropocentric discourse, society no longer functions around the human being as the nucleus. Instead, all elements of society are connected in the form of a decentered network. This networked nature of contemporary society constitutes the defining principle of posthumanism. Posthumanism and postmodernism are closely related, with the former being born of the latter. With the evolution of the postmodern age, liberal humanist subjectivity is replaced by 'distributive cognition'(Herbrechter 187). The dissemination of information through various devices and networks depicts the remediation of a decentered subjectivity.

Postmodernism refers to style, form and genres. The nature of postmodernism makes it very difficult to provide a concrete definition for the same. The architect, Charles Jencks, mostly associated with postmodernism in architecture, talks about the omnipresence of postmodernism

in every sphere of life. The term postmodernism can represent a style that breaks free of any structure. It is characterised by multiplicity, fragmentation and fracture. The term 'post' in postmodernism refers to practices in contrast to modernism's unified and singular identity (Malpas 1-10).

The postmodern age, by its fractured nature, influences literary and theoretical practices. The effect of postmodernism is seen in the category of fiction, among other literary genres, that deliberately blurs the aspects of reality and fiction. Multiple narratives substitute the presence of a grand narrative as the possibility of a 'reality' or 'truth' has been made redundant by the development of poststructuralism and deconstruction. "Poststructuralism specifically critiqued the structuralist analysis of language, literature, and culture (Bolter 2)."The prominence of inter-dependability makes a text an extension of previously occurring texts which is part of a historically constructed discourse. Postmodernism does not focus on the fracturing of the self alone, but questions the existence of the self. Following the emergence of post-structuralism and deconstruction, feminist and postcolonial perspectives have critiqued the notion that autobiography is accessible solely to powerful white males. Feminism and postcolonial thought discuss the presence of the marginalised voice of a class of people who have never had the access to the form of autobiography. These theoretical aspects focus on the difference in the lived experience of women and the coloured, namely the 'other'.

In contrast to rigid categorization and formal structures, the concept of hybridity takes precedence. Hybridity refers to the blending or mixing of different elements, ideas, or identities that transcend traditional boundaries. In this context, hybridity becomes a prominent feature, challenging established norms and allowing for a more fluid and dynamic understanding of narratives.

Within this framework, space and temporality, as well as the boundaries between fact and fiction, converge and intertwine. The traditional distinctions between real and imagined, objective and subjective, become blurred. This blending of elements creates a space of playfulness where multiple possibilities and interpretations can coexist. By rejecting strict categorization and formal structures, narratives embracing hybridity depart from traditional linear storytelling. They embrace a more open-ended, flexible approach that allows for exploring diverse perspectives and juxtaposing seemingly contradictory elements. This emphasis on hybridity encourages a more inclusive and multifaceted understanding of narratives, acknowledging the complexities and fluidity of human experiences and identities (Jones 35-40).

Postmodernism is obsessed with the idea of the past, of representing the past as an abstraction. The mercurial identity of reality/fiction provides a sense of narrative freedom. Meaning making is no longer an end in itself. It is a process without an end. Language play and hybridity of genres together create a multifaceted narrative which speaks to different readers differently. Fragmentation and fluidity of images makes a homogeneous self an impossibility (Gudmundsdóttir 1-10). The self can only be understood through moments. The effect that postmodernism has on the construction of the self is further disintegrated under the techno-cultural changes brought about in tandem with posthumanism. Through its deliberations, this chapter will trace the development and transformation of the genre of autobiography with special focus on the influence of postmodernism and posthumanism.

Tracing the self-narrative: From autobiography to autofiction

The attitude towards the genre of autobiography has completely changed in the contemporary age. Literary devices are in continuous flux, changing with the changing demands of time. The perception that autobiography was exclusive to privileged white males was initially held, but the rise of feminism and postcolonialism has questioned and challenged this notion within the

genre. St. Augustine's *Confessions* is considered to be the first instance of autobiography in the western tradition (Fredriksen 87-98). However, the genre of autobiography mostly flourished during the 18th and 19th centuries in the hands of the likes of Jean Jacques Rosseau, representing liberal humanist subjectivity. Before the 18th century, the autobiography was considered a form of "factual literature". It was more of a historical document than a literary form. Spiritual autobiography was prevalent during this era. Autobiographical narratives during this period were forms of instructional literature coupled with historical events. The concept of modern autobiography begins with the European Enlightenment. During this phase, historiography is separated from autobiography. It is characterised by an autodiegetic narrator who chronologically narrates various life events. An autodiegetic narrator refers to a first-person singular narrative based on the present (Herman and Vervaeck 139). The latter half of the 20th century in western literary canon, beginning from the 1980s saw the increasing importance and integration of feminist, poststructuralist, and postcolonial theories within the sphere of autobiography theories. The genre became more approachable and inclusive with the alternative voices being inserted into the autobiographical form. Sidone Smith and Julia Watson discusses the prevalence of the idea of the story of the great man. "German tradition of Geistesgeschichte (the spirit of the historical moment) excludes other kinds of life narrative practiced for much of human history— letters, diaries, journals, memoirs, and other autobiographical modes of everyday and private life. It also excludes other kinds of subjects. Unmentioned are the non-public figures such as women, slaves, and colonized peoples, whose assertion of human status and exercise of rights as social subjects were systematically restricted and often brutally repressed and whose acts of self-narrating either silenced, repressed, or ignored."(Smith and Watson 196) The change in the attitude towards and perception of autobiography began as early as the 1900 in the hands of Virginia Woolf. Through her autobiographical writing such as *Journal of Mistress Joan Martyn* and *A Room of One's O*wn,

she tries to give voice to the woman's voice distinct from her husband's story (Anderson 96).

Another influential work is Roland Barthes' autobiography *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes.*

In his work Barthes looks at his self as an outsider. The importance of his work lies in the fact

that "Barthes by Barthes is involved in recognizing that a coherent self is a fiction." (Anderson

72). V. S Naipul's Prologue deftly represents postcolonial perspective in autobiography *to an*

Autobiography and Michael Ondaatje's *Running in the Family.* These texts focus on the

experience of moving to a different country with its respective historical backdrop and cultural

practices embedded in the colonial past of India and the new country (Anderson 116).

Since the 1980s, the field of autobiography studies has undergone a significant evolution,

becoming more accessible and diverse. This change is largely due to the incorporation of

feminist, poststructuralist, and postcolonial perspectives, which have allowed for a wider range

of stories and voices to be heard, particularly those that had been side-lined in the past. The

critical analysis of autobiographies has been enriched by these perspectives, leading to a more

expansive and profound understanding of the genre.

The initial wave of critical examination brought feminist viewpoints to the forefront,

highlighting the representation of women's experiences in autobiographical works. This

movement sought to challenge the male-dominated narrative and pushed for the inclusion of

women's stories, thereby broadening the spectrum of autobiographical expression and

introducing themes centred around gender, identity, and the physical self.

Subsequent criticism delved deeper by embracing poststructuralist and postcolonial insights.

Poststructuralism disrupted the idea of a singular, unchanging self, proposing that identities are

constructed through discourse and are inherently fluid. This lens provided a richer

interpretation of autobiographical texts, underscoring the influence of language and societal

structures on personal stories. Conversely, postcolonial theory shed light on the effects of

colonial legacies on personal and collective identities. Critics analyzed autobiographies from postcolonial perspectives to understand how narratives are shaped by historical and power relations, bringing to the fore the experiences of individuals from formerly colonized regions and their complex sense of self, heritage, and place.

The integration of these theoretical approaches has led to a more inclusive and intricate comprehension of autobiographies, prompting scholars to view these works not merely as individual stories but as narratives interwoven with cultural, historical, and political tapestries. This broader framework has facilitated a deeper investigation into the construction and representation of identities within autobiographical literature.

In the context of the digital era, especially on platforms like *Facebook*, these theories provide valuable insights into the crafting of online personas. Social media is a modern platform for mediating self-narration, where users selectively share their life events, thereby constructing digital autobiographies that mirror their identities and social bonds. The principles of feminist, poststructuralist, and postcolonial criticism that have deepened the analysis of traditional autobiographies are equally applicable to the digital narratives, illuminating the intricate process of identity formation in the virtual realm.

Therefore, the progression of autobiography studies, influenced by these critical waves, highlights the genre's ability to engage with the diverse aspects of human life. It showcases the role of autobiographies, both printed and digital, as essential mediums for examining the convergence of personal stories, cultural backgrounds, and societal transformations. Smith and Watson comment on the various stages of critical approaches to autobiography as a form of life narrative. They comment "Critics shifted from the concept of a universal "self"— achieving self-discovery, self- creation, and self- knowledge— to a new concept of the "subject" driven by self- estrangement and self- fragmentation; and they explored the problematic relationship

of the subject to language. As a result, the project of self- representation could no longer be read as providing direct access to the truth of the self. Truthfulness becomes a more complex phenomenon of narrators struggling to shape an "identity" out of an amorphous subjectivity"(Smith and Watson 201).

The autobiographies written in the Indian subcontinent fall within the purview of postcolonial autobiography. The practice of autobiography, which is essentially considered to be embedded in the Western paradigm and emerging out of European Enlightenment has also found its way into the Eastern practices of life writing. Specifically, in the context of India, autobiography found its way into the literary circles during the 18th and 19th centuries, through Western influence. The autobiographical practices in the Indian subcontinent veered away from the standards set by the western canon. Unlike the western embodiment of autobiography, in India, the literary form is essentially a public one. The initial examples of autobiographies were connected to the fervour of Nationalism. M. K Gandhi's *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth* Jawaharlal Nehru's *An Autobiography* represents a public self with the themes of politics, nationalism, and spirituality. Gandhi aims at depicting his political beliefs rooted in his spiritual ideologies. Nehru on the other hand dexterously hides his self behind the public persona he creates through his autobiography. In the context of India, the demarcation between the public and private self is extremely pronounced. Dipesh Chakrabarty comments on the "public" nature of autobiographies in India, written by men as opposed to the personal self, portrayed in the autobiographies written by women. The colonial impact was the main impetus behind the public autobiographies being written by men during the colonial period (Chakrabarty 9). Apart from the colonial aspects, other forms of marginalisation centred around gender and caste influenced women and Dalits to adopt the autobiographical tool. The earliest example of an autobiography written by a marginalised voice is Rashsundari Dashi's *Amar Jiban (My Life)* written during the 19th century. Written at 59, she beautifully depicts the

condition of women in 19th-century Bengal while traversing the public space as an author (Sadhu 1-12).

The alterations in the western paradigm and the parallel developments within the Eastern canon, centred around autobiography, paved the way for the development of the varying forms of autobiography. This literary genre has always resided in between non-fiction and fiction, history and novel. The genre of autobiography is based on conventions that autobiographers strictly follow. It is a type of life writing which is unified, historical, and factual. This form of life writing revolves around, what Philippe Lejeune terms the "autobiographical pact". According to this pact, the author/narrator and the readers understand that the text's content is entirely true and verifiable. Lejeune focuses on the relationship between author-narrator-protagonist. In an autobiography, all three are connected through a single identity. Hence it becomes easier to represent verifiable truth. The concept of the "autobiographical pact," as originally introduced by Philippe Lejeune, revolves around the implicit contract between the author and the reader, where the author promises to present their life truthfully in their autobiographical work. This pact underlines the expectation of authenticity and factual accuracy in autobiographical narratives, distinguishing them from purely fictional accounts.

In the context of the Indian autobiographical tradition, and more broadly within autobiography studies, this pact has undergone significant examination and expansion, particularly with the integration of feminist, poststructuralist, and postcolonial theories from the 1980s onwards. These theoretical frameworks have challenged and complexified the autobiographical pact, questioning the very nature of truth, self-representation, and the authenticity promised by the autobiographer to the reader.

Feminist theories have interrogated the autobiographical pact by emphasizing the ways in which gendered experiences and identities shape autobiographical narratives, often

highlighting the omission of women's voices and experiences in traditional autobiographical canons. This perspective has led to a broader understanding of autobiography, one that includes forms of self-narration that challenge patriarchal structures and offer insights into the gendered construction of identity.

Poststructuralist theories have further complicated the autobiographical pact by deconstructing the notion of a stable, coherent self that can be accurately and truthfully represented in narrative form. From this perspective, the self is seen as a construct, subject to the play of language and discourse, and thus any claim to an authentic representation of the self is inherently problematic. This has led to a more nuanced view of autobiography, recognizing it as a site of negotiation between the author's construction of self and the reader's interpretation.

Postcolonial theories have added another layer of complexity to the autobiographical pact by highlighting the impact of colonialism and postcolonial identities on autobiographical writing. In the Indian context, postcolonial autobiography often grapples with the legacies of colonialism, including issues of language, identity, caste, and resistance. This has expanded the scope of autobiography to include narratives that explore the intersections of personal and collective histories, challenging Eurocentric models of self-narration and emphasizing the multiplicity of voices and experiences within postcolonial societies. Peculiar to the Indian autobiographical tradition is the category of Dalit autobiography that emerged in the 1970's. This category of autobiography focused on capturing instances of caste prejudice, "discrimination", and "exclusion" (Pandey 162). Some important works belonging to this category are Vasant Moon's *Vasti,* Om Prakash Valmiki's *Joothan,* and Urmila Pawar's *Aaydaan[i].*Gyanendra Pandey discusses the reasons behind the emergence of Dalit autobiography. According to him "The making of a new Dalit politics and history in the late twentieth century was conditioned by the heightened expectations that came with the establishment of an independent Indian state in the 1940s and '50s, educational advance and

social mobility in the later colonial period (which expanded greatly after Independence, assisted by new policies of affirmative action), and the very emergence of Dalit autobiography and memoir as a form of protest literature and a means of documenting the Dalit struggle." (Pandey 163)

The integration of these theories into autobiography studies has thus significantly enriched the genre, making it more inclusive and approachable by validating alternative voices and forms of self-representation. It has transformed the autobiographical pact, not by discarding it, but by reimagining it as a more flexible, multidimensional agreement between author and reader, one that acknowledges the complexities of identity, memory, and representation. With the changing concepts of identity and subjectivity, autobiography as a genre is continually altered and transformed to be reinterpreted as a larger genre of life writing. The term 'life writing' is better suited to represent the subcategories of self-writing encompassing the voice of the privileged white male of renown and the marginalised voices and everyday life.

In comparison to the previous ages, the postmodern age is characterised by the all-encompassing presence of fragmentation. Postmodernism breaks away from all set conventions and creates a protean style, which is neither fixed nor unified. As a result, generic life writing is impossible in an age of a fractured society. It is here that a writing practice such as autofiction can flourish. Doubrovsky in his seminal work *Fils* defines autobiography as a "privilege reserved for the important people of this world." The postmodern age dilutes all forms of borders creating hybrid spaces. The private and the public are no longer distinguishable. Behind the guise of the term 'fiction', an author, via the narrator, often easily relates events and issues which would have otherwise been difficult. The movement towards a participatory culture of narrative construction paved the way for the birth of autofiction, a branch of postmodern autobiography. Serge Doubrovsky first coined the term autofiction in his work *Fils.* According to Genette, when an author writes about his own life in the form of fiction, it should be called

autofiction. It "blurs the border" between the real and the fictional. The postmodern self is a conglomeration of multiple truths and visions. Hence to capture this multiplicity a newer form of writing is required. The elusive nature of subjectivity propounded by postmodernism finds a voice in the experimental form of life writing denoted by autofiction.

Autofiction in Context:

Autofiction is born out of French Feminist writing and therefore refused a place within the western canon. Only in recent years has autofiction gained popularity as a tool that allows the expression of subjectivity in the guise of fictionalisation. The rationale behind the use of fiction in autobiography can be philosophical and critical, like in the works of J.M Coetzee, or entirely personal as in the case of the works of Rachel Cusk. *Aftermath,* the autobiographical work of Rachel Cusk, initially faced controversy. Cusk was heavily criticised for representing her views of motherhood. Her writing enraged a great number of readers. As a result, she decided to make her work "Less confrontational"(Przulj 273), by renaming the protagonist Faye. This enabled her to still be sincere in her idea of representation while not affecting the readers' sentiments. Autofiction as a literary tool brings together sincerity and authenticity. Therefore it has been gaining more acceptance in the field of autobiography. Tijana Prulj quotes Sidharth Srikanth "for authors of autofiction both autobiographies and novels are formally inadequate to register the truths about the modern self"(Przulj 274). In short, the postmodern self's multifaceted nature, as opposed to the preceding idea of the sovereign self, requires the amalgamation of fictional and non-fictional forms. Cusk's memoir based on her experience of motherhood is entirely personal and subjective. She is not writing about her experience as a representative piece associated with women in general. Time and again Cusk has focused on her memoir being a literary piece used for the 'true' and sincere expression of her experience. Autofiction focuses more on the process of writing than the writing itself. In her attempt of telling the

"truth", Cusk faces rejection, which can be countered by disengaging herself from the narrated "I" in the third person. By removing herself from the lived experiences, she is able to voice her opinions regarding motherhood which is considered to be a taboo if depicted as non-fiction.

Phillipe Lejeune believes that the relation between the author, the character, and the narrator characterises the genre of autobiography. According to Lejeune, in the established form of autobiography the "author = character=narrator"(Lejeune 6). He also categorises a third-person autobiography in which the author is equivalent to the character but is different from the narrator. This categorisation is problematised in the works of J.M Coetzee. Coetzee's first autobiographical novel creates this duality through the narrative voice used in his work *Boyhood: Scenes from provincial life[ii]*. The peritextual elements of the novel concerning the front and back cover and the publisher's note clearly state the novel is to be read as an autobiographical work:

"In *Boyhood, J. M Coetzee revisits the South Africa of half a century ago, to write about his childhood and interior life"*(Coetzee)[iii]. The quoted sentence depicts how Coetze*e* retrospectively explores his childhood and internal experiences by revisiting South Africa as it existed fifty years ago. Coetzee delves into his early years' memories, emotions, and personal reflections through his writings, shedding light on his upbringing and inner world. By revisiting his time in South Africa of his past, Coetzee aims to provide a deeper understanding of his formative years and the socio-political context in which he grew up. His autobiographical work delves into his personal history and the complex dynamics of the time, offering readers insights into the social, cultural, and political forces that shaped his identity and worldview. *Boyhood's* young narrator grew up in a small country town. With a father he imitated but could not respect and a mother he both adored and resented, he picked his way through a world that refused to explain its rules, but whose rules he knew that he must obey. Steering between these

contradictions, *Boyhood* exposes childhood's tensions, delights, and terrors with startling, haunting immediacy. Coetzee examines his young self with the dispassionate curiosity of an explorer rediscovering his early footprints, and the account of his progress is bright, hard, and simply compelling. Through the blurring of the genres of fiction and non-fiction, Coetzee critically approaches the genre of autobiography. He writes in the third person instead of the conventional mode of first person singular, to remove himself from the position of "authority and responsibility" which characterises autobiography. He chooses to represent his interiority, and in doing so, he combines fiction with non-fiction. The first two novels, *Boyhood* and *Youth* extensively use non-fictional content. Whereas, the trilogy's final book, *Summertime* uses more fictional content which are then connected to the impressions of Coetzee's self as depicted in *Boyhood* and *Youth.* He chooses to do so to better portray his sense of himself. In *Boyhood*, young John's experiences are presented to us by an adult J.M Coetzee and are intended to be the adult Coetzee's assessment of young John's nebulous interiority. John's thoughts and feelings are a product of the adult Coetzee's knowledge of the themes that shaped his own life, themes that are worked out in his fictional works. This adult awareness informs not only the narrations of interiority but also the thematic organisation of the narrative. (Srikanth 17)

The third-person narrative voice creates a heterodiegetic autobiography. Throughout the novel, the narrator refers to the character using the pronoun "he". Remembering the past self from the present tense position reinvents the self. The discrepancy in the narrative voice and the reference to the character in the third person, introduces a fictional element in the autobiographical narrative, by displacing the connection between the past and present selves. Coetzee through his narrator disassociates his past with the present self. He takes a stance of self-mockery based on his earlier self. His novels, *Boyhood, Youth,* and *Summertime* are regarded as an autobiographical trilogy. While *Boyhood* is a reflection on Coetzee's childhood, *Youth,* as the title of the novel suggests is focused on his adventures during his youth.

Summertime constructs an imaginary time and space in which Coetzee's narrator focuses on a period after the death of his protagonist, John. Though considered a trilogy, there is no continuity binding the three novels together. The common thread tying the three novels together is the protagonist, John. The paratextual elements persuade the readers to perceive the novels as autobiographical. However, the information provided within the folds of the narrative cannot be easily verified. *Summertime* specially imagines a scenario where Coetzee is dead and a fourth person narrative voice is used along with snippets of interviews of his friends and family members.

In keeping with the postmodernist obsession with the question of authority, Coetzee keeps harping on the mercurial tendency of authority in fiction. Coetzee in his novel *Diary of a Bad Year* elaborates "On authority in fiction", and states that "Authority must be earned; on the novelist author lies the onus to build up, out of nothing, such authority." (Samin 45) In keeping with this ideology, Coetzee represents the facts of his life in combination with fiction. The novels do not follow a linear trajectory apart from the name of the protagonist, nothing ties the three together. The third-person narrative voice used by the narrator to refer to himself is an act born out of the conflict between the public and the private life. Time and again the narrator in Coetzee's novels reminds the readers that whatever is being narrated may not be the truth.

Starting from *Boyhood,* where the protagonist John is depicted as a person who is perpetually conflicted to *Summertime*, in which the very concept of auto/biography is being torn apart and the truth of the authority is questioned. The number of interviews following the perusal of J.M Coetzee's notebooks after his 'demise' bring out responses more about the character themselves than Coetzee himself. Unlike in *Boyhood* and *Youth,* the name "John Coetzee" is used more than the term 'he'. Coetzee's preoccupation with the validity of truthfulness in self-narrative is

explicitly depicted in the contrasting and conflicting use of historical and biographical facts along with fictional elements.

The novel *Summertime* is set apart from the other two novels as this novel is a recounting of Coetzee's life after his fictional death. The character of the biographer meets with various characters who were deemed to be important in the life of J. M Coetzee. However, by retelling their encounter with Coetzee, the characters mostly recount about their own lives rather than about Coetzee. One character among them named Julia says "Mr. Vincent, I am perfectly aware it is John you want to hear about, not me. But the only story involving John that I can tell, or the only one I am prepared to tell, is this one, namely the story of my life and his part in it, which is quite different, quite another matter, from the story of his life and my part in it."(Coetzee, *Summertime* 43) Later in the novel, Julia refers to Coetzee giving her a copy of his novel *Duskland*, where she learns that Coetzee's father was a historian. On enquiring about it from Coetzee, he responds saying "You mean the preface?'…' Oh, that's all made up!" (Coetzee, *Summertime* 56)

Autobiography in the Postmodern age becomes an anomaly. Where temporality is no longer a fixed notion, a chronological narration of events fails to tell the story of the self. The investigation of time within postmodern self-narratives, especially with reference to autofiction, unveils a sophisticated perception of temporality and narrative form that stands in contrast to conventional autobiographies. Autofiction, a concept introduced by Serge Doubrovsky, merges real-life events with imaginative writing, granting writers the liberty to delve into their personal histories and identities without being constrained by absolute factual truth. This genre embodies postmodernism's critique of established ideas about truth, existence, and portrayal, underscoring the personal and fabricated aspects of identity and life stories. The self is construction in the context of unstructured temporality. Gerard Genette talks about a heterodiegetic narrator who is not a character in the narrative but has access to all events and

characters (Genette 764). Such a narrator can easily distance her/himself from the protagonist and study her/his life bound in time and space. The individual's perception of time, contesting the objective or collective depiction of time's progression seen in classic storytelling is challenged in autofiction. By focusing on the personal experience of time, these narratives bring to light each person's unique temporal realm, where time could seem extended, condensed, broken, or repetitive, as opposed to a consistent, straight passage. This emphasis on the personal experience of time resonates with postmodernism's doubt of overarching stories and absolute truths, cherishing personal viewpoints and life experiences instead.

Contemporary fiction focuses more on the psychological aspects of character interactions and experiences. According to Chloe Delaume, an autobiographer depicts his life through a chronological timeline and events, whereas in an autofiction the narrator studies, and processes particular events in her/his life to understand the implication of situations and the construction of a self. As a result, an autofiction will always portray how particular events affected the author-narrator-protagonist (Grant 301). In the realm of postmodern autofiction, the conventional linear timeline is often abandoned, showcasing a disjointed, non-sequential, and intricate recollection of memories and self-perception. Authors navigate through the malleable nature of time, where different eras converge, echoing the intricate act of recollection and oblivion. Narratives may oscillate between various epochs, indicative of the unpredictable emergence of memories, swayed by present sentiments, happenings, or contemplations.

Life has myriad dimensions to it. It is a mix of emotions, sentiments, psychology, societal attitude, and a temporal presence. An autobiography only portrays a historical timeline bereft of the other aspects of life. Autofiction, on the other hand, brings together the psychological effects and emotions evoked by particular phases of life. This phase might be limited to a single day, or leap through time, stringing together formidable events of a protagonist's life. In postmodern autofiction, the exploration of time is intrinsically linked to the concept of identity.

The disrupted, scattered timeline mirrors the complex, dynamic, and at times conflicting aspects of one's persona. Rather than following a straight path, autofiction mirrors the ongoing process of self-discovery, which is a continuous adaptation and reassessment of past events and future goals in the context of the now. Such temporal flexibility permits a deeper examination of identity, recognizing the influence of memory, creativity, and storytelling in its formation. Another important element of autofiction is the relationship between author-narrator-protagonist. The author of an autofiction draws attention to the narrator's and protagonist's fictionality. Some novels might have all three sharing the same name, while others deliberately destabilise the concrete connection between the three.

Through a series of five novels, St. Aubyn represents his emotional responses to his memories as he remembers them. Edward St. Aubyn uses a heterodiegetic narrator, Patrick Melrose, to represent his life and more importantly his trauma. St.Aubyn, like his protagonist Patrick Melrose, as a child, suffered sexual abuse at the hands of his father. The characters of Patrick's parents were modelled on Edward St. Aubyn's father, Roger St Aubyn, and his mother Lorna. In one of his interviews, Edward St. Aubyn mentions how writing about the trauma faced as a child helped him to deal with the pain- "I discovered the solution at the same time as Patrick, I discovered it by writing it. And I wrote with tears streaming down my face, tears of relief, not of self-pity or anything of that sort, I wasn't sobbing at the sorrow of it all, I was relieved that the solution had turned up, and it has something to do with no longer searching for consolation. Not to be consoled, or inconsolable, but something different."(Freeman)As apparent in his words, Edward St. Aubyn processed the trauma through his writing about the same but in the garb of fiction. A third-person narrator creates a distance to view the self under construction. Wordplay becomes important in the construction of the self. The generic game enables the representation of the past which is already always mediated through several viewpoints. In the words of St. Aubyn "I have spent twenty-two years trying to transform painfully lived

experience into what I hope is pleasurable reading experience." His novel series captures the dying aristocracy in the context of time and space. The private and public spaces where this class interacts again beautifully bring out the fragmentation of an age-old class, presently dwindling into oblivion. The readers see the deconstructed society through the eyes of Patrick Melrose. His childhood home, simultaneously, becomes a space of comfort as well as trauma. The narrator views the protagonist, as trapped in a nightmarish existence, fighting to come to terms with his father's, David Melrose's, paedophilic thirst and his mother's alcoholism to escape the tyranny of David Melrose.

Never Mind, the first novel of the series, opens an idyllic French suburb, where David Melrose is enacting his brutal sadism, a mark of the Aristocracy that he is a part of. His wife Eleanor Melrose, a rich American heiress, a victim of David's brutality, chooses to drown in alcohol to escape leaving her son Patrick unattended and exposed to David's wrath and sadism. For Patrick, the house is a haven as well as a space of unending trauma. This is the place where a part of himself is constructed.

St. Aubyn uses the heterodiegetic narrator to understand the situations he had to live through. The postmodern experience of a bygone era of Englishness sets the stage for the fragments of time. David Melrose often reiterates, "things were better in the eighteenth century." In contrast, the narrator portrays the aristocratic circle as "a breeding ground for disdainful misanthropic attitudes." The main protagonist, Patrick is irrevocably tied to the past, to his childhood. Across the five novels, he struggles to not become an English snob like his father. However, ironically, Patrick inherits his sarcastic bend of mind from David Melrose.

In *Bad News,* the second novel of the series, the narrator depicts Patrick spiralling out of control in a drug-induced haze. His heroin addiction shows his conflict with his childhood traumas. The memories of his father sexually abusing him for years pushes him towards a desire to

forget. The death of David Melrose does nothing to eradicate the horrors experienced by Patrick. Instead, it only enhances his dependence on drugs. While in New York to collect his father's ashes he exclaims "It was a moment of catastrophic charm. How could he ever hope to give up drugs? They filled him with such intense emotion." The houses he shared with his father, David, symbolised his trauma and the oscillating relationship with his father.

 The narrator unfolds the stories in fragments of synchronic times and events. The past, however, is always looming above the present. A common trope repeating time and again is that of wrongful disinheritance. Starting from his grandmother and moving down to his mother Eleanor, the family wealth is being passed on to others, leaving Patrick to take up a profession. In Patrick, the aristocratic fervour reaches its lowest point. His father, disinherited by Patrick's grandfather for taking up a profession, which was unlike an aristocrat, chose to get the degree but never practice. Patrick on the other hand had no choice but to work as an advocate to earn his living.

The narrator's distancing himself from the protagonist and the author distancing himself from the narrator creates multiple selves that appear to be separated. Patrick feels this sense of disassociation when he places himself as a voyeur of his sexual abuse by his father, David Melrose.

"For a moment Patrick felt he was up there watching with detachment the punishment inflicted by a strange man on a small boy. As hard as he could Patrick concentrated on the curtain pole and this time it lasted longer, he was sitting up there, his arms folded, leaning back against the wall(St. Aubyn, *Never Mind* 101)."

Approaching the self in the third person helps the author to disassociate himself from the event in the same vein as J M Coetzee. This approach is repeatedly found in autofiction as a means to separate oneself from the factual responsibility which is depicted in an autobiographical

pact. Patrick would often converse with phantom people during his drug-induced hallucinations. His struggle with heroin and the following euphoria is brilliantly depicted by the author using the voice of the narrator. A heroin addict himself, St Aubyn captures the effects of the drug on the fragmented mind.

"Patrick felt limitless dread. The rotten floorboards of his thoughts gave way one after another until the ground itself seemed no fitter than sodden paper to catch his fall. Maybe it would never stop. 'I'm so tired, so tired,' he said, sitting down on the edge of the bed, but immediately getting up again.(St. Aubyn, *Bad News 109*)'

Memory is essential to autofiction. The narrator re-invents and reconstructs time, space and memories to create a view of the protagonist's life through a critical mirror. St Aubyn cultivates his trauma and his struggles to capture the one-dimensional and depthless lifestyle of the English aristocrats.

In *Some Hope*, the third book of the series, Edward St. Aubyn captures the English attitude, snobbishness, and disregard. Situated in an English countryside, various characters belonging to the dying aristocracy come together in a fitting performance of pretentious and dark sarcastic humour. A note of nostalgia runs along the vein of the novel, as Patrick slowly places himself into a life bereft of heroin addiction. He fondly remembers his house in Lacoste, which is slowly descending into decay. The playgrounds of his childhood, the tree frogs, and the well had all been eradicated with time. However, Patrick still clung to the horrors of his childhood.

"…geckos still flickered over the ceilings and under the eaves of the roof, and a tremor of unresolved violence always disturbed the easy atmosphere of holidays, like the churning of an engine setting the gin trembling on a distant deck. Some things never let him down(St. Aubyn, *Some Hope* 92)."

The desire for a male heir, propensity for spending more than one could afford, and the showcasing of one's social position is deftly portrayed in this novel. The main event around which the plot of the novel revolves is the birthday party of one of the rich aristocrats belonging to the plethora of characters in the fictional framework of St Aubyn. The emotional responses of the characters to situations capture various sides of a single character. The identity is forever caught up in a process of construction.

The unreliable heterodiegetic narrator primarily speaks through the point of view of Patrick Melrose. Interchangeably, the other characters also find a voice in the narrative. The narrative voice shifts its focus to Patrick's son Robert in the fourth novel of the series, *Mother's Milk.* However, the narrative is back in the hands of Patrick, who appears to be a more experienced narrator.

The Patrick Melrose series, by its playfulness and fragmented construction can be placed within the practice of autofiction. The author cleverly titled the five novels of the series. Each of the titles is connected with important incidents in the life of the protagonist, Patrick Melrose. The novels do not narrate events sequentially from birth to death. Instead, each novel caters to the most influential events and situations in Patrick's life. *Never Mind*, introduces the readers to a single summer afternoon that began traumatic experiences of Patrick. *Bad News*, brings with it the news of David Melrose's death. It brings with it a promise of escape for Patrick, from the horrors of his childhood. Ironically enough he is pushed into a life of drug abuse to deal with his conflicting character, always fighting to not become like his father, *Some Hope,* set in the English countryside flits back and forth between the nostalgic past and a hopeful present. Patrick is no longer addicted to heroin. He appears to be in control of his life, though he keeps slipping back into the clutches of the past. *Mother's Milk* talks about Patrick's mother Eleanor Melrose, who places her concern in the wrong places. While she neglected her son, she compensated for it through her acts of charity. In complete contrast to Eleanor is Patrick's wife

Mary, who has devoted her life to her two sons. *At Last,* opens with the funeral of Eleanor Melrose. Patrick struggling with hate, love, and pity for his mother, finally finds a kind of absolution. However, Patrick continues to struggle with his desire to be "in two places at the same time." Together, the five novels narrate the story of St Aubyn. As in an autofiction, St Aubyn takes recourse to the form of narrative fiction to come to terms with his childhood trauma. He does not merely incorporate elements from his personal life, but he also strives to disrupt the readers' interaction with storytelling and subjectivity(Clark). Patrick Melrose is an example of a brilliantly written English autofiction showing how events shape a character and identity. His reason for combining the autobiographical form with fiction is to better represent his trauma and, simultaneously, process it by disassociating with the narrated "I". This is the prevalent trope in autofiction which removes the burden of verifiability from the author's shoulders.

Coupled with the postmodernist tendencies in life writing, the evolution of technology furthers the strengthening position of autofiction in the contemporary age. Olivia Laing's *Crudo* furthers the eponymous presence of autofiction in life writing. In this novel, Laing recreates her life experience coupled with the biographical elements of Kathy Acker, a renowned "counterculture provocateur"(Hadley). She continuously shifts between the voice of "Kathy" and Laing voicing her own experiences in the 21st century. In one of her interviews, Laing talks about the "impossibility of a single self"(Armitstead and Tresilian). In her novel, Laing focuses on current issues of gender fluidity, politics, and other global issues which she encounters on the internet. Like J M Coetzee, St.Aubyn, and Rachel Cusk, Laing too uses a heterodiegetic narrator to depict the multiplicity of self. She begins the novel with :

"Kathy, by which I mean I, was getting married. Kathy, by which I mean I, had just got off a plane from New York. It was 19:45 on 13 May 2017. She'd been upgraded to business, she was feeling fancy, she bought two bottles of duty-free champagne in orange boxes, that was the

kind of person she was going to be from now on"(Laing). The quoted lines depict the heterodiegetic narrative voice which is used to combine the biographical details of Olivia with Kathy Acker in the character of "Kathy". In her own words the novel is about "thievery"(Armitstead and Tresilian), in which she uses the readily available details of Acker's biography.

Karl Ove Knausgaard's autofictional series *My Struggle* represents the change in narrative structure which defines the influence of database structures, as discussed in Chapter Two. Unlike in traditional autobiographical work which is based on selection. Kausgaard resorts to the use of lists and minute details in order to narrate his life. He uses anaphoric singulative mode of storytelling, which focuses on detailed moment-by-moment recounting of events and thoughts, rather than adhering to a traditional, plot-driven narrative structure. The series is known for its voluminous detail, recounting events from the author's life with intense granularity. Each volume explores different facets of his life, from childhood through adulthood, focusing on mundane details, inner thoughts, and the complexities of human relationships. This approach results in a narrative that is both expansive and deeply personal, challenging conventional expectations of storytelling and autobiographical fiction.

This mode of storytelling is evident across the six novels of the series. For example in the third book of the series, *Boyhood Island,* Knausgaard details his father's every action and recounts a memory captured in photographs "Of course I don't remember any of this time. It is absolutely impossible to identify with the infant my parents photographed, indeed so impossible that it seems wrong to use the word 'me' to describe what is lying on the changing table, for example, with unusually red skin, arms and legs spread and a face distorted into a scream, the cause of which no one can remember, or on a sheepskin rug on the floor, wearing white pyjamas, still red-faced, with large dark eyes squinting slightly. Is this creature the same person as the one sitting here in Malmo writing? And will the forty-year-old creature who is

sitting in Malmo writing on this overcast September day in a room filled with the drone of the traffic outside and the autumn wind howling through the old-fashioned ventilation system be the same as the grey hunched geriatric who in forty years from now might be sitting dribbling and trembling in an old people's home somewhere in the Swedish woods?" (Knausgaard, *Boyhood Island* 6-7). Knausgaard, instead of condensing or synthesizing experiences, catalogues them in detail, mirroring the expansiveness and inclusivity of a database. Knausgaard's writing stretches beyond the selective memory and synoptic view of traditional autobiographical storytelling, which often uses the iterative mode where repeated events are mentioned only once to condense and provide a narrative economy. Instead, his approach mirrors the digital age's obsession with capturing every detail, akin to a *Facebook* timeline where every post and photo contributes equally to the portrayal of an individual's identity and life narrative, without prioritization or hierarchy.

Knausgaard reflects on the impossibility of completely identifying with past versions of oneself, suggesting a dissonance between the present narrative 'I' and the past experienced 'I'. This aligns with the anaphoric singulative storytelling in that it challenges the narrative coherence often sought in traditional autobiographies and reflects a more fragmented, database-like structure of identity across time. The stream of consciousness that unfolds in this passage, where Knausgaard scrutinizes the past and questions the continuity of self, can be seen as an enactment of navigating a database of personal history, full of entries that resist synthesis into a single, cohesive narrative.

Thus, Knausgård's narrative mode, much like *Facebook* narratives, presents a form of digital autofiction that allows for an accumulation of moments and details, emulating the way digital

platforms store and present data. The resulting narrative is one that does not prioritize events based on traditional narrative importance but treats all memories, thoughts, and experiences as equally significant, resonating with the database structure's non-hierarchical, ever-expandable nature.

Knausgaard's method mirrors the paradigmatic dimension by presenting a comprehensive database of life events, rather than selecting a linear, syntagmatic narrative path. His writing aligns with the shift observed in new media, like social media platforms, where the emphasis is on the availability and presentation of myriad details and choices rather than on a singular, linear story.

In graphically representing the narrative structure of "My Struggle," one might visualize it as an extensive field rather than a linear path, where each point represents a detailed recounting of an event or thought, interconnected not by a straightforward plot but by the thematic and existential exploration of the author's life. This structure highlights the series' deviation from traditional narrative strategies, embracing a form that reflects the intricacies and repetitions of real life instead of a constructed narrative arc.

Unlike the autofictional practices in the Western canon, the logic for adopting the autofictional mould in the works of Indian authors, are quite different. As seen in the discussion of the works of Coetzee, St. Aubyn, Rachel Cusk and Olivia Laing, their approach to autobiography is a critical stance on the process of self-writing and a commentary on existing social aspects . In comparison the works of Indian authors, like Yasodhara Laal, chooses the medium of autofiction to make it more marketable. She believes that publishing a book as fiction has greater attraction in the Indian market than the non-fictional medium (Bhargava). In the western canon, autofiction is mostly practiced by privileged men and women. The representation of the marginalised voice is through the female voice and the non-celebrity day-to-day rendering of

lived experience. Whereas in the context of India, marginalisation is represented on various levels of distinction beginning from gender to caste, religion, class, and language. This makes the "Indian" autofiction far more varied. Yasodhara Laal in her novels *Just Married, Please Excuse,* and *How I became a Farmer's Wife* presents her lived experience in the form of a traditional fictional narrative with a proper plot structure. Her use of vernacular language written in the manner of texting adds a different angle to the medium of autofiction. Charu Nivedita refers to his novel, *Zero Degree* as an autofiction (Khan). This novel breaks away from the traditional fiction written in India. Written in the postmodern style of fiction, similar to Italo Calvino, Charu Nivedita recreates the literary canon within Tamil literature. He has dedicated the novel to Kathy Acker, earlier discussed with reference to the work of Olivia Laing. In a similar style as Laing, Charu Nivedita depicts the narrated "I" as a combination of his lived experience with other fictional/non-fictional characters. He introduces the "I" as:

"THE "I" THAT APPEARS at the beginning of this novel refers to me, Charu Nivedita, the author. But there are several other "I"s responsible for the book. First of all, there is Surya, who wanted to write a novelisation of the life of Muniyandi, and dedicate it to his daughter, Genesis; He made pages and pages of notes and pasted in lots of clippings from the daily newspapers. Then there is Muniyandi himself, who later went through Surya's notes and made all sorts of corrections and revisions. But this material alone could never have been organised into a complete novel. In the tangled mess, it is often confusing who the "I" refers to sometimes it is Muniyandi, other times it is Surya, other times it is simply lost in a fog"(Nivedita 11). The fracturing of the "I"s into several fragments is reminiscent of the postmodern lack of subjectivity and genre-blending which characterises autofiction. These examples can be referred to to understand the varying approach and attitudes towards autofiction in the western and eastern paradigms.

Conclusion:

The study of life writing has evolved through the ages to a literary practice that encompasses different forms of autobiography, autofiction, and autobiografiction, to name a few. As discussed in the previous chapter, the "narrative turn" played a crucial role in changing the attitude toward what is considered literature. In connection to the previous chapter, this has further focused on the changing understanding of what is to be considered an autobiography and how it is related to the truth component. With the changes in narrative structure and the theory of truth, an entirely "true" autobiography is no longer possible in the contemporary age. Postmodernism alongside the development of poststructuralism, feminism, and postcolonialism has made it impossible to write an autobiography in a single autonomous voice. This chapter has focused on understanding the progression of autobiography as a genre, both in the Western and Eastern canon, which has slowly resulted in different forms of life writing and enabled the confluence of fiction with non-fiction.

Notes:

[i] Vasant Moon's *Vasti* has been translated into English as *Growing up an Untouchable in India:A Dalit Autobiography.* Om Prakash Valmiki's *Joothan* has been subtitled as "A Dalit's Life". Urmila Pawar's *Aaydaan* has been translated in English to *The Weave of My Life.*

[ii] Refer to Coetzee, J.M. *Boyhood: scenes from provincial life.* Vintage Books. 1998. This is the edition I am referring to in the thesis.

[iii] Refer to the blurb in the opening page of J.M Coetzee's novel *Boyhood.*

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Chapter 4

Digital Memory, Narrativity, and Interactivity

Storytelling has been an essential tool for the representation of human experience. Down the ages, storytelling has resorted to various forms. Autobiography is one of the many forms which is used for a structured representation of events and experiences. As discussed in the previous chapter, Autobiography as a genre has been transformed to adapt to the changes in the social fabric. The development of postmodernity and postmodernism enabled the birth and growth of autofiction as a form of fictional autobiography. Postmodernity refers to the historical period following modernity, associated with globalization, consumer culture, digital technologies, and the erosion of traditional forms of social organization, such as the family , the nation state, and religion. Postmodernism is often considered to be the response to postmodernity, as it seeks to understand and critique the cultural and intellectual shifts that have taken place in the The premise of this chapter is to further elaborate on the connection between postmodernism and posthumanism, which will then connect to the development of digital posthuman autobiography. The 'networked society' has introduced newer aspects of digital culture. A critical aspect of digital culture is the construction of digital memory. The nature of memory in the digital sphere transforms into a body of data and metadata. This chapter will also focus on the characteristic of memory and truth in a digital society concerning its effect and importance in posthuman autobiography. It will further focus on the changing narrative structure of the evolving memory culture and life writing in the context of the digital space.

In the traditional understanding of autobiography, the author seeks to present a coherent and stable narrative of significant life experiences, focusing on events, emotions, and relationships. However, Herbrechter considers autobiography a genre of writing that is re-contextualized in the light of posthumanist ideas about nature and self. He believes posthumanism challenges the

traditional sense of memory and autobiography (McNeill, "Digital Posthuman Autobiography" 2-5). Posthuman autobiography is rooted in the belief that technology, media, and cultural change profoundly transform our lives. New forms of technology are significantly changing how human beings interact with the world and each other. Enhancement in technology blurs the boundaries between the physical and digital realms, between the biological and the artificial, and between the human and the non-human. The increasing integration of technology into our lives can also have significant implications for our sense of self. It also changes how we experience the world. Posthuman theories of autobiography focus on the "webs of relation" influencing the construction and reception of the autobiographical self and text. Rob Gallagher states, "Digital Media are fostering new understandings of personhood"(McNeill, "Digital Posthuman Autobiography" 5). The human-machine interface used for daily interaction has redefined the idea of identity connected to personhood. Autobiography in digital space differs from printed text due to the amorphous nature of the digital text. It is not a fixed text but a continuous narrative that is perpetually updated.

An important aspect of understanding how digital posthuman autobiography differs from traditional autobiography is understanding the structural difference between print and digital narratives. Print narratives primarily rely on written text to convey the story. Descriptive language, dialogue, and narration are crucial elements for constructing the narrative world and engaging readers' imagination. It is also bound by spatial constraints. In contrast, digital narratives constructed using social media platforms, are multimodal and spatially boundless. Philippe Lejeune undertook the sampling of 'online diaries' or blogs. He tried to understand the difference between diaries in the pre-digital age and the post digital age. According to Lejeune, the online environment is "the total opposite of the conditions that led to the development of the personal diary, which is based on a different notion of time (delay, maturation, and assimilation), and of communication (deferred or exclusive, that is, based on

secrecy)." (Hayes 338) In contrast, social media platforms like *Facebook* showcase narratives of instant gratification. The element of retrospection is most often missing from the narrative engagements of the *Facebook* profile. The profile is structured around listing of activities of the past as well as the present moment in the form of *Facebook* Live. The subject presentation through the *Facebook* profile posts are also unique in the sense that "Individuals construct themselves as subjects because they can make themselves the objects of their narratives by virtue of their reflexive practice." (Schachtner 4). While presenting the self, the respective users look at the self as an object. The self can only be realized through the recognition by the others in the form of likes and comments. The following chapter will discuss the architectural features of *Facebook* which enables a different form of narrative practice.

Social Media spaces like *Facebook* are advertised as democratised spaces where the users can represent themselves as they wish. However, the personal memories shared on *Facebook* are structured in a given format following the platforms' guidelines. Individual identity is only granted meaning and significance 'in relation to the network,' which in effect means that the 'private, interior life of the humanist subject . . . is thrown over for the networked self (McNeil 72).' There is no longer a single sovereign self but a conglomeration of various identities which are equally essential. The self, like the memories, is networked. They are constantly shifting and changing through clicks and links. These constant changes are connected to the ubiquity of collective memory, substituting memory as a form of a singular experience. The memory construction process is intertwined with various elements that converge, depicting the mediated expression of the self. The lived experiences and available technologies and practices create a postmodern collective space. The networked nature of memories and experiences of the digital age is contextualised within the posthuman paradigm. The next section of the chapter will offer a detailed understanding of the autobiographical practices of the digital posthuman.

Human and non-human elements forming a digital narrative

Posthumanism critiques the traditional anthropocentric perspective centred around the superiority of humans. In its philosophical essence, anthropocentrism signifies a human-centric perspective that assigns exclusive intrinsic worth to humans. In contrast, all other entities are valued solely based on their usefulness to humans or their instrumental value(Kopnina et al. 113). Posthumanism, instead focuses on incorporating non-human factors in understanding the world. The binary existence of the human and the non-human is no longer relevant. It is a new way of understanding the relationship between human and non-human elements. Ihab Hassan coined the term posthumanism, commenting, "We need first to understand that the human form- including human desire and all its external representations- may be changing radically, and thus must be re-visioned. We need to understand that five hundred years of humanism may be coming to an end, as humanism transforms itself into something that we must helplessly call posthumanism" (Hassan 843). The transition from humanism to posthumanism as indicated by Ihab Hassan's insights comes at a pivotal moment in the intersection between technology, culture, and identity. Hassan's work predates the widespread adoption of personal computing and the internet, yet his anticipation of a shift towards posthumanism is incredibly prescient in the context of today's digital age. This transition reflects a broader, more inclusive understanding of identity, consciousness, and the body, influenced significantly by digital technologies. Posthumanism, as Hassan suggests, moves beyond these foundations, questioning the centrality of the human in discussions of technology, ecology, and biology. It challenges the anthropocentric views of humanism, proposing a more integrated or networked perspective of humanity's role in a broader ecological and technological context. This shift is not merely philosophical but tangible in the digital age, where technology mediates human experience, identity, and reality. *Facebook* is an essential case study of mediated human experiences and their interaction with the idea of identity and reality. *Facebook* allows users to

create and curate digital identities that can be radically different from their offline selves. This multiplicity of identities reflects posthumanist notions of the self as fluid and distributed. Users navigate between their offline realities and online personas, suggesting a composite view of identity that transcends the physical body. This multiplicity challenges the humanist idea of a singular, coherent self, embracing instead a more fragmented and pluralistic understanding of identity.

The centrality of human beings is substituted by the belief in the networked pattern. In relation to social media spaces, the materiality of information technology's hardware and software components connects with the human components to create a network. The interaction of human and non-human elements forms this network for communication. The interface between users and *Facebook* demonstrates a symbiotic relationship between humans and technology, characteristic of posthumanist thought. The platform mediates nearly every aspect of social interaction, from communication to the formation and maintenance of relationships, embedding technology deeply into the fabric of human life. This symbiosis challenges the humanist separation between subject (human) and object (technology), suggesting a co-constitutive relationship where humans and technology evolve together. As discussed in the previous chapter, towards the end of the 20th century, postmodernism and poststructuralism focused on displacement. Both postmodernism and poststructuralism enact the subversion of the modernist perception of "unity, simplicity or universality" (Bolter 2). Language and cultural systems construct meaning. Therefore, there are multiple and contrasting perspectives on any given issue. Power dynamics and social hierarchies form the basis of these perspectives. Postmodernists and poststructuralists reject the traditional notion of grand narratives in favour of fragmented and multiple perspectives. The concept of the "postmodern schizoid" defines an individual's fragmented, disconnected self and fluidity in a postmodern society. The postmodern and posthuman age redefines the embodied self of the contemporary age. The

postmodern idea of the disembodied self suggests that as technology advances, the boundaries between the human and the machine will blur. New forms of consciousness and identity, no longer limited by physical embodiment, will replace the traditional human self.

Among the foremost posthumanists, Donna Haraway talks about the process of cyberization of humans. She discusses the irrelevance of the contemporary age's distinction between humans and non-humans. According to Haraway, cyborgs are "creatures simultaneously animal and machine, who populate worlds ambiguously natural and crafted. Modern medicine is also full of cyborgs, of couplings between organism and machine, each conceived as coded devices, in an intimacy and with a power that were not generated in the history of sexuality" (Haraway 150-51). Haraway's understanding of the posthuman signifies a clean break from the traditional humanist form, further strengthening the hierarchy through transhumanism. Transhumanism focuses on the enhancement of human capabilities with the interference of technology.

On the other hand, posthumanism negates the human's centrality vis-a-vis the non-human. Through her understanding of the cyborg, Haraway hints at the existing relationship between humans, non-humans, and machines. She explores the presence of the "ghost" in the 'pre-cybernetic age.' The "ghost" acts as a metaphor for the representation of the human mind in literature and technology before the rise of cybernetics. She argues that the "ghost" is a reminder of the human body's limitations. The human mind is perceived to be a separate and autonomous entity. She further points to the posthumanist aspect of problematizing the dualistic view of the human-nonhuman, the natural, and the artificial. The presence of digital networks has made the distinction between physical existence and computer simulation redundant (Herbrechter 343). Hayles believes that the vital aspect of the digital subject is the "dynamic of fragmentation and recombination." This aspect of the digital subject means that it is no longer static and pre-determined. Instead, it constantly evolves and changes through

fragmentation and recombination, giving rise to "emergent properties," which are new and unexpected behaviours that emerge through the combination of smaller parts.

Understanding posthumanism as an extension of postmodernism and poststructuralism is essential for tracing the development of posthuman autobiography. Posthuman autobiography refers to the self-narrative of an individual who has undergone significant technological or biological enhancements, resulting in a fundamentally altered sense of self. An essential aspect of an Autobiography is the study of memory. In the context of autobiography, memory is referred to as autobiographical memory. Autobiographical memory is a type of memory that allows individuals to recall specific events and experiences from their past. This type of memory plays a significant role in our sense of self and identity. In addition, it has close ties to the sense of continuity over time. The following section will elaborate on the changing perspective of memory and its experience within the milieu of digital media culture, the nature of truth, and its implications concerning subjectivity.

Memory and Truth in Digital Posthuman Autobiography

Media has been acting as a storage unit for memory since time immemorial. However, the digital aspects of evolved representation technology have redefined memory space. Therefore, an updated ontology for memory research is imperative, one that recognizes the impact of media on shaping and transforming the essence of memories and what can be remembered or forgotten. There is a growing degree of mediatization in every aspect of human life. This newer form of memory ecology created by hyperconnectivity convolutes the divide between memory and media as separate entities (Hoskins, *Digital Memory Studies,* 1-24). Mediatization refers to the media's effect on social changes and its processes. Memory in the age of social networks is geared around "where to look". The importance of remembering as an act of cognition is no longer relevant. The ubiquitous nature of digital tools and connectivity constantly brings the present to the forefront. As a result, past experiences are perceived entirely through the present

moment. The culture of instant gratification is disconnecting social media users from their past in the presence of the present. According to Todd Gitlin, "the experience of immediacy is what media immersion is largely for: to swell up the present, to give us a sense of connection to others through an experience we share." (Hoskins, "The Mediatization of Memory", 39) That is the transformation of personal and private memories into a shared, and collective memory has made the present moment critical for the formation of personal narrative. The 'datafication' of a person on social media platforms creates the space for making an archival memory. 'Datafication' refers to transforming human experience and activity into digital data. The cultural framework or 'schemata' reconstructs the past organised memories. Schemata are mental frameworks or structures that individuals use to organise and make sense of information. They influence how individuals process and remember information, especially when forming narratives. The past is experienced as an active network that blurs the private and public distinction. The memory boom in the digital age, "marked a convergence of a new public will-to-remember with technologies that gave such remembrances their archival form…(Hoskins, *Digital Memory Studies,* 14-15)." As such, memory is reshaped into archives of the self, leading to the formation of self-narratives.

The nature of memory transformed as written literature gradually replaced oral literary traditions. Without any external device for recording memories, oral culture emphasized remembrance through reiteration and shared experiences. The invention of writing led to storing memories in a tiered structure. A networked structure again replaced this with the development of the digital space, removing the boundary between media and memory by interconnecting the same.

Neuroscientists support the psychologists' understanding that memories derived from personal experiences are alterable and manipulated renditions of past experiences. Recalling the past is always based on the present self and the related concepts of society. "Memory can be creative

in reconstructing the past, just as the imagination can be reconstructive in memorizing the present- think only of the many visual tricks people play to perform the cognitive task of factual recall" (Dijck 34). It means remembering a past event and capturing an instance in the present are both affected by some construction. Memory is not a stagnant and unchanging representation of the past but a dynamic process influenced by the brain, mind, technology, and materiality. The materiality of technological modes is essential in defining mediated memories.

Technology and materiality create the cultural framework within which the mediated memories are embedded. Digitization affects memory culture constructed by the use of mediated memories. Technological advancement brings about a profound transformation in our knowledge and understanding, revising our perception of self and society. Eugene Thacker uses the term "biomedia" to refer to how memory and materiality are changing in a digital age. By emphasizing the significance of digital technologies in shaping our understanding of memory and experience, Thacker's work offers a critical perspective on the intersection of memory and materiality in digital posthuman autobiography. He believes that the increasing use of brain-machine interfaces, wearable technologies, and other digital memory storage and retrieval forms is transforming how individuals experience and recall their memories and experiences (Thacker 1-31). The cultural meaning of mediated technologies directly links private life to public culture. As suggested by Thacker, the changing technologies lead to a morphing nature of memory. Foucault's concept of "technologies of truth and self" offers a valuable framework for analyzing the intersection of memory and materiality, specifically regarding digital posthuman autobiography. It refers to how individuals are encouraged and enabled to understand and regulate themselves through self-reflection, self-examination, and self-surveillance. In the digital age, technologies of the self, have become central in constructing identity by monitoring and regulating an individual's thoughts, behaviours, and emotions.

In the digital age, the technologies of self, have transformed into the technologies of sharing. The cultural framework and practices connected to the development of the digital space dictate what constitutes memories. Social network platforms record memories in the contemporary age that changes the nature of memory. Digital memory blurs the boundary between private life and public life. Recorded memories of private life are exposed for the public to peruse and comment on. Social media platforms like *Facebook* works along this line of transforming the private to public discourse. Written in the form of a life narrative, a *Facebook* profile challenges the traditional forms of autobiographical narrative. Print narratives are essentially very different from transmedial narratives. Therefore, the manner of representing memory also changes in the digital narrative. However, unlike print narrative, narrative in the digital medium is engaged in an active process. *Facebook* profiles access different mediums to represent events. The events are not necessarily connected with space and time. The passive and static nature of the print narrative is transformed into a dynamic and active narrative in the digital media. Uses of images, sound, and videos create a more detailed narrative than a print narrative which is much more constricted.

Bernard Stiegler argues that human cognition has always used a process of exteriorization, through which external forms of memory, such as writing, aid internal cerebral cognition processes. How we remember is then influenced by the external recording devices available (Razinsky 189). Reconsolidation theory best explains the changing nature of personal memories in the digital space. This theory refers to how a previously consolidated memory is updated or modified through reactivation and re-encoding. It also highlights how technologies can manipulate personal memories and experiences. "What is recorded by digital memory is the result of decisions made about what constitutes experience and what is significant" (Razinsky 188). By emphasizing how digital technologies can alter the process of memory reconsolidation, this theory underscores the importance of considering the broader social,

cultural, and political implications of these technological advancements, particularly regarding the authenticity and reliability of personal narratives.

In this respect, the narrative merges into what Hoskins calls 'the connective turn', concerning the experience of memory in a digital media culture. The connective turn includes the enveloping of every day in real-time or near-instantaneous communications, including 'messaging', be these peer-to-peer, one-to-many, or more complex and diffused connections within and between groups, 'crowds', or networks, and facilitated through mobile media and social networking technologies and other internet-based services. (Hoskins, *Digital Memory Studies,* 86).

The confluence between narrative and connectivity signals a shift in 'the organization of platforms from database structures into narrative structures." (Dijck 203) Marie Laure Ryan focuses on the movement from "narrativity to interactivity", which refers to the evolution of storytelling from a predominantly linear and passive to a more active and participatory one. Ryan argues that as new forms of media emerge, such as video games, virtual reality and hypertext, the traditional notion of narrativity is changing. In these new forms of media, the audience is no longer merely a passive recipient of the story but actively involved in shaping the story's outcome. For example, the status updates on *Facebook* are not a passive narration by a user. Instead, the narrative is furthered by responses in the form of comments, emoticons or even link to a different narrative. This process makes the self-narrative on *Facebook* a continuous and active narrative through the interaction between the narrator and the narratee. The interactivity of these new forms of media challenges the traditional definition of what constitutes a narrative and how stories should be told(Ryan 338). The following section will elaborate on the positioning of memory concerning the narratives of the social media.

Social Media, Narrativity and Autofiction:

In the context of the information age, it is essential to incorporate the understanding of subjectivity through the posthuman lens. "In contemporary media culture, users are not autonomous actors; instead, their identities are defined by the performances that they give in their almost constant interaction with social media and entertainment applications. Furthermore, users could be said to perform their identities according to discursive frameworks constrained in part by the social media applications themselves" (Bolter 6-7).

The turn of the twentieth century saw a change in the perception of history. The inclusion of minority voices reframed what constitutes history. Previously history had only been accepted as the dominant narrative voice. However, with the development of Postcolonial history, the alternate voices questioned the dominance of hierarchy in history. In addition, the democratization of knowledge and information began with the development of the printing press. Walter Benjamin's analysis of the importance of 'mechanical reproduction' as a critical element in the position of art deftly portrays the beginning of this form of democratization. Similarly, the development of internet and the birth of web 2.0 brought about a significant change in the autobiography discourse.

The field of Autobiography studies looks at a narrated self as a socio-historical construct. In place of the individual's construction of the self, collective memory is always prioritised. A change in attitude to autobiography can only be observed in recent years. "The traditional focus on 'great men' and public figures has been challenged by feminist, poststructuralist, anthropological and postcolonial criticism as male-dominated, elitist, Eurocentric and frequently ethnocentric" (Wagner-Egelhaaf 74). Contemporary criticism has influenced the development of interest in the self-narration of individuals earlier dismissed as suitable subjects

for self-writing. The rise in self-publishing has paved the way for writing about tabooed aspects of life, such as desire, a different approach to life can now be easily written on *Facebook* as these spaces are instrumental in raising a voice and spaces of hearing as well. This change in focus is directed toward reconstructing the understanding of history "to question, correct, complete and complicate grand narratives about the past" (Wagner-Egelhaaf 74). The fragmented nature of the postmodern age has greatly influenced the cultural construction of identity and the self. Social media has transcended the bounds of space and time. It is an archived space where personal memories are archived for the public to access.

Memory can no longer truthfully recount a life story. Fragmentation is the essential hindrance to a fixed and singular narrative. Autofiction brings out the failure of memory in capturing a chronological life narrative. It moves towards a practice of blurring genres and bringing together facts and fiction. The concept of self and selfhood undergoes a significant change in the hands of autofiction. It focuses on the idea of the mediated self. The self can only be constructed through interaction with a social landscape and the perception of the self. The self-narration is not entirely based on memory itself but the representation of memory through reconstructing the past. In Autobiography studies, the concept of a single sovereign authorial self slowly diminishes with the changing milieu of memory cultures. An individual's memory is interlinked with cultural memory. According to Max Saunders, "our memories are always already textualized" (Saunders 323). The probability of "authentic" memory is impossible as remembering is always mediated. The term "fictions of memory" denotes remembering and reconstructing the past with the present.

Poststructuralist criticism believes in textuality bereft of the presence of the author. Life writing denotes inclusive voices in the narrative, including the forgotten and marginalized voices. According to Derrida, memory archiving is based on various politics. In his seminal work *Archive Fever*, Derrida comments on how an archive not only stores but also influences the

production of the archivable. Social media platforms such as *Facebook* can be associated with archiving. *Facebook* essentially archives the personal experiences and memories of the users. However, social media is considered a democratic space allowing users to personalize their representation; the algorithmic pattern of the platform structures the representation. The technical structure of the platform determines how and what a user archives. *Facebook* offers the amalgamation of various new media formats for archiving life experiences. This means that *Facebook* users can combine written texts with audio/video clips and images to construct a narrative using the archived materials available to the users. The life narrative is no longer restricted to the author alone. The audience, through comments and likes, also contributes to the writing of the narrative. "*Facebook* is a database of users and for users; each user's page is a database of their life, making this social network site a collection of collections and collectives. Like many digital media objects, it is based on computer database logic rather than the narrative logic of older media (Garde-Hansen 141)." The data in itself cannot be read as a narrative. The narrative is created through the interaction of databases and memory retrieval. The 'architexture' of *Facebook* profiles and its narrative paradigm of the homogenous archive will be discussed further in the next chapter.

With the advancement of the 20th century, the autobiographical text shifted its focus from the "Narrated I" to the "Narrating I." The process of self-writing becomes essential to the construction of the autobiographical self. In keeping with the belief of theorists such as Roland Barthes, the factual and authentic autobiography becomes irrelevant. The postmodernist stance of the fragmented self, further negates the relevance of a sovereign self-representation. Camille Lauren posits the idea of shift from "I am" to "I are", to represent this very multiplicity of selves("Autofiction"). The ambiguous nature and role of memory in the construction of individuality furthers the need for a literary tool to combine the elements of autobiography and fiction. This leads to the development of the contemporary literary genre of autofiction.

In the networked society, memory has become inerasable. The ever-growing and elusive internet space is a giant memory storage unit, a veritable 'memory machine.' Therefore, life writing has become a process of 'self-deletion'. The movement from "narrativity to interactivity" referred to in the previous section is based on the premise that earlier autobiographical practices created narratives using the paradigmatic elements of a person's life. However, with the advent of social media, the paradigmatic becomes more critical than the syntagmatic. "In an autobiography, an author representing their life draws on the data set of their experience and renders, from that data set, a narrative expression of finite words and pages. This autobiography, or syntagm, does not contain the entirety of the available data set, but it is the definitive expression of that life, as it is the only (or one of a few) public version(s) of it" ("Autofiction and Selfie Aesthetics"). Narrativity is no longer necessary in the realm of social media. Instead, the autobiographical self is changed into and represented as a database. An autobiography is a narrative expression of an author's life that is limited to the finite words and pages of the text. This text takes priority over the author's actual life experiences, as it is the only public representation of those experiences. The nature of the novel, including autofiction, is akin to that of an autobiography. It is a syntagm (a linguistic unit) built from smaller syntagms, such as sentences, paragraphs, and narratives.

Memory plays a pivotal role in an autofictional narrative. The manner in which the author/character chooses to remember an incident or perceive and represent the memory of it influences the fictional aspects. The ubiquitous presence of social media platforms helps users to generate and capture memories in the form of a personal archive. The affordances of the digital platform initiate memory cultures that did not exist in the pre-digital age. Memory and interactions based around it make the objects and images crucial to the construction of the identity portrayed on *Facebook* profiles. The comments take the narrative forward while also indicating the 'lease' that connects it to the past. The public nature of remembering through

Facebook posts and associated comments and 'tagging' adds another dimension to memory connected to cyberspace. The following screenshot [Refer to Figure 11] of an individual post and the comments on it clearly depict how memory functions on *Facebook* while structuring an autofictional identity.
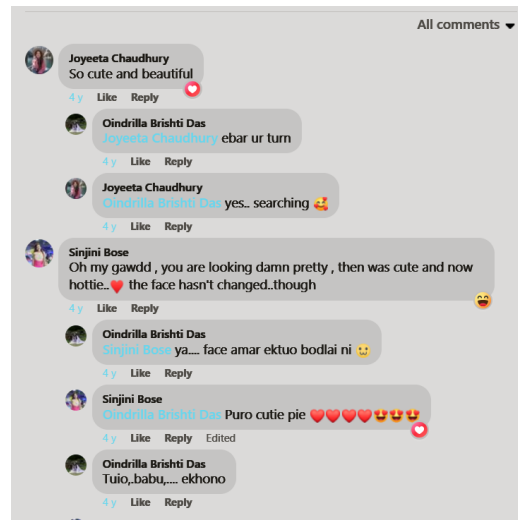
Figure 11: Facebook Challenge (Sourced from Oindrilla Bristi Das' Facebook Profile)

The post refers to a challenge or 'dare' on *Facebook*, juxtaposing an image from Oindrilla Das' childhood and an image from the present. She has further tagged a list of her *Facebook* 'friends' thereby creating a network of interconnected personal narratives. The comments on the post focus on Das being "beautiful" and "cute" in the past as well as in the present. One of the comments relates to Das' transformation from being 'cute' to being 'hottie'. The adjectives used in the comments in the audience's perception of the two images located in different times and spaces. The 'dare' is used as a part of Das' self-narrative; however, the post in itself is insufficient without the user's engagement through the comments and dialogues.

In the context of autonarrative, the *Facebook* post can be seen as an act of self-storytelling, where the individuals curate and share aspects of their personal lives in relation to broader

social acceptance and acknowledgement. The choice of images and their captions reflect a self-awareness and an engagement with temporality and personal growth.

Considering the postcomparative approach, this post moves beyond merely comparing the present with the historical significance of the place. Instead, it seeks equivalence—acknowledging the complex legacy of the location as both a cliché in personal photos and a site of historical and aesthetic significance. This nuanced approach recognizes the layered experiences and the entwined personal and collective memories that are evoked through such "evocative objects."

In contrast to an autobiography's fixed and definitive nature, social media represents the opposite. Users' social media representations on social media are scattered across the web and subject to constant alteration. Instead of a single definitive representation, social media representation is a collection of moments, tweets, comments, and selfies that remain volatile in the internet's space. Combined with the archival quality of social media, the 'self-defining memories' of the autobiographical self, acquire some inherent qualities of the digital media. The unreliability of the constantly rewritten memories is critical to forming a life narrative on social media (Garde-Hansen et al.). The constant restructuring and rewriting of memories on social media, such as *Facebook*, is enacted and remembered through performative practices. This includes using profile pictures, status updates, likes, comments, and shares to create and curate an online persona that reflects their desired self-image. In addition, individuals may also use *Facebook* to perform various social roles, such as friend, colleague, or family member, by sharing content that is appropriate for each respective group. Performing the self on *Facebook* can also involve visual and textual cues to signal identity and belonging. This can include using profile pictures, cover photos, and other visual elements to communicate aspects of the self, such as interests, hobbies, o political beliefs. Textual cues, such as status updates, comments, and captions, can also express one's personality and worldview.

"While it is commonplace to position memory in context of the act of re-experiencing the past, digital media gives rise to an ability to 'version' and 'forget' through a condition brought about by generational edits of memory. From a phenomenological perspective, the issues that emerge here play out a significant role in both how accounts of the past are recalled from a contextual point of view and how they are then changed and re-experienced through the endless reproduction of digital narrativity". (Garde-Hansen 185)." Memory on social media platforms is stored as incomplete noncontextual data. Digital media introduces the ability to create different versions of memories or to forget them altogether through successive edits. The memories on social media platforms are formed in the form of networks. Private memories are remembered and re-experienced as public or social memory.

The internet continuously reminds one of every event that has happened in the past. As such, memory can never be forgotten. This is more evident in life writing on the social media platforms such as *Facebook*. The self is continuously updated on platforms like *Facebook*. It depicts the memories of a sovereign self and how the others remember a 'self' through their interactions, transforming the self into an 'assemblage.' Returning to the discussion in Chapter Two of database as narratives, these assemblages can be viewed as an integral part of *Facebook* database. The following image depicts the "Memories" feature of the *Facebook* platform. This feature showcases the centrality of data in the construction of the self. The algorithm replays specific data from a pool of database to help one curate the past and connect it to the present of a user
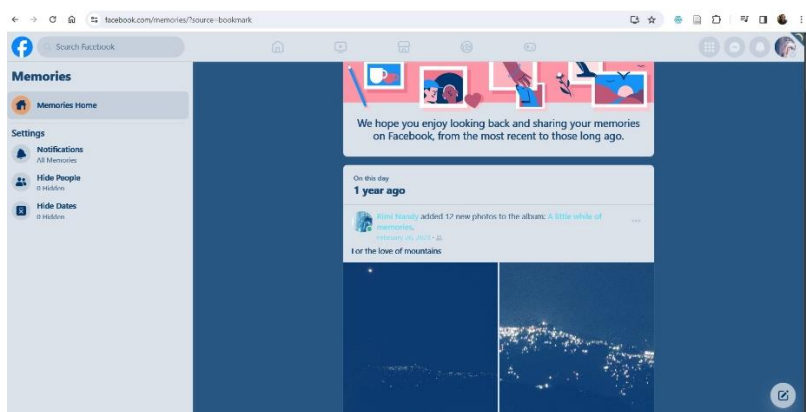
Figure 12: Facebook 1-year memory (Sourced from Rimi Nandy's Facebook Profile)

The posts are, however, not permanent. They are volatile in nature, often being removed or edited with time. In several instances, earlier posts become unavailable. The following screenshot is an instance of the same.
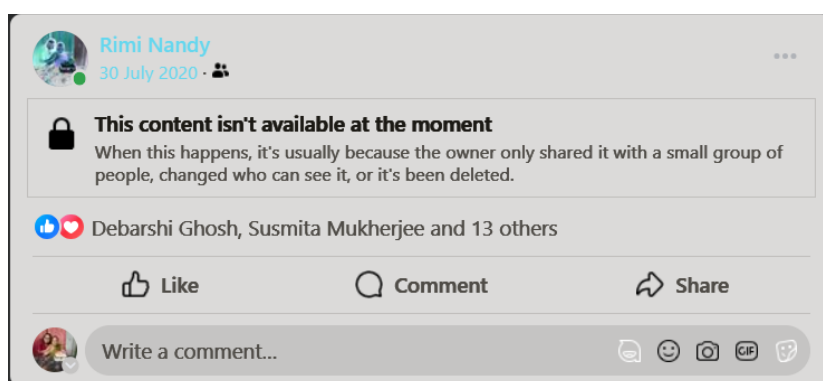
Figure 13: Unavailable Facebook Content (Sourced from Rimi Nandy's Facebook Profile)

The other engagements with the post are still visible, though the 'original' content is no longer available. In the case of literary autofiction in its print tradition, memory representation is definitive as the readers or any external elements cannot influence.

Social Media and New Autofiction

Like the technological advancements' influence on autobiographical practices in the online medium, literary autobiographical texts and genres are also affected by digital practices. The

newest trend in life writing is being followed by the likes of Patricia Lockwood, Olivia Lang, and Ben Lerner, who have broken down the boundaries in life writing. Social media has transformed the very nature of autobiography as it is slowly replacing the traditional form of linear narrative in an autobiography. Like the printing press, information technology has also contributed to the restructuring of the human condition. According to Andreas Kitzmann "Social media is a form of self-documentation that both draws from earlier traditions (such as diary writing or snapshot photography) and departs from them in notable and transformative ways" (Kitzmann 420). *Facebook* updates can be considered a journal used to find meaning in the activities around a person. The journal elements give a flavour of biography to the *Facebook* profiles. I hypothesize that *Facebook* can be considered an Autofiction or Fictional Autobiography practiced within the digital culture of the contemporary age. Material technological tools greatly influence the literary structure of human society. As mentioned in Chapter One, I would be exploring the genre of autofiction and would like to see how far *Facebook*'s 'fictional autobiographies' can be correlated with it. The reasons behind the desire to create a mediated identity through *Facebook*'s fictional autobiographies are also a focal point of the thesis. Further, the study would involve how the narrative construction is affected by creating a mediated identity.

The similarities and dissimilarities between Autofiction and *Facebook* narratives will be dealt with in detail in the following chapter. Though no study has been conducted on *Facebook* as autofiction, social media practices have greatly influenced the understanding and functioning of autofiction. "New Autofiction" denotes the effect of social media practices on the further development of autofiction. "New Autofiction" is the term used to refer to life narratives inspired by social media's structure. Autofiction and "New autofiction" now coexist and project a new understanding of the autobiographical voice.

The narrative role played by *Facebook* has at its base the human desire for a sense of belonging as is evident in the works of Maslow, Sandy Stone and Sherry Turkle. Manuel Castell clearly depicts how the birth of the networked society greatly influenced the manner in which goods are produced and consumed. Terranova and Lazzarato talk about how the rise of the information age has given birth to concepts such as immaterial labour and free labour. In this context, it is essential to closely evaluate *Facebook* as a source for gift economy. It becones challenging to determine whether the use of *Facebook* is an act of labour or leisure.

The layout of the *Facebook* profile is akin to that of a novel. The paratextual elements such as the cover page, profile options, and emoticons help categorize *Facebook* as a narrative of the self. *Facebook* represents a self embedded in the process of computer-mediated communication. Along with the paratextual elements, the multimedia components also work towards presenting a mediated self. The position of the narrator is also forever shifting. Different types of narrators come together to create an impression of the self. Moving from homodiegetic to heterodiegetic, the narrator narrates the self from within the narrative or as an outsider, depending on the scenario of the self that is being presented. In other instances, the narrator becomes an autodiegetic narrator who tells the story of the self from within the narrative structure while also being the protagonist of the same. The other element which makes *Facebook* a relevant self-narrative is the presence of affective response. The ability to situate oneself in the past and revisit the emotional aspects is projected through the affective response. The *Facebook* profile timeline creates a space for integrating affective responses as a part of the self-narrative created through a participatory culture.

The use of *Facebook* has seen a gradual decline in use due to various factors, primarily the question of privacy and security. However, a significant crisis that reinvigorated the use of *Facebook* is the spread of the Covid-19 virus. The prominent place afforded to community

building in the platform provided by *Facebook* furthers the role of *Facebook* as a social document. The communities formed on *Facebook* are not based on proximity. Instead, its focus is on shared interests. The concept of 'friendship' and staying connected is redefined in the context of *Facebook*. Though the term "network" is increasingly used in the context of social media, it signifies links and connections in the social space. It is not restricted to technological networks alone. According to Latour Actor-Network Theory, "does not wish to add social networks to social theory but to rebuild social theory out of networks"[i]. The sociological contextualization of autobiography is reformed to integrate into the changing social norms of a networked society.

The rise in self-publishing and the advent of participatory culture has re-invented the manner in which people communicate with each other. This, in turn, affects the representation of self and selfhood in cyberspace. This becomes a conglomeration of the human and non-human which is at the crux of the posthuman age. A close study of cyberspace in tandem with the "real life" indicates a massive change in the social structure and social practices. Unlike the accepted idea regarding technological determinism, the change in the attitude and perception of the people, the technology is also enhanced. The works of Manuel Castells, Sherry Turkle, and Donna Haraway illustrate how the concept of "real virtuality" is an amalgamation of the "real" and the "virtual", which has made the two indistinguishable.

"The formation and contestation of memories under these conditions has become apparently more public in an environment of instant and extensive connectivity where the production, reproduction, repetition and circulation of the media- matter of memory are made available with increasing speed and decreasing cost"(Hoskins, "The Mediatization of Memory" 26). The constant churning of memories as data in real-time, coupled with ubiquitous devices, makes it imperative to share personal memories in public. The networked structure of social media

platforms and the adjoined devices ease the sharing of every detail of life on the social media platform.

Conclusion

In the current age, studying a phenomenon in isolation is impossible. As defined by Latour, the 'actors' and 'actants' are connected in a network and, therefore, easily affect each other. The movement away from the structured pattern of modernism and the rise of poststructuralism and postcolonialism led to the development of the fractured nature of postmodernism. Postmodernism further developed the interconnected nature of society into a posthuman approach. The proliferation of digital devices and the birth of web 2.0 speeded the narrative acts of the self into a simultaneous portrayal of multiple selves on social media platforms. This chapter aimed to trace the developments that led to the formation of digital posthuman autobiography. A study of digital memory practices depicted how social media practices created the space for transforming the personal narrative into public history. The chapter also introduced the concepts of 'architexture' and 'new autofiction,' which will be elaborated on in the following chapter.

<div align="center">Notes:</div>

[i] Latour, B. (1970, January 1). [PDF] On Actor-Network Theory. A Few Clarifications, Plus More Than a Few Complications: Semantic Scholar. Semantic Scholar. https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/On-Actor-Network-Theory.-A-Few-Clarifications%2C-Plus-Latour/7352c5ec843c9882dfa7678e01ab93b4194a0a27.

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Chapter 5

Genre, Textuality, and *Facebook* Narrative

The earliest division of literary forms dates back to Aristotle's description of the same in *Poetics*. However, the demarcation between literary forms made by Aristotle depicts a difference in the mode of enunciation (Genette 95). Genre, on the other hand, represents literary forms. Gerard Genette critically discusses generic demarcation based on paratextual differences. The premise of this chapter is to chart the connection between genre and textuality with particular reference to the genre of autofiction. It will also focus on the paratextual elements of *Facebook* and make a comparative analysis between autofiction and *Facebook* posts as narrative. For this purpose, the *Facebook* profiles and the connected posts will be considered as a genre of autobiographical writing. The posts shared on *Facebook* 'Timeline' are akin to the traditional autobiographical practices of narrating daily stories(S. Fuchs).

The previous chapter dealt with the nature of memory apropos the changing technologies of representing and remembering. Confessions were the earliest forms of remembering, which later developed into the genre of autobiography. A printed text's form and structure provide meaning along with the content. According to Gerard Genette, paratextual elements are essential to meaning-making. The generic label on the book cover influences the reader's understanding of the text. Philippe Lejeune mentions that paratext is "a fringe of the printed text which in reality controls one's whole reading of the text "(Rasmussen 127)[i] . Understanding the sociology of publishing through paratextual elements in connection with the changing nature of memory will provide a better understanding of autofiction as a genre. The study will also enable us to understand whether *Facebook* can be situated within the evolving genre of autofiction. The paratextual elements of a printed text are finite and structured. In comparison, the paratextual elements in social media are dynamic and volatile. Therefore,

paratextual components are critical to generic identity. The following section will focus on the study of genre and its connection to textualities.

Genre and Transtextuality

Genre is an elusive term that is difficult to define. It is an ever-changing model contextualised within a given period's social and cultural spaces. According to Schmitt, "genres remain a shifting construct, mostly because they are semantic clusters historically determined (Schmitt 26)." Schmitt quotes Gasparini "[i]n societies constantly mutating, static genres fossilize and die, just like the processes they are based on; evolutionary genres, on the contrary, boost creativity. The success of the concept" "novel", for instance, can be explained by its plasticity" (Schmitt 27). In summary, society evolves with time, changing life and perception. Therefore, the evolution of the genre is imperative. In the absence of evolution, genres would become redundant. The shifting nature of society also includes the commercial aspects of the genre. The market conditions enable the interaction between an author and the target audience and vice versa. The rules of literary genres are not always strictly followed. Most often, the subversion of generic rules defines the changes in the genre. The literary experimentation in the genre of autobiography and its transformation to a larger field of life writing best encompasses the subversion of generic rules. Traditionally believed to be a 'true' and factual narration of life events, defined by 'autobiographical pact', autobiography spans a larger volume of writings within the genre of life writing such as memoirs, diaries, and newer forms of digital like writings such as blogs and narratives on social media platforms.

In order to understand autofiction as a genre, it is essential to comprehend how autobiographical narratives have transformed with changing social conditions into the genre of autofiction. With reference to this transformation, I will discuss autobiography's role in shaping the genre of autofiction. The autobiographical pact is at the centre of the autobiographical genre. The element of truth and the relation between the past and the present creates the base

for this generic practice. Schmitt quotes Timothy Adams and comments that, "autobiography might be best thought of as a thing made out of a thing done"[ii], even if this thing done is perceived in a relative manner. A "thing made": that is to say, something extracted from the real of our experience and rematerialized in the fabric of our memory (a zone that is dangerously close to where our imaginary life also happens)"(Schmitt 58). This means that the representation of a past act in the form of remembering is always somewhat reconstructed. Therefore, discrimination between the fictional and the real is not always plausible. Autofiction is considered to be a postmodern version of the traditional memoir undermining a finite identity. It mainly subverts the conventions associated with the autobiographical genre. A crucial marker of autofiction is its indeterminacy. Fiction cannot be differentiated from the reality in autofiction because "imagery triggered by fiction, especially the realistic kind, is suffused with our experience of the real and is under the yoke of our episodic memories." (Schmitt 89) This means our lived experiences are used to naturalise the fiction. Therefore, the latter can never be separated from the former.

In his work *Palimpsests*, Gerard Genette refers to the term transtextuality, which refers to various ways in which one text refers to, transforms, or depends upon other texts. Genette identifies five different transtextuality categories: intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, hypertextuality, and architextuality. Intertextuality depicts the connections between texts, highlighting the shared themes or ideas or subverting the meaning of earlier works. Paratextuality refers to the various elements of a text that influence its reception. These may include the book cover and title, to name a few. Metatextuality refers to texts about other texts, such as reviews, literary criticism, or adaptations of earlier works. Hypertextuality creates a network of interconnected texts to provide additional context, information, or a non-linear reading experience. Finally, architextuality situates a text within a particular literary tradition or its departure from convention.

In contrast, McGann emphasizes the sociology of publishing. He believes that the meaning-making of the text is situated within sociological elements (Rasmussen 126). According to him, "Both the practice and the study of human culture comprise a network of symbolic exchanges. Because human beings are not angels, these exchanges always involve material negotiations. Even in their most complex and advanced forms—when the negotiations are carried out as textual events—the intercourse that is being human is materially executed: as spoken texts or scripted forms"(McGann 3).The materiality of the texts is deeply integrated into the textuality and the text's understanding per the textualities. Reading and interpreting a text is incomplete without understanding the prevailing socio-economic conditions within which the text has been constructed. The textual practices are transactions between the writer and the reader.

"What are the ethics of the interpolation of the stories and voices of others into a user's digital life narrative? What to make of the use of photographs? What social pressures are at play in determining what is written on the site and who can see it? "(Morrison 113). Each of these questions is critical to understanding digital life writing with respect to *Facebook*. The following sections will try to answer these questions raised by Aimee Morrison in her essay *Facebook and Coaxed Affordances.*

Facebook **Architext:**

The questions raised by Morrison could be explained through the lens of 'architext'. The architext can be defined as the guidelines for expressing user experience (Saemmer 4). '*Facebook*'s revenue model is based on targeted marketing. For this to succeed, *Facebook* requires detailed personal information acquired through the users' interaction with the platform. At its core, *Facebook* is an architextual text. It has specific structures and conventions that govern users' engagement with the platform. News Feed is an essential feature of *Facebook*. It is designed to 'curate' content for each user based on their interests and engagement history. This feature enables users to scroll through endless content, from photos

and status updates to links to news articles and videos. The news feed is organised chronologically, with the most recent post appearing at the top of the feed. This structure encourages users to engage with the platform frequently and stay up-to-date with the latest news and updates from their friends and family. This leads to the creation of a large amount of user-generated content, which the company can then use to generate revenue. While creating a profile, *Facebook* users are asked to provide demographic information and verified contact details. The structure of the form acts as a guideline for making an ideal profile(McNeill 71). The profile has different sections under ''Posts,' 'About,' 'Friends,' 'Photos,' 'Videos,' 'Check-ins,' and 'More.' According to Laurie McNeill, "The Profile combines templates, drop-down menus (for relationship status, for instance), and fill-in-the-blank fields in a range of topics (e.g., lists of favorite music, sports teams, books; familial relations; political and religious views). It thus asks users to provide both what it identifies as 'basic' information (sex, geographical location, email address, place of work) and more substantive autobiographical performances" (McNeill 68). The *Facebook* architext dictates the autobiographical performance. The users perform their digital self, according to the parameters set by the profile interface.
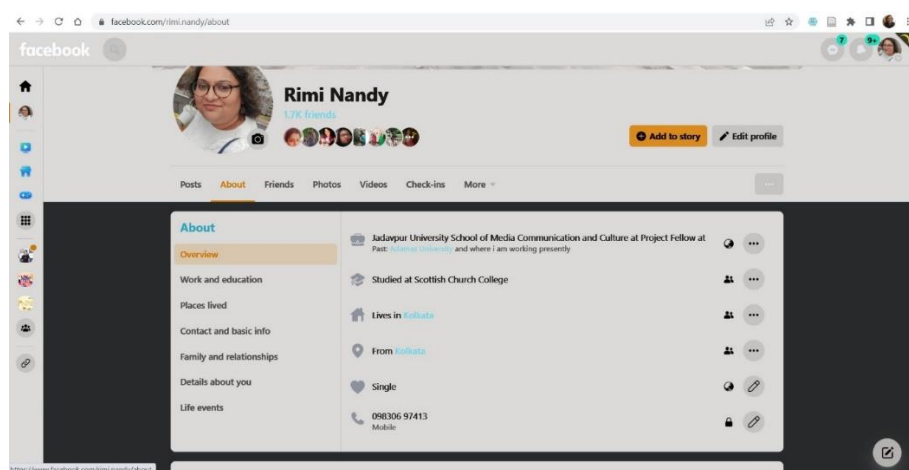
Figure 14: Facebook Profile- About Section (Sourced from Rimi Nandy's Facebook Profile)

Figure 1 shows the categorisation under the 'About' section. Each section asks for specific information providing 'authentication' in the line of Lejeune's 'autobiographical pact.' The autobiographical aspects of the profile undergo datafication. These data are then transformed into commodities. The 'About' section provides an overview of the profile to guide the reader's interaction with the profile interface. The architext persuades the user to provide maximum amount of information. The interface's affordances guide the construction of the digital autobiographical self. The separate categories are critical to forming networks and communities through shared tastes and interests. The templates are rigid and leave no room for performing the self beyond the architextural layout.

The 'Notification' section under the homepage depicts the collaborative structure of the writing of the autobiographical self on *Facebook*. In addition, 'Notification' shows the audience's responses to a user's posts [Refer to Figure 15]. A user narrates his/her life activities through multimodal elements. However, the narrative is incomplete and perpetually extended through the other users' responses to the narrative. The users, therefore, lack any semblance of control over the narrative they write. I propose that the affective responses generated by other users to specific posts are rife with autofictional voice. The emotional responses transform the historical event into a critical commentary on the life event.

Furthermore, the same post might trigger different responses among networked users. These responses can be read as a fictional component of the life narrative. Thereby supporting the contention that *Facebook* is a form of autofiction.
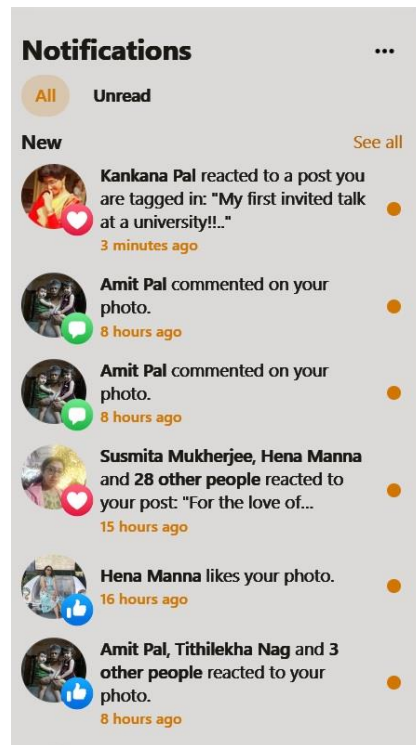
Figure 15: Facebook Profile Notifications(Nandy)

Autobiographical performance becomes critical in an age of rampant self-publishing. *Facebook* posts have become a commodity due to the enormous amount of personal data acquired from status updates. *Facebook* architext defines the pattern for portraying life on *Facebook* through affordances and constraints. *Facebook* status update prompt "What's on your mind" appears as a part of "coaxing technologies"(Morrison 116), persuading the users to interact with the status update interface. The limited space for writing a post further persuades the users to write short and attractive status updates. The later part of the chapter will provide a detailed discussion of the status update interface. The material affordances of linking photos, videos, emojis, geo-location, and tagging enable a multimodal representation of daily life events in fragments. The affordances and the constraints together function as a dominant architext on *Facebook*. The architext is directly linked to the algorithms and vice versa in order to encourage the making and sharing of user-generated content.

Facebook architext predefines and dictates how content is to be shared on the platform. With respect to publishing photographs in albums, the architext gives two options to choose from. The two options are "Grid View" and "Feed View" [Refer to Figures 16 and 17].
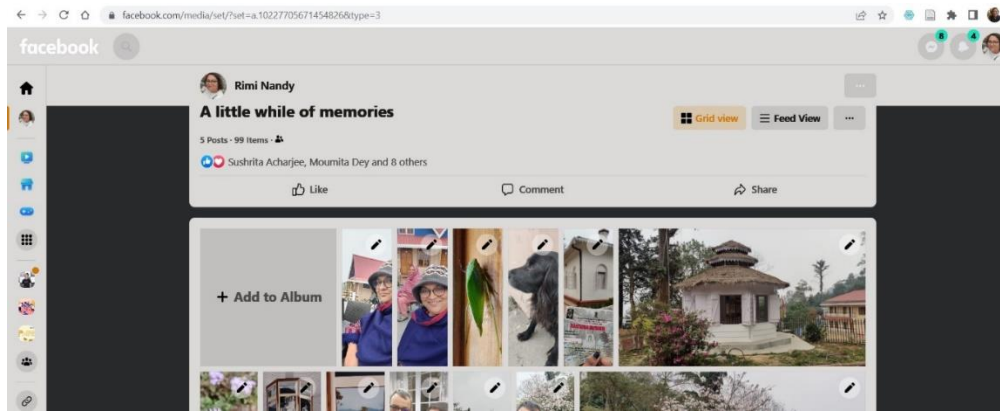
Figure 16: Facebook Photo Sharing Grid View (Sourced from Rimi Nandy's Facebook Profile)
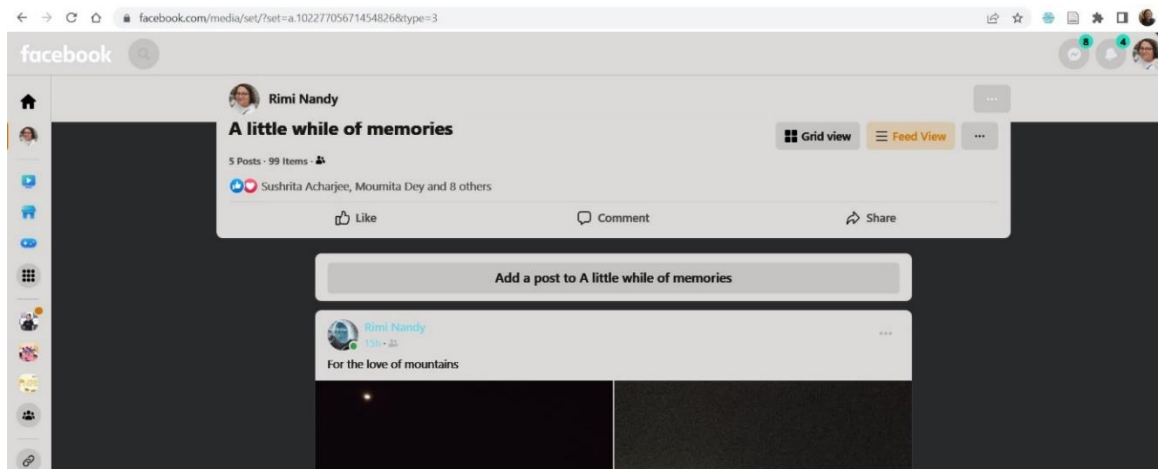
Figure 17: Facebook Photo Sharing Feed View (Sourced from Rimi Nandy's Facebook Profile)

The "Grid View" showcases the maximum number of photos simultaneously, partially visible in parallel frames. Meanwhile, the "Feed View" depicts all photographs in chronological order. The user, therefore, can only choose between the two options. This constraint put by the architext persuades the users to follow a structured pattern of life writing. *Facebook*, architext,

however, is a dynamic process. Therefore, the features and their affordances are often changed and upgraded. As a result, *Facebook* "exists in a perpetual present." (Morrison 120) Therefore, any traces of prior versions of architexts is entirely removed from the system. The resulting life narrative is constantly evolving with changes in the system. The users or authors do not have any control over how the narrative is structured. This is in complete contrast to printed texts. In the case of a printed text, the initial writing might be influenced by the implied readers and the social structure. Nevertheless, once printed, the text does not change.

Another critical aspect of *Facebook* architext is using third-person narrative voice. Irrespective of who writes the status update, it is always written in the third person. For example, the status prompt begins with the name followed by "is feeling…" [Refer to Figure 18].
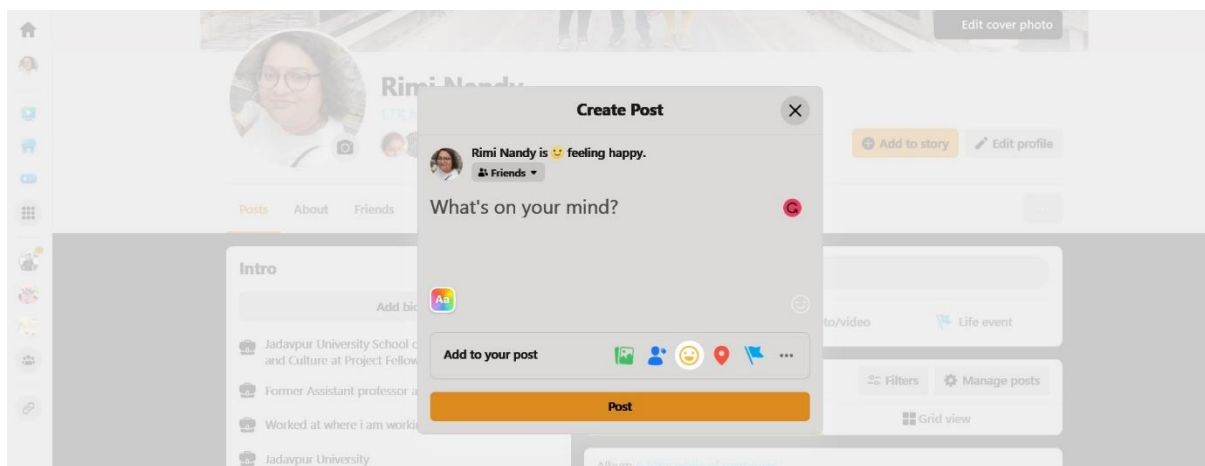
Figure 18: Facebook Create Post (Sourced from Rimi Nandy's Facebook Profile)

The image above shows that the third-person narrative voice is used to write a post. This creates a distance between the author and the post. A similar pattern can be found in the autofictional genre, where the author uses a third-person narrative voice to disassociate oneself from what he/she is writing. The act of disassociating oneself from their words has become prevalent in the digital age due to the increasing importance of affect in place of truth value. *Facebook* provides a space to analyse oneself as an outsider. Hence the third-person narrative voice plays

a crucial role in the construction of life writing on *Facebook*. The idea of subjectivity is reformed through human-machine interaction. Haraway's concept of the cyborg can be linked to the autobiographical self in a posthuman context. The interlinking of human-machine, human-software, and the networked pattern of human interaction contributes to the perception of digital subjectivity as posthuman.

The News Feed component is a central element in *Facebook* architext. The news feed in a user's profile is constructed as an "assemblage". According to Laurie McNeill, "Acting not only as producers of life stories, *Facebook* users also by necessity consume the autobiographical acts of others, and in so doing, contribute to them: the network structure of the site demands the persistent, symbiotic generation of narratives"(McNeill 71). The news feed clearly depicts this networked structure with updates from 'friends' timeline overlapping each other and co-constructing a narrative. The feature of 'tagging' others to posts, photos, videos is another instance of intervening and networked life narrative. The *Facebook* architext, through its affordances and constraints, guides and 'coaxes' the users to structure the narrative for maximisation of revenue. The architext sets stage for linking paratextual elements to further the meaning-making process of *Facebook* as a digital autofiction.

Apart from the earlier mentioned subsections of the *Facebook* profile, the platform also tracks every act and interaction of a user. These trackings are visible to the respective users under various lists of data documenting the manner in which the user interacts with the available content along with the interactive practices followed in the network of friends. The lists become a conglomeration of data working towards constructing the self-narrative. Unlike in print tradition, which only depicts the final and completed manuscript, in the digital environment, the narrative continues incessantly. The *Facebook* platform takes away the agency from the user, who is the primary author. Every move the user makes is documented in the form of a series of data, as evident in the following images. These data leave a trail behind in the profile

even if it is deleted. This option for perpetually editing the data and thereby the narrative of the self, makes *Facebook* very different from autofiction belonging to the print culture. An autofiction published as a soft-bound/ hard-bound/ e-book represents a finality that is absent within the structure of *Facebook*.
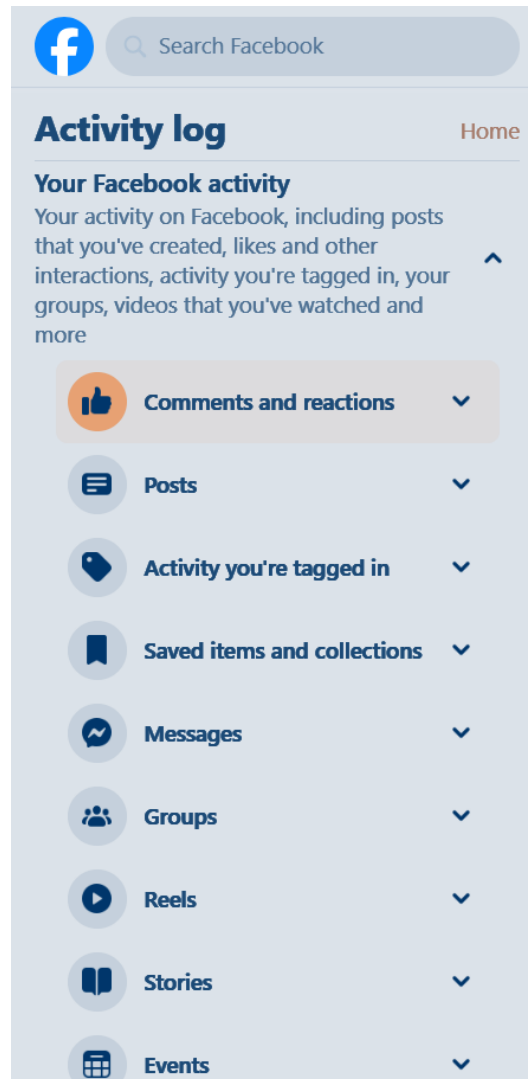
Figure 19: Facebook Profile Lists (Sourced from Rimi Nandy's Facebook Profile)

As depicted in the above image, the lists on a *Facebook* profile page are constructed to enable the collection and documentation of a user's interaction with the platform while using it to promote one's idea of the self.

The following section focuses on analysing paratextual elements of *Facebook* and autofiction. The contextualising of *Facebook* within the genre of autofiction will be justified through a comparative study of the paratextual elements.

Paratextuality in *Facebook* and Autofiction:

Genre and textualities inform the writing of a text and its reading. As discussed earlier, the generic description of the book's cover page influences a reader's expectations. Paratextuality is critical to a better understanding of a text. Authorial intentions are deftly represented by various paratextual elements used in a text. These elements also guide the response of the readers. According to Gerard Genette, paratext is a framework for analysing the various elements surrounding a text and shaping its interpretation. These elements include the title, cover, preface, introduction, and other elements that help to frame the text and create meaning for the reader. In autofiction, paratextual elements play an essential role in constructing its indeterminate state. It not only depicts the author's desire to subvert the autobiographical genre but also plays with the readers' expectations. Similarly, when applied to *Facebook*, paratext can refer to the various elements surrounding a user's profile and posts, such as their profile picture, username, bio, and comments and reactions from other users. The following section will give a detailed analysis of the paratextual elements of a *Facebook* profile. For the analysis, I have referred to my *Facebook* profile as a representative of the default structure followed on the *Facebook* platform:
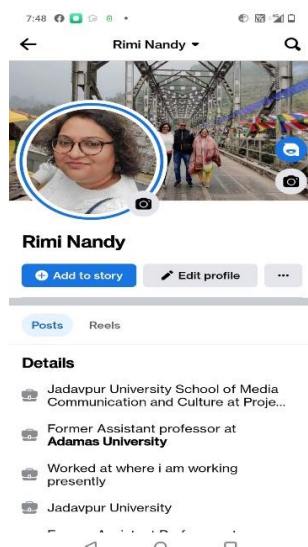
Figure 20: Facebook Profile (Sourced from Rimi Nandy's Facebook Profile)

The above image depicts the various paratextual elements in a *Facebook* profile. Each of the elements contribute to the narrative discourse. The visible paratextual elements can be considered to be transformed versions that are affected by the materiality of social media. The introductory profile page is akin to the cover of a printed text. The profile users name is the first unit of the page followed by the cover page and the profile picture. The three units together introduce the profile user. The profile picture and the cover photo provide visual cues for the perception of the user's personality and character. The bio follows visual elements. Thus further enhances the understanding of the profile user. The bio provides information about education, work, marital status, political view and religion. The "Add to story" feature on *Facebook* allows users to share photos, videos, and text that are visible for a limited time on their profile. This feature can be considered a narrative element on *Facebook*, as it allows users to create and share short-term stories that contribute to the overall personal narrative on the platform. This feature can be better explained by Georgakopoulou's concept of "small stories". Small stories refer to a type of digital storytelling that emphasizes brief, personal narratives shared on social media platforms. In the context of small stories, the "add to story" feature can be seen as a way to facilitate collective storytelling. Followers can contribute their own small stories to a shared

narrative, building on each other's experiences and creating a sense of community through shared storytelling. With reference to autofiction, the "add to story" feature could be seen as a way for users to blend their personal stories with fictional elements creating a new form of storytelling. The ephemeral nature of "add to story" feature lends itself well to autofiction, as it allows users to experiement with blending fact and fiction without necessarily committing to a permanent record of their story. Users can also choose to add filters, stickers, and other digital effects of their content, further blurring the line between reality and fiction. The stories are created through the interaction of authors and readers.

Unlike Wolfgang Iser's reader-response theory, the nature of the implied author and the implied reader is transformed by web 2.0. As discussed earlier, authorial intention is represented through a text's paratextual elements. In the case of *Facebook*, however, the paratext is influenced by the architext of *Facebook*. The algorithms on which the platform runs, decides the paratextual features available to the users. The users can choose from a select number of paratextual features the algorithms provide them. Though the user can choose any image to be used as a profile picture, yet the format of the profile picture is fixed. Similarly, the implied reader is constructed by the respective algorithms.
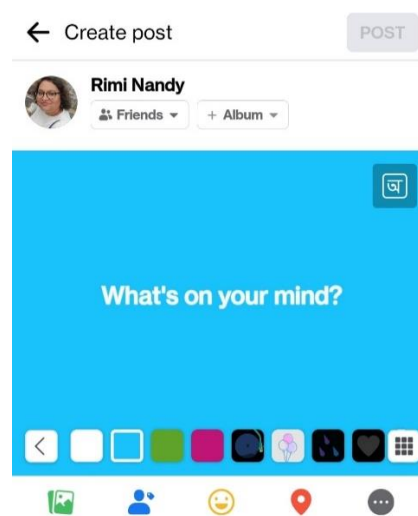
Figure 21: Facebook profile space for writing posts(Nandy)

The above image depicts the *Facebook* platform's space for writing posts and updating the life narrative. Georgakopolou discusses "the dialectic between stories and media affordances" (Georgakopoulou et al. 14). According to Georgakopoulou, the stories updated on social media can be contextualised within the 'breaking news' construct. Social media algorithms shape the recency of posts, simultaneity, and sharing lives in the moment. She also refers to the idea of 'narrative stancetaking' which refers to the brevity of the posts and the affordance provided by the in real time posting. As evident from the earlier image, the space provided for writing a post is limited. Instead of telling the entire story, the space provided only allows the announcement of the stories. Hence the relevance of 'small stories' with respect to *Facebook*. The post in itself represents a narrative in process. The process of making of the stories directly dialectically linked to engagement between the user and the context within which the status update is being placed. The narrative becomes a semiotic activity unfolded in a multimodal space. The life narrative in the form of *Facebook* posts uses multiple authors and multiple readers. Thereby making the process extremely dynamic. The prompt inside the panel for writing a post is "What's on your mind?". This question prompts the user to share the current thoughts occupying their mind. By sharing their thoughts and feelings, people are revealing aspects of themselves to their social network and shaping how they are perceived as others. The prompt leads to the exploration of identity and performance of the self which is akin to the genre of autofiction. The prompt "What's on your mind?" not only relates to events and incidents but also the emotional or affective responses to the same. Like autofiction, this *Facebook* prompt allows the users to depict snippets of their daily life without any chronological order. It also provides options of depicting emotions under the heading "How are you feeling". This section lists a total of 198 emotions accompanied with emoticons to visually represent these emotions. This feature while being an affordance also acts as a constraint, as the emotions beyond this list cannot be represented using this feature. This feature

only caters to the emotions of English speakers more specifically American English. Other global languages and vernaculars do not fit into the afforded list. Informal words like "blah" and "meh" are also enlisted as emotions. The word "meh" was popularized by the American cartoon series *The Simpsons (*"meh")*. The word "blah" is similar in meaning to the word "meh", denoting 'languishing'. This term became popular during the Covid period to define a feeling "joyless" and "aimless" (Grant). The following image shows the section "How are you Feeling?" along with examples of emotions from the list.
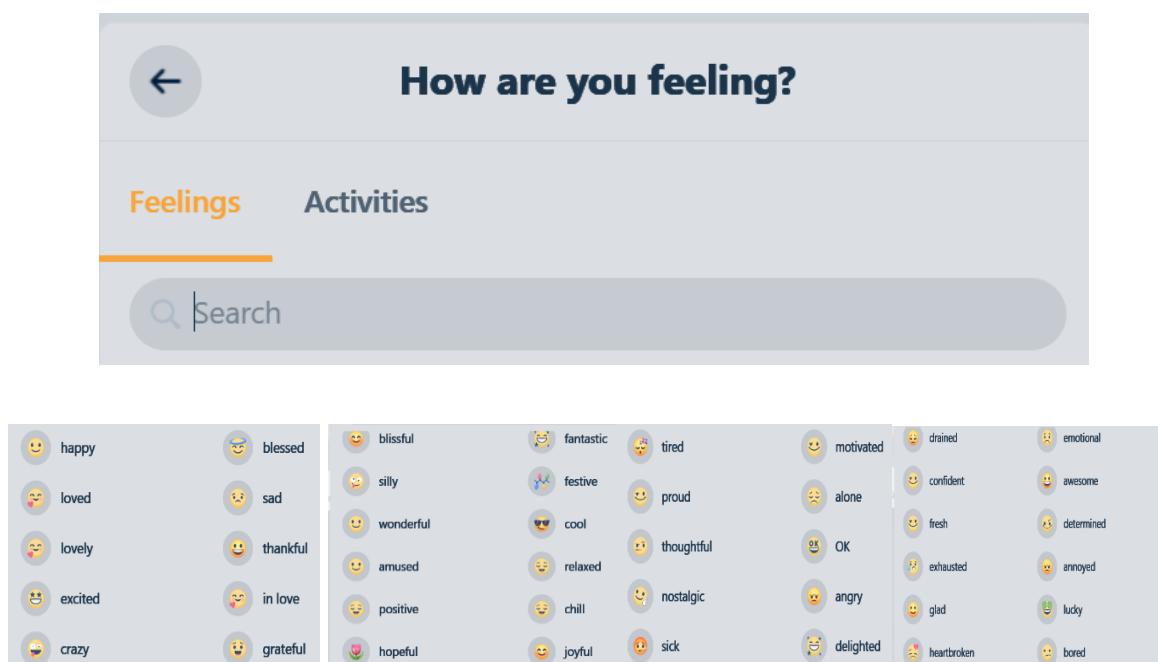
Figure 22: "How are you Feeling?" List (Sourced from Rimi Nandy's Facebook Profile)

Autofiction affords the author the opportunity to textually represent fragments of their lives, thereby allowing the "telling of the moment". *Facebook's* architextural format, on the other hand, moved from "telling the moment" to "showing the moment". The phrase "telling the moment" only uses textual elements for narrating stories. In comparison, the phrase "showing the moment", uses multimodal elements to narrate an instance or story. The changing conditions of user engagement facilitated the inclusion of elements such as geo-location, shared

check-ins and visual elements in the form of images, emoticons and patterns. The real-time showing of moments is further developed in the post-2015 period to include sharing of moments in the form of *Facebook* memories.

Technological advancements have greatly influenced the changing nature of reading and writing. According to Wysocki the development of new technologies provides for new ways of reading and writing. Resorting to technographic features allows for the functioning of the *Facebook* narrative characterised by brevity and immediacy. Technographic features of digital media include the use of video, audio, and images to convey a narrative. Therefore, the narratives often consist of short anecdotes, photographs, and videos shared in real-time. The narratives also use interactive elements such as comments, likes and shares.
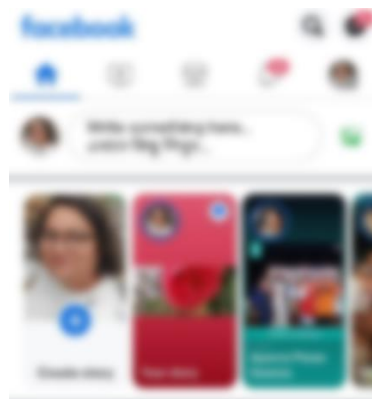
Figure 23: Facebook Profile Timeline (Sourced from Rimi Nandy's Facebook Profile)

Autofiction in the form of printed texts use traditional literary elements, which are restricted to the boundaries of an individual text. *Facebook*, however, uses literary elements catering to the social media sphere. As such a user's autobiographical narrative is not bound by his/her respective profile alone. *Facebook* as an autobiographical space is a complex structure of networks. The timelines of various users are interconnected and overlapping. This leads to the construction of the life narrative as a dynamic and continuous process of linking and interlinking. The total number of "Friends" on *Facebook* and their "stories" or "reels" come

together to create one aspect of the narrative self. As seen in figure 3, the timeline shows my story alongside the stories of my "Friends". Quantified data, texts, and other multimodal elements contribute to constructing self-narrative. The number of friends can be considered to be a marker of a user's popularity. Another essential aspect of quantifying data is represented in the number of likes. Gerlitz and Helmond refer to Likes on *Facebook* as 'social buttons'. According to them, these 'social buttons' are used for the intensification of affect on the users, thereby increasing a post's potential for engagement. It further entails "liking a post, for instance, does not only 'reveal' that someone appreciates the post but also turns it into a 'Liked post' with a different value and circulatory force on the social media platform" (Georgakopoulou et al. 11). The Likes on *Facebook* is now categorised to depict complicated emotions such as laughter, sadness, love, and care. These contribute in furthering the affective instances on the users. The categorised Like buttons on *Facebook* is critical to the functioning of *Facebook* architext. A user's preferences are analysed through these 'social buttons' which are then built into the algorithmic patterns of *Facebook*. Bernie Hogan uses the metaphor of an exhibition "curator" to refer to the *Facebook* algorithms that help users exhibit their work for public consumption(" The Social Significance of the *Facebook* Like Button"). Aimee Morrison refers to Gillian Whitlock and Anna Poletti's idea of social network sites like *Facebook* being "auto-assemblages". Morisson refers to the term in order to define the significance of "the technological characteristics of digital media." (Morrison 113) She focuses on the interaction between the "style sheets"/ algorithms that influences the structures and matter of user's posts and the display of the posts in another users' timeline.

Textuality and Cognitive Narratology:

Cognitive analysis of the reading process better explains the reading of ambiguous genres like autofiction. The 'architext' is essential to understanding the reading process and associated meaning-making. Kahneman's slow and fast thinking theory discusses the brain's processing

of information as a system. He refers to two types of information processing, system 1 and system 2. System 1 represents effortless thinking, whereas system 2 represents critical thinking. Regarding reading autofiction, we can apply Kahneman's slow and fast thinking theory to understand the cognitive processes at play. System 1 thinking or fast thinking may be used while the readers encounter familiar experiences depicted in the narrative to quickly connect and draw meaning from it (Kahneman 20). The author's information available to the readers influence the reader's perception of autofiction. Fast thinking is automatic, intuitive, and often based on biases. For example, readers may form opinions about the author based on their perception of the story. The prevalence of fast thinking in the cognitive processing of an autofiction can be equated with the cognitive processing of a *Facebook* profile. *Facebook* users quickly scan through their feeds and make effortless decision regarding the content they encounter. With the algorithms in place, *Facebook* platform always project content in line with a user's belief system. Hence fast thinking is more probable than slow thinking.

The other cognitive theory which can be used to connect the reading process of autofiction and *Facebook* narrative, is "attention management." "Attention management" is connected to the concept of scarcity of attentional resources. Reading autofiction involves processing information about the author's life, as well as the fictional elements that are incorporated into the narrative. As readers encounter new information, their attentional resources are depleted, making it more difficult to focus and make sound decisions. Like *Facebook* architext, autofiction utilises certain features and techniques to capture and hold readers' s attention. For example, the author may use vivid descriptions or emotional storytelling to engage the reader and make them feel more connected to the narrative. Using fictional elements can also add excitement and interest to the story.

Additionally, just as algorithms play a role in the *Facebook* architext, the author's choices in crafting the narrative can impact the reader's attentional resources. For example, the author

may include a complex plot or multiple characters, requiring more cognitive resources to follow and understand.

Similarly, *Facebook* architext has predefined spaces for writing status updates. The default form includes a rectangular space with a coloured background, patterns, and texts with limited choices. Therefore, the architext influences the author to write shorter, attractive updates to gain readers' attention and implement fast thinking. In contrast, longer posts are black and white with the default font. This is because a longer post requires more extended processing through slow thinking.

Georgakopoulou refers to short and concise posts as "small stories". According to her, "small stories" is directly linked with "portability, replicability and scalability of content" (Georgakopoulou 133). She connects these three features to the concept of tellability of 'small stories'. Tellability is defined as the 'noteworthiness' of a story. "Tellability (sometimes designated "narratibility" or "reportability") is dependent on the nature of specific incidents judged by storytellers to be significant or surprising and worthy of being reported in specific contexts, thus conferring a "point" on the story" (Baroni 447-448). In the traditional form of autobiography, the noteworthiness of the events narrated is connected to the status of the personality. Since autobiography only related to renowned personalities, the narrated events could not be 'trivial.' Autofiction, however, narrates any person's life story irrespective of their social standing. The changing socio-technical scenarios changes the perception of 'noteworthiness'. The 'tellability' of 'small stories' on *Facebook* challenges the traditional notion of 'noteworthiness.' Concerning *Facebook*, the 'tellability' is connected to the pattern dictated by *Facebook* architext. Ruth Page discusses the nature of the tellability of *Facebook* status updates. She believes that *Facebook* status update has low tellability. Page refers to Ochs' and Capps' concept that stories with low tellability is associated with "narrative as social forum" (Page 70) where day-to-day occurrences are discussed in the context of existing social

discourse(Page). Considering its social role, it can be said that the tellability of the status update is secondary to the need to affirm social closeness. It can be observed that status updates of specific profiles receive more responses in the form of comments and likes than others. However, in each case, the tellability of the story might not be connected to the responses it receives. The stories do not pose values in itself. Rather the narrative value is created through the interaction between various users and the *Facebook* interface (Georgakopoulou et al. 137-139).

"Visual affordances for storytelling that in face-to-face contexts was primarily verbal have paved the way for big platforms designing stories as viewable features, integrated into their architecture, and named as such."(Georgakopoulou 134) The visual affordance provided by the *Facebook* status update interface transforms personal narratives into something to be visually experienced rather than read. Including visual elements makes the narrative more attractive than verbal posts.

Facebook status updates are primarily in real-time. This temporal significance challenges the founding principle of narrativity, namely the difference between narration and narrated events. This distance is visible with reference to autofictional texts in the printed form. However, due to the 'breaking news' format of *Facebook* status updates, the boundary between the narration and the narrated events collapses. Specially in *Facebook* Live, the dilution of the boundaries is critical to understanding its tellability and the response it generates. Therefore, the cognitive response to it dramatically differs from the earlier version of *Facebook* status update in the verbal text alone. This section has focused on the cognitive understanding of literariness and its connection to digital life narrative. The affordances of the upgraded version of *Facebook* has challenged and transformed the traditional perception of digital life narrative.

Conclusion:

The previous chapter dealt with technological advancement and its relation to the evolving field of memory studies with regard to digital posthuman autobiography and the newer form of autofiction practiced in the digital space. This chapter continued to discuss the role of technological advancement in the sphere of autobiographical studies. It proposed to study the textualities of autobiography, autofiction, and digital posthuman autobiography. The main focus was on the aspects of paratextuality and architextuality. Through a detailed theoretical discussion and supporting textual examples, the chapter has tried to establish the importance of paratextuality and architextuality of *Facebook*. Previous studies have analysed various components of *Facebook* Profile. However, an analysis of architextuality and paratextuality of *Facebook* and the evolving field of life narrative has rarely been discussed. Therefore this chapter aimed at closing the gap between the technical aspects and narrative aspect of *Facebook*. Through this analysis I propose to term this form of digital autofiction as 'autodatafiction'. The concluding chapter will define the term and elaborate on the need for and the significance of the term 'autodatafiction'.

Notes:

[i] Philippe Lejeune says this in his work Le Pacte autobiographique. Lejeune is quoted by Gerarld Genette in turn, in his work Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation (pp. 2). Rasmessun then quotes the phrase indirectly in his essay "Genre and Paratext". Refer to Genre and…. Copenhagen Studies in Genre 2.

[ii] Quoted from Timothy Dow Adams work Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography.

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Chapter 6

Facebook in the "Indian" Context

Introduction:

The year 1995 marked a period of crucial change in the field of life writing. The World Wide Web was introduced this year, transforming life narrative practices. According to Phillipe Lejeune, media has perpetually moulded the act of self-representation. As mentioned earlier, the material conditions of a given period influence the new literacy studies discussed in Chapter One, which focuses on studying the impact of the 'digital turn' in developing a new form and mode of literacy. Life narratives published through the print medium differs from their digital counterpart mainly on the absence of the 'time-lag', an essential feature of print publication. As evident from the analysis of new literacy studies, narratives are not entirely based on the cognitive sphere alone. The social and cultural trends affect the narrative discourse equally. In keeping with this attitude towards narrative analysis, *Facebook*, as a narrative, needs to be studied in connection to cultural practices.

Narratives enable individuals to depict their identity within the context of a socio-cultural paradigm. It helps shape societal values and aspirations alongside a sense of belonging (Azzari and Travaglini 2-4). Therefore, the social context is critical to any form of narrative analysis. Discourses are situated within socio-political-economic aspects of a given place, which also seeks to project a collective national identity. The previous chapter discussed how textualities influenced the writing and reading of autobiographical texts. The impact of technological advancement was also studied to understand the transformation of traditional autobiography into digital posthuman autofiction. This chapter's premise is to analyse and comment on the birth of autobiography in India as an embodiment of nationhood and nationalism. It will further emphasize the idea of 'Indianness' and *Facebook's* representation of the cultures of India in an

era of globalization. 'Indianness' is an abstract concept that is difficult to define. A discussion of nation, nationhood and nationalism is imperative for understanding the nuances and complexities of the term 'Indianness'. A concrete definition of nation is an implausibility as it is essentially a construct. According to Gellner, nation as a concept is intrinsically linked with nationalism. He believes that a nation can only exist in an "age of nationalism". He connects the rise of nationalism with the development of industrialization. He said the pre-industrial era was characterized by an agrarian society with tightly bounded and immobile communities. With the rise of industrialization, existing community boundaries were broken down to create a homogenized society through standardized education. Since industrialization developed unevenly across various states, the states with later development were at a disadvantage. This led to a higher culture being preferred to mass culture. A shared culture enabled assimilation while a differing culture led to the exclusion of the lower cultural practices. Gellner believed that only with the desire for political sovereignty, giving rise to a sense of nationalism, does a nation come into being. This is visible in the context of India developing into a nation.

The long period of British rule in India induced a nationalistic feeling that pushed for the disentanglement of an Indian identity from that of a British colonial citizen. Autobiography was one of the essential tools for the construction of Indian subjectivity. Mahatma Gandhi is the earliest practitioner of a form of autobiography centred around the concept of nation and nationhood. Performing an 'Indian' identity on *Facebook* cannot be analysed as a singular act. As discussed in chapter 4, *Facebook* architext coerces the users to create a single and homogenous identity. However, the multimodality feature of *Facebook* connects more to a fragmented identity creation. The autobiographical and autofictional markers in a printed text is essentially a retelling of the past. In contrast, the autofictional elements in a *Facebook* narrative is most often a depiction of events and experiences in the real time alongside the depiction of past events. The ubiquitousness of technological devices, previously discussed in

Chapter 4, enables the users to update/post 'live'. This affordance and socio-cultural situations portray a fragmented and multifaceted national identity.

Nationalism is derived from the Latin word 'natio'. In its earliest form the word nation referred to communities of foreigners as 'uncivilized'. The present usage of 'nation' as a term to denote large population living in a country was began in the 17th century (Reicher and Hopkins 21)

Nation as a psychological construct is created through culture being embedded in the notion of nation state that is perceived to be naturally occurring. Nation state, therefore, represents the socio-historical context within which culture develops. (Ederson 1-2) Gellner refers to the act of constructing high culture to imbibe a sense of cultural homogeneity. This form of homogeneity binds a state to its corresponding cultural practices and beliefs constructing and adhering to a trope of 'official' knowledge. Nationhood as a construct is represented through what Michael Billig refers to as 'banal nationalism'. It refers to everyday practices which have been used symbolize an idea of the nation. According to him the phrase 'banal nationalism' refers to "the ideological habits which enable the established nations of the West to be reproduced. It is argued that these habits are not removed from everyday life, as some observers have supposed. Daily, the nation is indicated, or 'flagged' in the lives of its citizenry. Nationalism, far from being an intermittent mood is established nation, is the endemic condition" (Billig 6) The self is embedded in these everyday practices which have become a part of the conscious and unconscious self.

Traditional autobiography focused on the representation of the sovereign 'I'. In contrast, digital autobiography depicts a collective notion of the 'I'. The chapter also proposes to trace how autobiographical self and nationhood are interconnected through performance. An autobiography is "an embodied discourse contextualized by and expressive of the historical circumstances in which it takes place" (Wagner-Egelhaaf 228). Therefore, an autobiographical

narrative can only be depicted through reference to the socio-political and cultural conditions prevailing in a given historical time and space. A national narrative is similar to an autobiographical narrative in that both are acts of self-invention performed through varying accounts of nationhood. An autobiographical self is depicted as a named textual subject belonging to a particular geographical space. Like textual autobiographies, though *Facebook* offers a sense of globality, users still situate themselves within a geographical paradigm by naming the 'Places lived'. Autobiographies can function as cultural artifacts, representing and preserving diverse perspectives within a nation. By writing their life story, individuals can highlight their connections to their country, culture, and history, emphasizing aspects that contribute to their national identity. Traditional written Autobiographies often include personal anecdotes, reflections, and experiences that shape one's sense of belonging to a particular nation or culture. This feature is similar to the practices of autobiographical narratives in the digital medium. They offer a platform for individuals from various backgrounds and communities to share their stories and contribute to the overall tapestry of national identity. Autobiographies that explore marginalized or underrepresented voices can challenge dominant narratives and provide alternative perspectives on national identity. Various factors such as shared history, traditions, language, and values shape national identity. Autobiographies often explore these elements and their impact on the author's identity, contributing to the portrayal and performance of national identity.

I contend that defining a structured and homogenous Indianness through the narrative representation of life events on *Facebook* is impossible. The reason is that India is a multicultural country with various religions, castes, and communities. Therefore, any particular marker cannot be used to represent the concept of Indianness. The algorithmic structure of *Facebook* and associated policies reflect the dominant viewpoints with reference to performing an Indian identity. Also, which users will be considered to be Indian is problematic. Whether

the user's geographical location would be considered for the decision or whether or not diasporic Indians would also be included cannot be clearly defined. The Cambridge dictionary defines the term Indian as "belonging to or relating to India or its people" ("Indian"). The definition makes it apparent that the term Indian can be defined to identify different people as Indians. Language is another essential marker of national identity. In the case of India, a discussion on language use in social media becomes extremely relevant. The chapter will refer to different textual examples in the form of *Facebook* posts to represent the varied types of nationalism instead of a homogenous and singular identity. Chapter 4 dealt with the architexture of *Facebook* in which the 'About' section is essential in developing an identity for representation of the self. The section 'Places Lived' under 'About' acts as the first marker of national identity. Connected with this, the 'Life Events' category also creates a network through interaction with other users to provide a 'national' sense of belonging. Finally, images/photographs also play a crucial role in constructing the self in accordance with cultural practices and expectations. The role of the global visual culture with the prevalent photography practices in India will be analyzed to trace its interconnectedness of the social media platforms and the autobiographical self. Therefore, studying *Facebook* posts in accordance with the socio-cultural aspects is imperative to understanding the connections between *Facebook* and autofiction.

Self as a Socio-cultural Construct:

On the one hand, the "social" in social media refers to "the connectedness of human users", and on the other, depicts the process of "automated connectivity of platforms". The concept of 'social' is a conglomeration of various aspects of life, namely political and economic factors of a specific space, which interact with human elements to produce cultural practices. Down the ages, the term 'social' has acquired a shifting meaning. During the 15th century, the term referred to 'home life' and 'living with others'. The Latin root 'socialis' represented the idea of

companionship. The centrality of the term 'following' in social media is derived from the root word 'sekw'. 'Social' also represents a form of 'doubleness' in its representation of the different ties that connect us and the structure that affects the formation of such connections. The construction of self is not a process in isolation. It reflects the socio-cultural aspects of a given time. According to Giddens, the representation of self in a narrative always connects the past to a desirable future. The construction of the self "is in constant interaction with the social and cultural contexts in which the individual life is lived" (Alleyne 102-103). Giddens believes that the changing social conditions influence the continual process of self-construction.

Sociality is critical to understanding social media and *Facebook* in particular. *Facebook's* sociality comprises 'cognition,' 'communication,' and community. Christian Fuchs discusses the interconnected nature of these three elements. According to him, communication is essential for forming a community, and cognition is the prerequisite for meaningful communication (C. Fuchs 6). Human beings can only exist within a social connection through the exchange of information in a symbolic manner. It is only through such interaction that it leads to the formation of human knowledge. This functions as the premise for the existing human relations. One of the major concepts associated with social media is the prevalence of convergence culture. Convergence with respect to the *Facebook* platform, refers to how the platform becomes both the medium as well as the machine, integrated to form a communication network. The social and technological aspects of society are brought together by social media platforms such as *Facebook*. The computer networks formed via *Facebook* function as the medium for communication and an enabler for collaborative information production. Therefore, the three components of sociality are integrated into a single platform. This convergence also leads to the convergence of various social roles. A person enacts several social roles pertaining to personal and professional spaces. However, a single profile on *Facebook* is used for the representation of all social roles as an amalgamation. Therefore,

structure and agency work together to form socio-cultural spaces. The material improvements affect how communication is practiced. Governmental policies also influence which platforms or mediums are used for communication. The structuration theory depicts that social practices are dictated by the social structures or individual agency alone. Instead, it focuses on understanding social practices as a dynamic process forwarded by the constant interaction between structure and agency ("Structuration Theory"). In a survey conducted to "Study *Facebook* Narratives in India"[i] shows that users of *Facebook* believe that societal practices have considerable influence on the posts. All of the 143 respondents identified themselves as being Indian, irrespective of the places they live in. Most of the respondents belong to the state of West Bengal, along with several other cities in India, UK and USA.
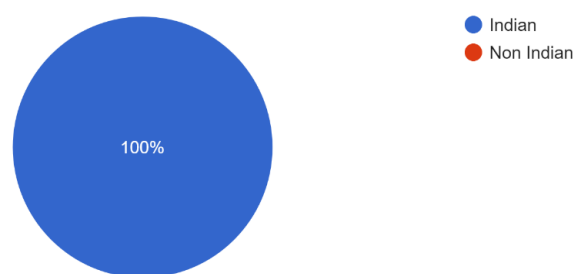
Figure24: Piechart showing the nationality of the survey respondents (Sourced from Survey conducted by the researcher Rimi Nandy)

According to the result of the survey [Refer to Figure 24], 57.3% of the respondents believe that the societal norms and expectations greatly influence the narratives shared on *Facebook*. 35.7% believe it is moderately influential while the rest believe the social norms are slightly influential or not influential. Therefore, the national identity is intrinsically linked to the representation of the self on *Facebook*. The geographical location of a user does not affect their national identity.
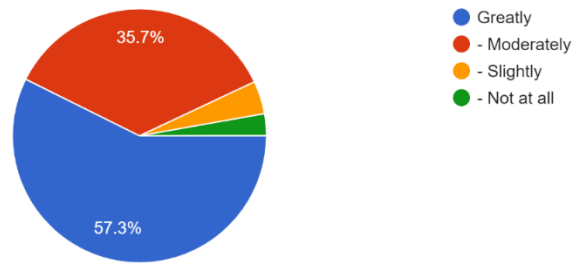
Figure25: Piechart depicting the influence of social expectations (Sourced from Survey conducted by the researcher Rimi Nandy)

As mentioned earlier, the social and cultural norms of space connected with the concept of nation greatly influence the construction of a national identity. The pie chart above [Refer to Figure 25], analyzing the responses to the survey questionnaire's question "To what extent do you think societal norms and expectations influence the narratives shared on *Facebook*?", depicts that 57.3% of respondents believe that societal norms and expectations greatly influence the narratives shared on *Facebook*.

According to Van Dijck "The sphere of rational arguments, independent from both market and state, was destroyed by the same forces that initially established it. Printed mass media became a tool for political manipulation and a medium for advertisements. As a result, the public sphere transformed into a discourse in which "state authority was publicly monitored through informed and critical discourse by the people" (Habermas 1989, xi). The principle of publicity activated by the people was taken over by state powers and commercial forces, which took control over communication flows, thus influencing people's social behaviour and political preference through rhetorical and publishing strategies (Dijck, Pg 163)." He further refers to Benkler's term 'networked public sphere' to define social media as a 'nonstate' and 'nonmarket' space for the unfettered exchange of opinions, the same as eighteenth-century

England's coffee houses and salons. However, the algorithmic structure of social media platforms such as *Facebook* creates filter bubbles and fragmentary groups of opinions and biases. Though *Facebook* is considered to be a democratic space, it is still controlled by the market and the government. The government's policies and actions controlling social media are prominently featured in countries such as China, Russia, Iran and India.

While life stories in print media are similar to life writing on social media, they significantly differ in context of 'time-lag'. The concept of 'time-lag' refers to the various stages a text must cross before final publication. This enables time for editing and controlling what is published. However, in social media, posts can be shared in real time, providing less opportunity for the state to contol the content. In this respect social media is a much more democratic medium compared to print medium. Though sharing content on social media is easier, it can still be manipulated by removing content, blocking dissenting users or simply referring to the shared posts as "fake news". For example, on *Facebook* during the COVID-19 period, many "Inidan" users resorted to criticizing the government's inability to efficiently manage the death toll resulting from the spread of the coronavirus. According to Nandy et al. *Facebook* became a site for political narratives and counter narratives with the ruling party and the opposition, posted information and comments to negate each other's influence. A supporter of India's ruling party counters the opposition's criticism by referring to an act of spreading 'fake news'(Nandy et al.). The concept of digital nationalism and its connection to autobiography in general and on *Facebook* in particular will be further elaborated in the following section

Autobiography, Self-invention, and Nationhood:

Autobiography and nationhood are seemingly disparate. However, though both differ in various aspects, the terms also denote some similarities. Both are socially constructed performances. Both terms indicate an idea that is intrinsically linked to one another. Most scholarship on nationhood considers a group, the smallest unit of practising nationhood. According to Michael Billig "nationalism is the ideology by which the world of nations has come to seem the natural world-as if there could not possibly be a world without nations" (Billig 37). Nationalism, therefore denotes beliefs, habits and practices of everyday life. Joseph Marichal discusses how human beings are always looking to be a part of an 'in-group' or community(Marichal 5).
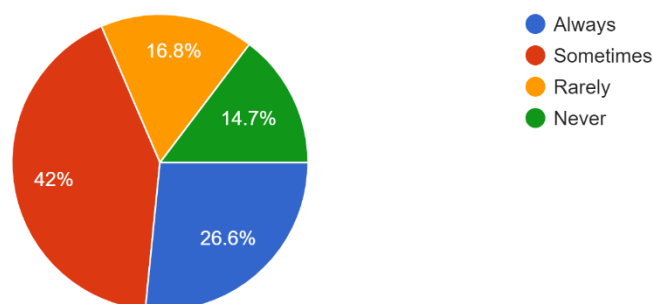
Figure 26 chart representing the percentage of users considering potential audience while posting on Facebook (Sourced from the survey conducted by Rimi Nandy)

The survey results for the question "Do you consider the potential audience on *Facebook* when crafting your posts?", [Refer to Figure 26] show that 26.6% of users always consider their potential audience while crafting a post, 42% consider it sometimes, 16.8% rarely consider it and 14.7% never consider it. This proves that *Facebook* posts narrate one's life events with the view of gaining acceptance from the audience, thereby forming a sense of community. The audience's expectations are influenced by the accepted cultural tropes defining national identity.

Prominent among them is Benedict Anderson's concept of the "imagined community" in which the individual aims to practice his/her agency as a part of the community. In contrast, Raul Moreno-Almendral stresses the idea of 'everyday nationalism' as being connected to the individual enacting their agency. Almendral believes "nations are nothing outside of the minds and practices of the people that embody them". (Moreno-Almendral 650) Anderson's "imagined community" and Almenssssdral's "everyday nationalism" are diametrically different in their attitude and perception of the characteristic features of nationhood. An autobiography's similarity with the idea of nationhood lies in its nature of being a performance. While autobiography is a textual form of self-invention, a nation performs its identity through the interaction of educational, cultural, political, and economic power relations. While referring to Benedict Anderson's perception of Nationhood, Carolyn Steedman reflects that an autobiography is a meaningful record of an autobiographer's life and is situated within a nation's narrative. Both nationhood and autobiographical selves are constructed as a performance. However, such narratives are composed of multiple versions and cannot be interpreted as a singular historical experience. Since subjectivity is crucial to self-invention, it varies from person to person. An autobiography and nationhood are not mutually exclusive. Rather they are connected through a network of acts and its associated meaning. On one hand, a nation provides the basis for the autobiographical self; on the other, the autobiographical self,

goes into the making of identity markers of a nation. (Wagner-Egelhaaf 228) The human penchant for narrativizing their life leads to lining up life events and perceived experiences. Lydia Wevers in her essay on *Autobiography and the Nation,* talks about the embedded nature of the self in "nation, that it is an imagined community produced by participation, will and forgetting, depend on the constructive elements of written texts – memory, imagination and participation. In an endless reflection of each other, both autobiography and the nation exhibit the incompleteness and permeability of performed identity, whether it is individual or collective"(Wagner-Egelhaaf 229). Autobiography and the nation both demonstrate the fluidity of identity. The narratives constructed in autobiographies often mirror larger national narratives, reflecting societal values, historical events, and cultural norms. Conversely, national narratives can influence how individuals perceive and narrate their own lives. This dynamic interplay highlights that identity, whether individual or collective, is a performative act that is constantly being negotiated and redefined. The stories told by individuals about themselves and their communities are not static truths but evolving narratives that reflect the ongoing attempts to make sense of their place in the world.

Discussions around nationalism primarily refer to Benedict Anderson's idea of "imagined community" and nationhood born out of print capitalism. However, the notion of national identity is not restricted to it being an imagined concept. With reference to the growing impact of globalization online, the digital space increasingly tries to transform the idea of nationhood into a concrete presence in online platforms (Skey). In the contrast to print media which allowed a one-way dissemination of information, digital media, provides a space which is built on the feature of "many to many". Digital media "acts as a tool of emotionally-driven connectivity through which political communities–nations, regions, sects, tribes– are (re)imagined. Yet, its two-way nature makes for a more dialectical process between producers and consumers of media." (Tynan) However, in the absence of a concrete form of regulation

like in the case of newspapers, digital media like social media platforms, enables the exchange of different kinds of opinions. The growing ease of exchanging all forms of opinions leads to the "(re)solidifying of communities based on narrow, exclusivist conceptions of identity". (Tynan) A content analysis of *Facebook* posts can show how the posts are articulating the nation. A detailed analysis of select *Facebook* posts will be presented later in this chapter.

Nationalism is interlinked with the idea of 'national borders. Traditionally, national borders refer to a geographical space where citizens can exercise sovereignty. However, in the digital age, the conventional definition can no longer articulate what national borders represent. The internet has made geographical limitations irrelevant. Instead, what connects people are their shared ideas and beliefs (Halavais 7-8).

"Much of this impact is arguably related to how digital modes of communication have changed our individual and collective experience of the spatial and temporal conditions of human society" (Smyth 420). Internet connectivity is essential to the functioning of a 'networked society'. According to Castells Network society is "the social structure resulting from the interaction between the new technological paradigm and social organization at large"(Castells and Cardoso 3). The development of Information and Communication Technologies influenced the rise of a society interconnected through their interaction with the cyberspace. The ubiquitous nature of computer technology and the associated network enables society to overcome the limitation of a physical communication network. An always online network is created through the development of microelectronic devices, and computers which follows the principle of being constantly connected. The subject that is constructed within the likes of *Facebook* is piecemeal and fragmented. The business model followed by *Facebook* urges users to update the profiles continuously through friend suggestions or community suggestions. The users in turn agree to the terms of engagement for creating the 'ideal' self-representation. The social buttons, discussed in Chapter 4, are an essential trigger for the collusion between users

and the *Facebook* platform. The social media self is a self that is constructed out of bits of data – status updates, uploaded photos, tags by 'friends', news feeds, and the implied social and cultural capital created by one's network of friends. Digital self, manifested on digital platforms like *Facebook* is a fragmented one. It includes not only an individual's perception of his/her life but also the enormous unstructured data feeds, algorithms, and readers' contributions connected to the likes and dislikes of a person. *Facebook* and the representation of self, using 'fiction' of the individual as an autonomous subject that is directly and almost totally in control of its representation. *Facebook* builds on both human and posthuman concepts of the human subject in compelling, and arguably posthuman, life narratives, as its users produce and are produced by accounts of digital life. (McNeil 67) Individual identity is only granted meaning and significance 'in relation to the network', which in effect means that the 'private, interior life of the humanist subject . . . is thrown over for the networked self' (McNeil 72). This changing attitude to individual identity implies that in contrast to the humanist ideal of completely autonomous individuality, identity in the digital age is formed through interactions of individuals over a network of communication connections. Therefore, the interactions over online platforms such as *Facebook* shape the identity represented through online profiles. National identity is one of the many elements based on collaborative content creation and distribution.

Digital Nationalism through digital autofiction:

National identity is socially constructed, but at the same time, it is critical to the understanding of sociality. Therefore, nationalism is strongly integrated within the sociocultural aspects of selfhood. The concept of Indianness as a unit of identity can be traced back to the colonial period in the writings of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, among others. Each of them worked towards constructing an Indian identity which would be in contrast to their identity as a British Colonial citizen. Gandhi depicts two aspects of himself, focusing on separating his

Indian identity from his performance as an English gentleman. In their autobiographical work, 'Indianness' is perceived as a collective identity embracing India's colonial history. The national identity functions as the coming together of various regional identities. Nationalism is connected to autobiography through the retelling of events that reflect national ideas, ideologies, and perceptions. Gandhi begins his autobiography with an introduction- "Four or five years ago, at the instance of some of my nearest co-workers, I agreed to write my autobiography. I made the start, but scarcely had I turned over the first sheet when riots broke out in Bombay and the work remained at a standstill. Then followed a series of events which culminated in my imprisonment at Yeravda. Sjt. Jairamdas who was one of my fellow-prisoners there, asked me to put everything else on one side and finish writing the autobiography" (Gandhi 43).Through these words, Gandhi situates himself within the historical context of Indian freedom movement and his role in it. His narration of his life events depict how each incident worked towards developing his ideas, ideologies and identity as an 'Indian'. In one of the chapters he describes his interaction with Mr.Chesney Jr., editor of *The Pioneer*, a newspaper published from Allahabad. In this entry Mr. Chesney Jr.'s response to his request for an audience. Gandhi was extremely pleased with his "patient hearing" but at the same time quotes his caution-"He promised to notice in his paper anything I might write, but added that he could not promise to endorse all the Indian demands, inasmuch as he was bound to understand and give due weight to the viewpoint of the colonials as well" (Gandhi 286). Here Gandhi refers to himself as 'Indian' in opposition to the British Imperial identity. Across the expanse of his autobiography Gandhi represents his identity as an Indian subject. From his formative years to his growth as a prominent freedom fighter and his notions of 'swaraj', 'satyagraha' and non-violence, his autobiography captures the historical, social, economic and political aspects of India as a nation.

Simultaneously both are concerned with a representation of the historical past. However, *Facebook* as an autobiographical tool greatly differs from the practice of nationalism and traditional autobiography. Unlike the practices mentioned earlier, *Facebook* narratives are incomplete and perpetually ongoing. It depicts the past alongside events and actions in real-time. According to Benedict Anderson, nation is based on "horizontal comradeship". This form of comradeship can only be constructed through the recognition of social and cultural commonalities that bind the citizens together into an "imagined community". According to Francois Lionnet, "Autobiographical texts do the cultural work of laying out the set of relations that each new generation inherits and transforms" (Lionnet). Therefore, the connection between nation, nationalism and autobiography is evident. This relation between the two is further emphasized in the words of Lydia Wevers who comments that as "nation is imagined as progressive and future focused, autobiography offers a sense of narrative completeness about individual life, since it is a performative genre. As the nation performs itself across a spectrum of practices –education, cultural production, politics – so the textual self enacts and shifts identities"(Wagner-Egelhaaf 230). In summary, the idea of nationalism is greatly allied with the practice of writing an autobiography while also differing from it.

The form and nature of autobiography have been transformed with the rise of a "networked society". In an age where human and non-human elements are constantly connected, the literature is essentially transformed to reflect the changes in society. With every sphere of life moving on to cyberspace, the act of writing the self in the form of an autobiography has also been upgraded to capture the changing times. The *Facebook* platform, for example, provides a space for informal sociality. The birth of social media affected the structure of human connections. It initially started as a platform presenting personal information in the form of data. However, with the development of Web 2.0, social media shifted from a database structure to a narrative structure. In his speech at the launch of *Facebook* Timeline, Mark

Zuckerberg said "Timeline is the story of your life. It has three pieces: all your stories, all your apps and a new way to express who you are" (Dijk 204). This proves that *Facebook* is no longer a platform for gaining access to personal information about 'friends'. Therefore, in the words of Zuckerberg, *Facebook* is a life narrative in the digital age. Posthuman life narratives follow a non-linear narrative structure focusing on interconnection, interrelation and the disruptive nature of storytelling. In doing so different elements, be it human or non-human interact to produce a branching in the story. *Facebook* is the perfect example of such stories created through co-existence. Relationality between readers- The autobiographical pact gives way to a posthuman pact in the digital age. The centrality of humans as the author and reader is substituted with different forms of subjectivities, including machines and their relationality. In other words, the narrative written on *Facebook* does not solely show human interactions. Also writing as the primary act of narrative is displaced by other forms of storytelling namely audio-visual. The narrative written by a user is not only read by other users but filtered through various algorithms, the materiality of devices used to record the narrative, the sharing of stories, the performance of identity through human and non-human elements, the virtual communities, all coming together to influence the direction of the narrative.

A prominent example of the different facets of identity construction on *Facebook* is that of posts showing animals talking in the human language. The analysis of such posts from a posthuman animal studies angle depicts the anthropomorphic tendency in the act of writing the self. Anthropomorphic approach can be seen as an extension of anthropocentric understanding, even though it tries to counter anthropocentrism. However, as Wolfe mentions, that animal studies still mirrors an anthropocentric bias (DeMello 26-30). Traditional autobiography has always concentrated on the lives of important historical figures only. In contrast such posts representing an animal's life narrative breaks free from this accepted generic marker. Instead, it takes an anthropomorphic stance to the construction of identity by giving a human voice to

animals. The following image is an example of this posthumanist gaze practiced in a self-narrative on *Facebook*. This image appears on the Timeline of Mr. Aritra Cakraborti's profile. In the accompanying comment, the user writes in the voice of his pet cat, stating "Mother is visiting my grandparents and will be returning tomorrow. Hence have to give importance to my father compulsorily"(Chakraborti)(Translation my own).

Figure 27: A 'Cat's' Narrative

The post appears to be an attempt at giving agency to non-human beings. However, in the absence of a common language, the agential shift still remains centred on human language. The *Facebook* post [Refer to Figure 27] serves as an example of posthuman autobiography by incorporating the cat into the personal narrative, thereby anthropomorphizing it and recognizing its agency. This approach aligns with Katherine Hayles' concept of multispecies flourishing, which advocates for ethical consideration and mutual flourishing among different species. Cynthia Huff refers to Hayles and states that "agency from human exclusivity and

locates it instead in the broader category of organism, thus granting the latter agential status ethically and as coaxers of life narrative" (Huff 280). The post challenges human exceptionalism and underscores the interconnectedness of human and non-human lives, illustrating a harmonious and ethical relationship within a shared narrative framework.

Apart from being a commentary on the decentring of the human species in the narrative framework, the post also reflects some of the prevalent ideas among the Bengali community, that is connected to a fragment of "Indianness". Sitting on a stack of blankets, the cat is the central element in this narrative. The background shows two framed photographs of the family. One of the photographs represents the couple's wedding in the past. The familial bonds with the cat is depicted through a reflection of the wedding ritual. The use of the Bengali language in the narration, situates the post within the Indian cultural practices.

A multilingual country like India has several linguistic communities are represented on social media platforms. An analysis of the language used on platforms such as *Facebook* shows multiple languages being used to represent oneself within the construction of an Indian identity. Such vernacular presence on the platform can only be understood if the users have recourse to the cultural climate of India. There is no single vernacular which could be defined as "Indian". For example, the viral video of a woman drinking tea while saying, "Hello fraans chai peelo" can be seen as a commentary on another aspect of "Indianness". A critical discourse analysis proves that this popular trend on *Facebook* can only be understood within the framework of a discourse in India. "Chai" has become synonymous with Indianness. In this post, a home video shows a woman in "traditional" attire sipping tea from a glass and addressing the audience to consume tea. The word 'fraans' can often be found on *Facebook* and it denotes an Indianization of the term 'friends'. This gave rise to several videos mimicking this act and reifying the national identity portrayed through it. As discussed earlier, such posts cannot be understood

outside the Indian cultural context. The algorithms will suggest the video to users connected across the "Indian" network.

The ubiquitous nature of digital tools makes social media easily accessible. Social Media enables fragmentation through the various imagined communities found on platforms such as *Facebook*. This has enabled the transformation of the very nature of nationalism. There are two forms of nationalism, one verging on the spread of extremist viewpoints and right winged politics while the other depicts everyday mundane activities featuring national identity.

Social Media such as *Facebook* is characterized by the prominence of 'showing' in place of ''writing'. Showing does not refer to the use of photography but the mode in which life events are narrated through the use of social action buttons such as 'Likes'. Photography is a form of indexical signs, which represents a cause-and-effect relationship. Whatever is captured in a photograph is what appears before the photograph. Similarly, the automated listing of actions in a *Facebook* Timeline is indexical by nature, as the comments, reactions, suggestions, and other activities undertaken by a user, automatically represent the personality that the user intends to present. Georgakopoulou's idea of 'narrative stancetaking' deftly explains this feature afforded by *Facebook*. It refers to the position a narrator/storyteller situates him/herself within a narrative. D. H Zimmerman discusses the role of the communicator vis a vis the context within which the narrative is set. The storyteller, referred to as the "here-and-now communicator," operates within the immediate context of the storytelling act. This means they are aware of and responding to the current conversational setting, audience, and social cues. Zimmerman refers to this act of the communicator as "discourse identity" (Georgakopoulou 40). How a user chooses to represent him/herself depicts the association with particular social identities. It 'indexes' certain social roles such as the regional and national identity.

Facebook, as one of the leading social networking platforms, has heavily embraced and promoted this ideal by creating features that automatically share various activities, such as

articles read, music listened to, or even locations visited, without the need for explicit user action. This concept of "frictionless sharing" (Payne 87-88) promotes the idea of constant, automatic sharing as the default mode of interaction and self-expression on social media. However, the idea of "frictionless sharing" raises several critical concerns regarding privacy, authenticity, and the distortion of personal narratives. On one hand, the concept of "frictionless sharing" aligns with Zuckerberg's vision of a more connected and transparent world. On the other hand, it raises questions about the boundaries of personal privacy and the authenticity of online experiences. The concept of "frictionless sharing" eliminates the need for conscious decision-making when it comes to sharing personal information, potentially leading to inadvertent disclosure of sensitive data and compromising user privacy. Moreover, the emphasis on automatic sharing reduces the agency of individuals in controlling and curating their online identity. Furthermore, the notion of "frictionless sharing" can also distort the authenticity of personal narratives. By prioritizing the automatic and immediate sharing of all activities, there is little room for reflection, introspection, and selective sharing (West 5-7). As discussed in Chapter Four, the algorithms heavily control the narrative construction on *Facebook*. Numerous posts are essentially a performance with little or no element of truth in it. Daniel Miller focuses on how the term *Facebook* is initiated within the social affordances of the U.S. However, based on that facility, "what any given population actually uses quickly develops its own local cultural genre and expectations, which will differ from others"(Miller 158).

The development of Web 2.0 has enabled users to interact with the content through comments, posts, and sharing. One of the essential functions of Web 2.0 and social media architecture is to monetize data. Personal information about the users contributes to the construction of such data. While sharing various personal information, the users also reflect the social structure within which the personal pieces of information are situated.

Friendship books to multimodal representation on *Facebook*. It is used as a site for social interactions between 'friends' and their networks, documenting interconnected events and activities. These interactions can be considered to be a form of banal nationalism which performs the nationality associated with India. The following section discusses the notion of "Indianness" as depicted on *Facebook*. Whether "Indianness" can be fruitfully depicted is a question that will also be dealt with in the later section.

The Question of "Indianness"

Social media practices are embedded in the socio-cultural spaces of a nation. Therefore, performing a national identity is intrinsically linked to the self-narrative depicted on social media platforms such as *Facebook*. *Facebook* profiles and communities' function as social spaces for interaction, which helps construct identity. The application of Critical Discourse Analysis depicts the rules which influence the multidirectional interactions taking place on *Facebook*. The online content reflected in the *Facebook* profiles and communities are based on pre-existing practices that define a nation's boundaries. Therefore, the content the users create is related to the national identity. Michael Billig discusses the form of banal nationalism which is omnipresent in the daily acts of life. Banal nationalism is very evident in *Facebook* content. The personal information in the About section, tagging local spaces like theatres, and restaurants, among other places. The photographs, poses, the language used the political discussions, the posts shared, the algorithmic suggestions all go into reflecting everyday nationalism. Though the internet inspires globalization, nationalism still thrives within the social space provided by *Facebook*. This chapter posits the idea of Indian nationalism depicted on *Facebook*. The practice of Indian nationalism reflected on the *Facebook* platform can be well posited through a reference to Ernest Gellner's idea of nation and nationalism. According to Gellner, a nation is not defined by its ethnic or cultural homogeneity, but rather by the

development of a unified culture and language that can be accessed by the majority of its population. This unified culture and language, according to Gellner, is not inherent or natural to a particular group of people, but rather constructed through the process of modernization and industrialization. In Gellner's view, the rise of nationalism is closely tied to the emergence of industrial societies, where increased mobility and communication led to a demand for a standardized language and culture that could facilitate economic and political integration (Gellner 125-127).

The question arises as to whether a unified and centralized "Indian" identity is plausible or not. According to Diana Dimitrova, "Indianness" is not a "scientific" or existing, real category. It is rather a perceived, fluid and ideologically colored discourse that constantly changes over time and is being conditioned by the ideological orientations and positions of the specific period discussed"(Dimitrova and Bruijn de). Stuart Hall focuses on the importance of looking at modern individual's cultural identity as an ongoing process constantly updated through the interaction between the subjective self and one's beliefs and ideologies. Therefore, the national identity is performed on social media based on the existing national discourse. Indianness is an imagined space or to borrow Benedict Anderson's words, an imagined community. However, India is a conglomeration of multiple layers of imagined communities with a shared historical past. It is impossible to associate a single cultural attribute with an identity embedded in a historical time and space. Indianness can only be defined "against the background of the plurality of India's languages, myths, religions and literatures—its shared linguistic, literary, cultural and religious history—that is, the ways Indians "imagine" "Indianness"(Dimitrova and Bruijn de 2).

Indian Nationalism was born as a response to the British rule in India. The desire to form a unique identity which would be in opposition to the colonial identity was critical to the idea of Indian Nationalism. The imperial subjugation led to the development of a form of Nationalism

which is fluid and yet still connected to the colonial past. With reference to this form of Nationalism, the national identity is deeply integrated in the celebration of the Indian Independence Day and the Republic Day. On the occasion of celebrating these significant days, several posts circulate across the *Facebook* platform celebrating the cultural heterogeneity and the heritage of India. National holidays are avenues for performing the national identity. Reliving the pain and struggle of the freedom fighters on Independence Day, enacting national identity through attires, images showing the "Indian" identity are markers of the performance of National identity. Celebrating the Indian heritage through symbols of the bygone era is the most common theme displayed on the *Facebook* profiles and status during such significant days. The following image is an appropriate example of the same:

Figure 28 : Performing ''‘Indianness’(Sourced from Debjani Banerjee's Facebook Profile)

The image [Refer to Figure 28] depicts a rice dish named as 'Tiranga Pulao' (tricolour pulao) used to represent 'Indianness' on the occasion of Indian Independence Day. The colour of the dish is associated with the tricolour of the Indian Flag. The term 'tiranga' is used synonymously

to refer to the Indian flag. The post begins with the words "Happy Independence Day my dear friends" which sets the premise for the performing of the national identity. The message ends with the words 'Jai Hind' (Hail India) followed by the emoticon for the Indian flag. The significance of the term 'Jai Hind' lies within the discourse of Indian freedom movement. Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose used this phrase as the battle cry for his regiment fighting for India's freedom from the clutches of British Imperialism (A. Das). It continues to be associated with patriotic feelings and the Indian identity. Therefore, the given image along with the language used in the post, functions as an indexical sign used to connote the idea of Indianness.

Another example of performing Indianness on the occasion of Indian Independence Day can be seen in the post shared by the actor Prabhash. His post is connected with the initiative of the Indian government named 'harghartiranga'(hoisting the Indian national flag in every house). An analysis of the post depicts the various markers of the national identity pertaining to Indian independence movement.

Figure 29: Prabhas' post on harghartiranga

The post talks about India being a country with diverse cultural practices. However, Prabhas focuses on the 'Tiranga' (Indian National Flag) as symbolizing a united India. His words "the Tiranga is an emotion for all Indians without any difference"(Prabhas) indicate a desire to homogenize an Indian identity through a single symbolic marker. The post and its use of the word and image of "Tiranga" when critically analysed gives an insight into the colonial past and the historical and political significance of the use of the flag as an essential element of "imagined community". According to the National Flag Code of 1950, the right to display the flag was restricted to the use by the state. The revised Flag Code of 2003, lifted the restriction on civilian display of the National Flag. This was followed by a landmark judgment of the Supreme Court in the Jindal case[ii] which allowed the flying of the National flag freely (Pai 40-41). The image also depicts the words "It's time to show our collective Deshbhakti" written in the colours of Indian flag, in a bold font. The specific term 'Deshbhakti' (patriotism) is being associated with the performance of Indian identity. The use of the Hindi term for patriotism can be contextualized within the discourse of Hindutva nationalism. Sudha Pai in her essay "The National Flag" also focuses on the role of the Bharatiya Janata Party in the attempt to re-appropriate the representation of the term secularism in the National Flag. The discourse focuses on making Hindi a form of national marker. The prominence of the Hindi language can also be seen in the use of the phrase "Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav" (elixir of energy of independence)("Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav"). According to the Rig Veda, 'amrit' is the nectar that makes the Gods immortal. The mythological tale of the samudra manthan (churning of the ocean) is associated with the term 'amrit'(Rajendran). The Vedic teachings, commonly associated with the Indian culture, is prevalently used to connect the idea of "Indianness". Therefore the use of the word 'amrit' is used to associate with Indian independence in order to situate it within the discourse of new nationalism in India. The prevalent language politics in India is also clearly reflected in the post's use of and promotion of Hindi as a National

Language. Raisun Mathew in his work on the language politics surrounding the use of Hindi, refers to Shashi Tharoor's argument "that India is a multicultural and pluralistic society and that this is what makes the country unique in its existence. Primarily, there is no single identity as Indian because each person's experience of India is different, having several micro identities that form the macro identity. The collective convergence of several micro identities of a person in India brings the macro identity of becoming an 'Indian' and thereby expressing the identity of 'Indianness'." (Mathew 299) The Bharatiya Janata Party led Government's insistence on imposing Hindi as a national language is brought into focus through this post celebrating the 75th year of Indian Independence.

Performing the national identity is a multifaceted act. This is very evident in the Tharoor's discussion of 'Indianness' consisting of various micro identities. There are various regional and cultural cues forming the larger idea of being an Indian. Another globally popular marker of the Indian identity is the Bollywood culture, that refers to the Hindi film industry. The following post [Refer to Figure 53] depicts the adoption of the features and characteristic elements of the Bollywood culture by Nina Wagner, a German citizen.

Figure 30: Who is an Indian?(Sourced from the Facebook link to Instagram profile officialhumansofbombay)

The above image is a screenshot of a reel shared on *Facebook* via Instagram in the "officialhumansofbombay" profile. The post shows Nina Wagner, a German Bollywood dancer. Through her costumes and dances to popular Bollywood songs, she imbibes the "Indian" culture into her identity. Her words, visible on the top of the image, "I may be a German, but I'm a Desi girl at heart", problematizes her national identity. The term "Desi girl" is often used in the context of Bollywood to refer to an "Indian" girl. By juxtaposing German and Indian aspects the post depicts her acceptance within the Indian cultural discourse through her use of markers associated with the term 'Indian'. These markers including the costume, jewellery, and the dance sequence performed by Nina Wagner, are connected to the concept of 'banal nationalism' discussed earlier in the chapter. In both examples, the connotative meaning of the post is more essential than what they directly denote. Therefore, the secondary meaning of the representation is crucial to the representation of selfhood through the posts. Georgakopoulou identified that "The *Facebook* status updates demonstrated a clear correlation between how a narrative stance was taken and what further telling, if any, ensued"(Georgakopoulou 42). In essence, how people communicate on *Facebook* can affect how others respond, and using a clear narrative stance can be a powerful tool for engaging and connecting with others on social media. The narrative representation of selfhood on *Facebook* simultaneously represents self and the other, as the stance taken defines how the viewer looks at the users' performance of the self.

Another crucial element in constructing "Indianness" is Diasporic nationalism or "long distance nationalism". This form of nationalism is practiced in the 'hostland' away from the homeland. The reflection of such practices are prominently featured in the *Facebook* posts of the diasporic community. *Facebook* posts connected to the celebration of various festivals of India in traditional attire and consuming dishes from the 'native' land is used to construct a selfhood performing nationality. These are mostly seen during National holidays, and festivals

such as Durga Puja, Diwali, Onaam among others. There also various Diaspora communities on *Facebook* based in countries such as Poland, the USA and others. The physical communities are transferred to the virtual spaces for the enactment of nationalism. The following posts can be considered as examples of diasporic nationalism.

Figure 31: Diasporic Nationalism (Sourced from Shweta Vasudeva's Facebook Profile)

Alongside the multiple voices and identities of "Indianness", there are also voices that never reach the *Facebook* platforms. These voices belong to India's 'invisible' population, namely the migrant workers. The sudden lockdown imposed in India during the second wave of Covid-19, had a tragic effect on the migrant workers(Yadav and Priya). During this phase, *Facebook* profile timelines were flooded with images of the silent suffering of the migrant workers. A large number of users wrote long posts, and shared and commented on numerous silent images. However, within these posts, the voice of 'invisible India' continues to be absent. Amrit Gangar used his *Facebook* profile to create a column named *Migrant Workers Discourse*, in order to draw parallels between the exodus images of the migrant workers and previous films, and photographs which create the discourse of the suffering represented by the silence, absences, and rootlessness of the migrant workers in the context of India.

Figure 32: Migrant Workers Discourse (Sourced from Amrit Ganger's Facebook Profile)

In his collection based on the *Facebook* column, Ganger writes "*Facebook* came handy to express myself and share my feelings with friends and foes, known and unknown. Sitting in a cozy comfort of my home, an ethical dilemma was also troubling me deeply – what right had I to use the images of the poor migrant workers and write about them? And that too through the facile medium of the *Facebook*? I was neither a victim nor a sufferer. But, nevertheless, as a fellow citizen, something inside me was compelling me to speak about them, on their behalf"(Gangar). The experiences and sufferings of the migrant workers were presented as a mediated representation on *Facebook*. The posts based on the circulated images of these workers went into constructing the individual narratives of various *Facebook* users. However, the workers themselves did not have access to the platforms directly. The lack of smartphones and access to the internet, with numerous workers dying on roadsides, their silent voices were lost. The affordances provided by *Facebook* were unavailable to the rootless migrant workers.

Facebook and the Indian Narrative of Surveillance:

As discussed earlier, _Facebook_ posts can be considered a life narrative form. However, being a collaborative space, it provides a conglomeration of different viewpoints which go into constructing the self-identity. The socio-political aspects are crucial to the construction of identity. Life narratives focus on various aspects of social life while representing a person through narrative elements. _Facebook_ posts also work toward the same end though it differs from traditional life narratives, as _Facebook_ narratives are a process that is forever continuing. An essential feature of self-representation on social media is cultivating the 'right' kind of story (Grant). The political structure, coupled with the social expectations, dictate the terms for writing a self-narrative. The public nature of _Facebook_ posts makes it easily accessible for surveillance. During the period between 2012 to 2015 several arrests were made based on Article 66 (A) of the Indian Constitution. This led to a controlled representation of the self on _Facebook_. The ambiguity of the article enabled its use as a tool for surveillance. This directly affected what was shared on _Facebook_ platform. Any form of criticism of the government at centre and state level were controlled through the surveillance of social media posts. With reference to the _Facebook_ arrests made using Article 66 (A) functioned as a digital panopticon. Some of the crucial cases during this period include Assem Trivedi's arrest in Mumbai for drawing a caricature of the corruption in Indian government.

Figure 33 : Assem Trivedi caricature of National Emblem(Sourced from 'I Support Assem

Trivedi' Facebook Page)

A second case involving the arrests of Shaheen Dhada and Rinu Srinivasan of Mumbai for posting a comment on *Facebook* criticizing the state-wide shutdown of Maharashtra for mourning the death of Bal Thackeray, a prominent politician, was also connected to the misuse of Article 66 (A) of Indian Constitution. Following is the post by Shaheen Dhada on *Facebook*. Her friend, Rinu Srinivasan had also liked the post which led to her arrest.
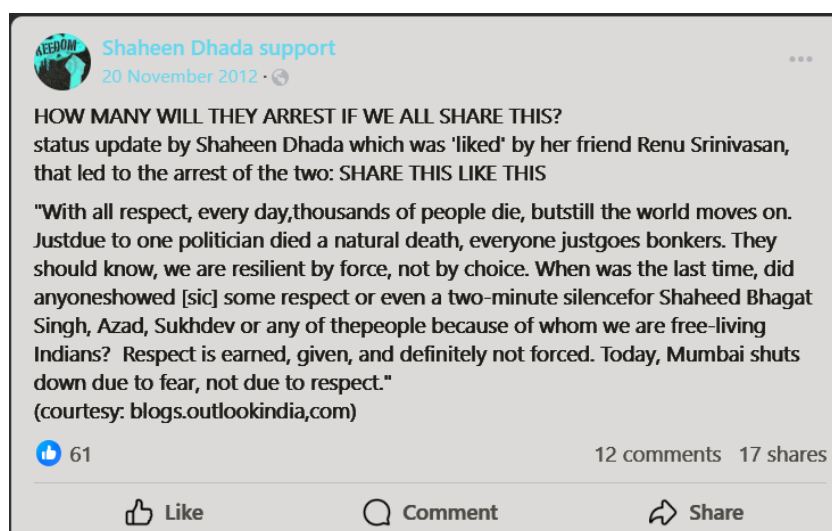
Figure 34: Shaheen Dhada post that led to her arrest(Sourced from 'Shaheen Dhada Support

| Facebook' Page)

The other sister had merely liked the post. The backlash due to the incessant use of the article to control the narrative of government India led to the abolition of the Act in 2015. Refer to the cases. The notion of the digital panopticon derived from Foucault's theory of the panopticon functions as a critical influencing factor in constructing self-narrative discourses on *Facebook*. Panopticon refers to Jeremy Bentham's prison model used to condition prisoners through the fear of surveillance. Foucault associates this with mechanisms of control. The structure of *Facebook* functions like the panopticon, with the management in control of the central tower. However, unlike Jeremy Bentham's prison structure, in *Facebook* the role of the guards and the prisoners are interchangeable (Fast). On *Facebook* a user's activities can be constantly viewed in the Activity Log. As such, the users are always performing under the gaze of an audience. Chapter 4 discussed the architexture of *Facebook*. It showed how *Facebook* allows a homogenous structure for profile creation and information dissemination. Therefore, the *Facebook* platform can be used to control and discipline the user's representation of an accepted discourse of nationality. Foucault focuses on how comments which challenge nationalist discourse are not welcome. The digital panopticon created by *Facebook* ensures the disciplining of the users/audiences with the fear of consequences. According to Foucauldian surveillance dynamics- "it is more helpful to see digital nationalism as a consequence of technological affordances, economic incentives, and policy choices that play a role in the politics of all modern nation states, albeit to varying degrees and with varying effects" (Schneider 197). In summary, the portrayal of Indian nationalism on *Facebook* is directly related to the policy decisions, the affordance of available technology including the rate of internet penetration, the gender biases, and its political implications. *Facebook* user stattistics in India shows that out of the total population of *Facebook* in India, 27.5 % were women and 72.5 % were men ("*Facebook* Users in India - January 2022"). This affects the narrative discourse presented on *Facebook*. The number of internet shutdowns prompted by the

government also persuades the representation of nationalist discourse. From January 2012 to June 2022 there have been a total of 647 internet shutdowns imposed by the government of India (Basuroy). In most cases the government reasoned that the shutdowns were put in place for security reasons.
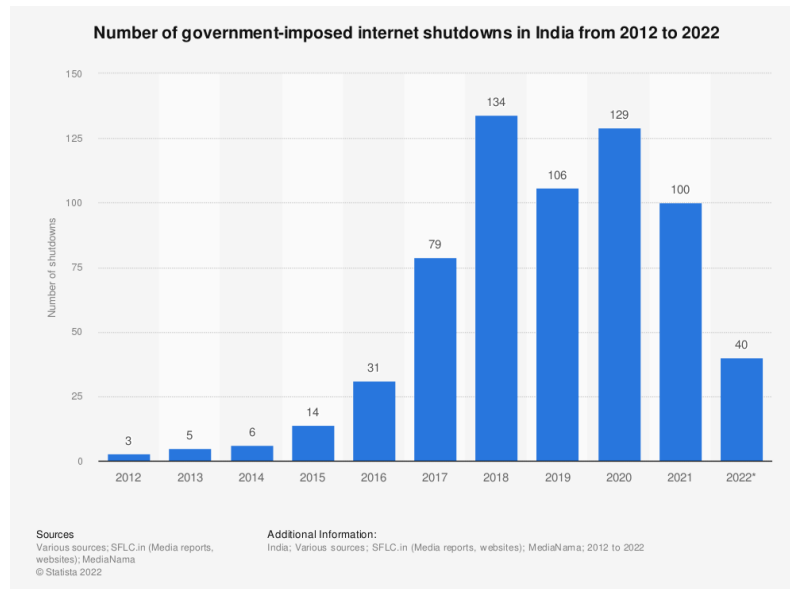
Figure 35: Number of Government-Imposed Internet Shutdowns in India (2012-2022)(Sourced from https://www.statista.com/statistics/1095035/india-number-of-internet-shutdowns/)

It has been observed that whenever any form of opposition or clashes take place between the citizens and the government of India, internet shutdowns are imposed to control the spread of information. This was evident in the long period of internet shutdowns in Kashmir (Bhadauria).

The public policies enacted by the Indian government greatly influence the architecture of *Facebook*. The boom in the use of social media platforms for political engagements resulted from its use during the 2014 election campaign by Bhartiya Janatadal Party. The prominent use of social media during this period gave rise to "selfie nationalism" in India. Populist politics became prominent under the regime of political leaders such as Donald Trump in the USA and Narendra Modi in India. The role of banal nationalism is significant in spreading the populist ideology across the digital space. The reiteration of ideas associated with nation-building in

daily life creates a strong base for spreading a solid Hindu nationalist ideology in case of digital practices in India and beyond connected by a nationalist political space globally.

Since *Facebook* architecture enables effective surveillance, most users fear backlash to their posts. The internet policies in India directly put platforms such as *Facebook* under the direct scrutiny of the government(Mahapatra). This fear may often discourage users from posting their true political views. The algorithmic structure and government policies might persuade users to perform a particular form of Indian nationalism. The data about internet shutdowns (discussed earlier) can indicate the fear generated by Government surveillance of social media platforms. Therefore, the authenticity of the posts created and shared by users is highly questionable.

This is evident from the fact that the option for *Facebook* Live and *Facebook* reels resulted from the policy decision to ban Chinese applications from being used in the geographical space of India. This led to the ban on Tiktok, a popular application in India and elsewhere(Singh). Lyndsay Grant talks about the importance of telling the 'right' kind of story to add meaning to one's life narrative. In her words "The stories we tell about ourselves are immensely powerful. In a digital age, how do we use social media to construct and tell these stories? How we explain who we are, where we have come from, and where we are going constitute important narratives that drive decisions we make about our futures and our ways of being in the world. These narratives are also crucially bound up with what we learn and how we learn it" (Grant). The 'right' kind of story in some cases might subvert the dominant narrative. In other cases, it might further the dominant narrative. The power yielded by the digital panopticon decides the form of an accepted life narrative. The life narrative in turn reflects the nature and structure of nationalism which is intrinsically linked to portrayal of the selfhood.

Conclusion

In the digital age, nationalism and autobiographical narratives cannot be represented as complete and singular identity. The analysis of these two ideas alongside select *Facebook* posts makes the multiplicity of identities apparent. Posthumanism negates the relevance of singular and linear narratives. Autobiography which is premised on a singular (auto) self-narrative has been replaced by the multiplicity of digital posthuman autobiography. In the context of this thesis, I proposed to use the term 'autofiction' to refer to multiple narrative voices and also the changing nature of traditional autobiography in the sphere of social media platforms. The fictionality in autofiction can be connected to the irrelevance of truth in the post-truth age which resulted from the structure of social media platforms such as *Facebook*. In an age where the affect is more crucial than the truth component, performing a self becomes increasingly important. Performing the self through *Facebook* narrative, therefore can be associated with Autofiction and the notion of a 'posthuman pact' to represent the changing nature of life narrative. This chapter mainly dealt with the connection between autobiography and nationalism on one hand, and on the other, it worked towards identifying an "Indianness" in the portrayal of selfhood in *Facebook* profiles. The critical discourse analysis of various *Facebook* posts depicted the impossibility of a unified notion of "Indianness" and a unified national identity pertaining to the performance of selfhood by "Indians" on *Facebook*.

Notes:

[i] Refer to Chapter 1. This survey was conducted by the researcher Rimi Nandy specifically for this thesis. The data has been automatically visualized using the features of Google Form.

[ii] The Indian industrialist Navin Jindal sought to fly the National flag on his factory in Chattishgarh in the year 1993. This led to the formation of the inter-ministerial Flag Committee on 18th October 2000. The report of the Committee led to the revision of the Flag Code in 2003

removing the restriction on civilian display of the flag. The new Flag Code was then used by the Supreme Court of India to pass its judgement in favour of Navin Jindal, thereby allowing the free display of the Flag on all days (Pai 41).

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Chapter 7

Conclusion

Narratives play a crucial role in interpersonal relationships. When individuals share personal stories, they invite others into their world, fostering empathy, connection, and trust. Through narratives, people reveal their vulnerabilities, emotions, and perspectives, enabling others to relate and understand them on a deeper level. Furthermore, narratives enable the exchange of wisdom, lessons, and advice, as individuals learn from the experiences and insights shared by others. This thesis critically evaluates the changing aspects of narrative spaces with respect to the study of *Facebook* as a form of autofiction. The thesis title 'The Birth and Growth of a Narrative Space: A Study of *Facebook* as an 'Autofiction' in the Indian Context (2006 onwards)' was treated in two interconnected parts. The first half of the title deals with the transformation of narratological spaces under the influence of information technology. As discussed in chapter 2, the ubiquitous nature of social media coupled with the convergence of various medium, has changed how narratives are structured and perceived. How the features of social media narratives have influenced the genre of life writing is also debated upon. Critical to the debate is the subgenre of autofiction. An analysis of the autofictional features and mirroring of the same in *Facebook* narratives depicts the two are interconnected. The title's second half and its discussion focused on studying *Facebook* as an autofiction in the Indian context. The concepts of nation, nationhood and selfhood were scrutinized in relation to the practices of digital nationalism. Through the course of the thesis the various changes brought about by the advent of information technology in the social, economic and literary facets have been minutely discussed. Building on the theories propounded by Manuel Castells, the thesis represents the implications of a society connected in a web of networks.

Narrative Spaces and the evolution of digital autofiction:

Narratives are instrumental in societal and cultural contexts in personal, interpersonal, and public domains. Political speeches, advertising campaigns, and media representations rely on storytelling techniques to engage and persuade audiences. These narratives shape public opinion, influence social norms, and mobilise collective action by presenting narratives that resonate with people's values, desires, and aspirations.

Religious and spiritual traditions heavily rely on narratives to convey moral teachings, spiritual insights, and the foundations of faith. Sacred texts and religious stories serve as guiding principles, offering believers a shared framework for understanding the world and their place within it. These narratives foster a sense of community and provide individuals with a source of meaning and purpose. As discussed in the thesis introduction, narratives capture the fundamental ideas and beliefs binding the society together. The storying of life events has been a crucial marker in human history. Chapter 3 traced the path of the autobiographical genre. The transformation of the traditional form of autobiography, which initially focused on delineating the lives of important historical figures, into a more inclusive space occurred through the modernization of social thoughts and prerogatives. Postmodernism had a major impact on autobiography and the act of representing a single sovereign identity. Fracturing and multiplicity are two of the most essential markers of postmodernism. Along with the strong presence of hybridity and breaking down boundaries, postmodernism's impact was strongly felt in architecture, art, and literature.

During the course of my research, I came across various similarities between autofiction belonging to print culture and the narrative structure of *Facebook*. At the same time I deduced that the autobiographical practice on *Facebook* essentially has features which the term

autofiction cannot define. Therefore, I propose a generic term to represent the practice of self-writing on *Facebook*. The term I choose to define autobiographical narratives written on social media platforms is 'autodatafiction'. The term denotes the coming together of autofictional attributes and the centrality of big data in structuring the self-narrative on social media platforms such as *Facebook*.

Textual autofiction primarily uses print or e-books and is characterised by a singular author representing their life in non-linear structure. In this format, the autofictional texts are complete and involve passive reading by the audience. The passivity lies in the inability of the audience in furthering the narrative. In capturing life events in a non-traditional manner by rendering autobiographical pact irrelevant, the author displaces the element of truth, which is critical to the autobiographical tradition. The genre of autobiography bound by the autobiographical pact is transformed with the advent of postmodernism. Chapter 3 deftly explained the changes depicted in the genre of autobiography. The postmodern paradigms questioned the idea of truth.

One of the essential features of autofiction is the mixing of fact and fiction. The examination of the autobiographical works of J. M. Coetzee, Edward St. Aubyn, Rachel Cusk, Olivia Lang and Ben Lerner distinctly demonstrates the hybridity of fact and fiction in their autofiction.

With respect to textual autofiction, the act of remembering and retelling is directly connected to the author's memory alone. The audience's perception of the events or memories countering the author's view has no place within the novel's framework.

Unlike textual autofiction, the autofictional practices on *Facebook* involve multiple authors in the form of audience who either choose to like, comment or merely view a user's posts. The audience interaction with a given post furthers the narrative through comments or simply by viewing a post. The survey conducted on *Facebook* narrative in India shows different forms of portraying oneself on *Facebook*.
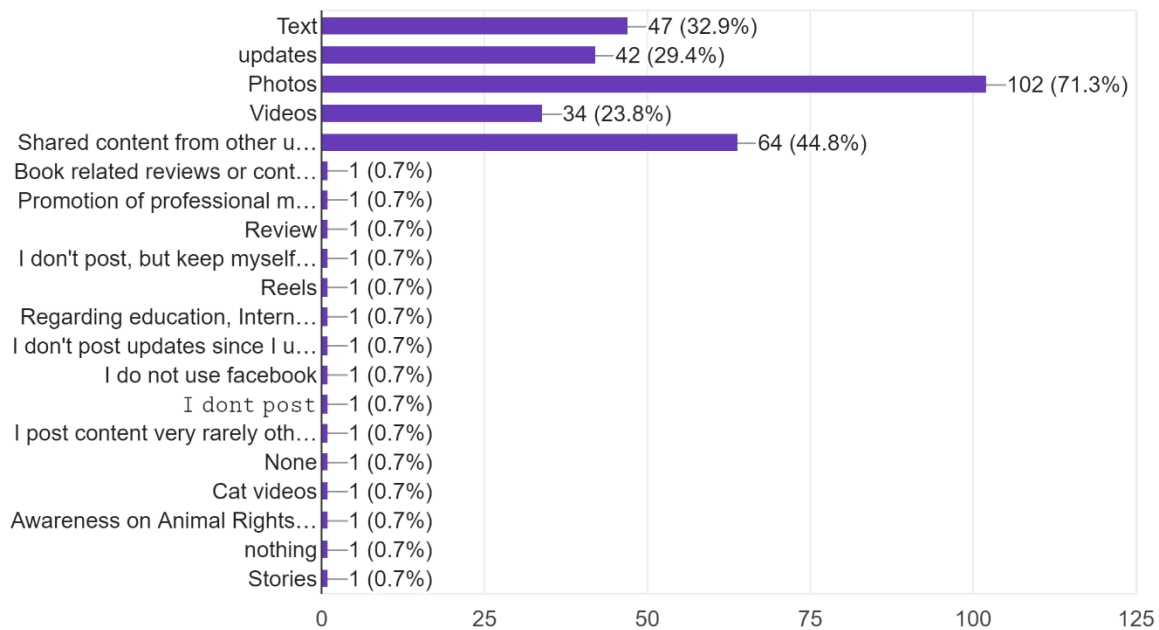
Figure 36: Type of Facebook Content (Sourced from Rimi Nandy's survey)

This graph [Refer to Figure 36] shows the response to the survey question "What types of content do you most commonly post on *Facebook*". According to the graph, that 71.3% of the respondents choose to post photographs, 44.8% post shared content by other users, 32.9% post content in the form of texts, 29.4% post updates, 23.8% post videos and the rest selected the option other specifying the theme of the content produced or shared. These options include content related to books, reviews, promotion of professional matters, reels, animal videos, stories, and the option of not posting anything but keeping oneself up to date with the "Feed". This graph depicts the multiplicity of content shared on *Facebook* and its networked nature, curating narratives through interactions and constant shifts between the roles of the author and the audience.

The following graph shows the response to the survey question "How do you prefer to engage with friend's family's narratives on *Facebook*?". According to the graph, 77.6% of the respondents engage by liking the posts, 37.8% comment on the posts, 28.7% view the posts without commenting, liking or sharing, and 8.4% share the posts. These varied manners of engaging with the posts create different narrative encounters. Merely viewing the posts is also a form of engagement with the posts.

How do you prefer to engage with friends' and family's narratives on Facebook?
143 responses

Liking their posts	111 (77.6%)
Commenting on their posts	54 (37.8%)
Sharing their posts	12 (8.4%)
Viewing without interacting	41 (28.7%)
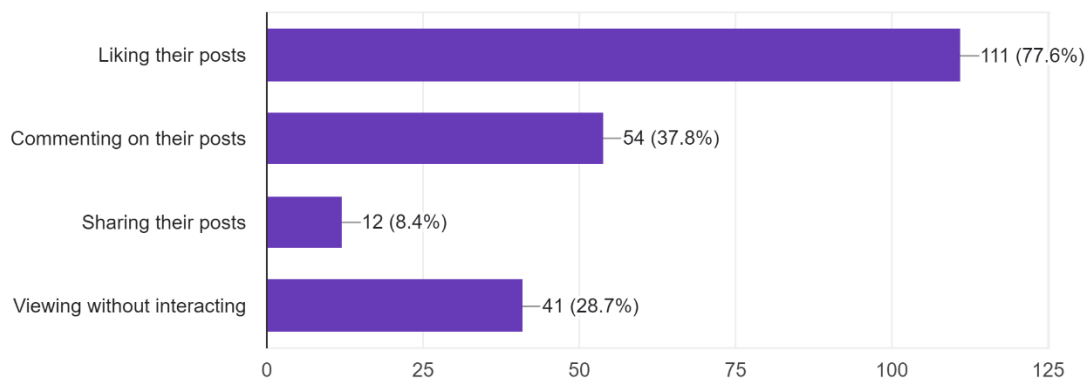
Figure 37: Graph depicting engagement with Facebook posts (Sourced from Rimi Nandy's survey)

The manner in which the narratives are generated and consumed on *Facebook* cannot be studied and defined using traditional methods. This gap in existing terms necessitates the formation of a term that can represent the characteristics of autofiction in social media enabled by its affordances. The discussion of the survey results and the analysis of the form of *Facebook* narratives in the preceding chapters justify the use of a new term to define social media autofictions. In this respect, the term 'autodatafiction' becomes relevant in capturing the narratives of the self, based not only on concrete elements but also on the presence of digital traces. The survey proves the significance of big data in the narrative of the self.

Autobiographical Crossroads: From West to East:

The critical works on the autobiographical/autofictional genre predominantly assess the Western practices of autobiography/autofiction. This section encapsulates the results of the examination of the essence of intercultural literary exchange between the West and the East. As explored in Chapter 3, the autobiographical traditions in India, starting with M. K. Gandhi, began as an opposition to the Western autobiographical approaches. It delves into the notions of nationalism, spirituality and the associated political landscape. The autofictional genre also found its way into the corpus of life narrative practices in India. A scrutiny of autofictional works by Yasodhara Lal and Charu Nivedita, among others, shows a varied representation of marginalised voices connected with gender, caste, language and religion. The rituals and social performances inform the Indian autofiction distinctly differently. It offers a picture of the dynamic interplay of ideas, themes, and narrative techniques that draw inspiration from Western autobiographical traditions while synthesizing them with the rich tapestry of Indian storytelling. This cross-pollination of literary traditions transcends the boundaries of mere influence, as it reflects a conscious choice by Indian authors to engage with and reconfigure Western autobiographical modes within the context of their own cultural and societal realities.

In conclusion, narratives are a powerful tool for human social bonding. They facilitate the formation of personal and collective identities, strengthen interpersonal relationships, shape societal values, and transmit cultural knowledge. By sharing stories, individuals and communities connect with one another, find common ground, and create a shared sense of meaning and belonging. The ability to engage in storytelling and engage with narratives is an essential aspect of human communication and social cohesion.

This crossroads is not merely a collision of disparate literary traditions; rather, it represents a creative negotiation between the individual and the collective, the personal and the cultural, and the autobiographical and the fictional. Indian authors have deftly woven their personal narratives into the larger fabric of societal and historical narratives, making autofiction in India an intricate, multi-layered tapestry that defies easy categorization. At this crossroads, we have witnessed the emergence of autofictional works that not only offer a window into the inner lives of their authors but also serve as mirrors reflecting the broader complexities of Indian society and its multifaceted identity.

Facebook as an Autofiction

The theoretical debates in the thesis outlined the interconnection between the varied concepts from the fields of narratology, autobiography studies, memory studies, culture studies, posthuman studies, digital humanities and media studies. Chapter 4 deliberated on the changes brought about in the prevalent characteristics of memory. The digital medium has greatly affected how memory functions. The narrative structure of an autobiography has been proven to be transformed with technological advancements. As elaborated earlier, memory has also become mediated in the age of the 'networked society'. Since memory is mediated, it can essentially be curated to portray a selected idea of the self. This phenomenon has been deftly discussed with reference to the prominence of post-truth to reiterate irrelevance of truth. The development of autofiction also propagates the hybridity of fact and fiction. In accordance with this principle the *Facebook* architecture clearly defines the parallels between a textual autofiction and the *Facebook* posts. Chapter 5 focused on the structure of *Facebook* and how it influences the narrative pattern. A detailed analysis of the affordances of *Facebook*, the algorithmic structure concisely illustrates how the platform becomes an efficient tool for a hybrid representation of the self. The limited choices for structuring a *Facebook* post persuade the users to narrate the self in a specific and defined manner. As illustrated, the paratextual

elements, demonstrate a correlation between a *Facebook* post and an autofiction. The multiplicity of self and its perception addressed in the thesis culminates in chapter 6, which places *Facebook* as autofiction in the Indian context. Since the idea of nationhood is socially constructed, the use of everyday practices as markers of nationality imbibes the posts as a mix of fictional as well as non-fictional aspects. The trivial actions performed daily, like visiting a restaurant, watching a movie, and other routine activities, are portrayed as essential bearers of meaning and nationalism. Across the thesis, all the chapters prove the hypothesis through arguments and deliberations. However, as discussed in the previous section, I believe a more appropriate term to signify *Facebook* as autofiction is "autodatafiction". This term could be used to categorise self-narratives written or mediated through social media platforms in general.

Implications and Limitations of the Research:

The importance of the thesis lies in the fact that it captures newer directions taken by narratology and the field of life writing. Every aspect of human society is impacted by technological advancements, giving rise to complications in the perception and reception of the self. The unique structure and features of *Facebook*, along with the large base of users, make it an essential source for studying social behaviours. The narrative elements detected in the structure of the *Facebook* posts and the structure of its platform also make it crucial to the sphere of literary studies. The interdisciplinary approach and methodology of the thesis add to its relevance in the current academic scenario. Traditional autofiction focuses on the author's manipulation of personal experience within a text. "Autodatafiction" diverges by highlighting the interactive and dynamic nature of digital narrative construction, where the story is also written by the audience's interaction and the platform's algorithms. It also challenges the idea of authorship and narrative authority, as external data influences can constantly reshape the digital narrative.

"Autodatafiction" builds on the concept of autofiction by recognizing that the narrative self is not only constructed through text but also through data. It acknowledges the role of algorithmically-curated environments in shaping narrative structure and reader engagement, incorporating the insights of metadata and analytics into understanding narrative.

A major obstacle faced while conducting the research was collecting data. Due to the privacy principles followed by *Facebook*, acquiring the data through web-scraping is impossible. As a result, collecting the data became a tedious task. The dynamic nature of *Facebook* means constant updation of the features. Due to this, the research had to make changes to accommodate the upgraded features constantly. Though there appears to be a methodological bias in using snowball sampling for data collection, this research used the bias as an element in data collection and analysis. Instead of focusing on the bias, this research used the researcher's profile as a means to study the structuring of the 'autodatafiction' influenced by the rich data environment surrounding the researcher's network of narrative activities. This term can offer new perspectives in empirical studies by linking narrative analysis with data analytics, enriching the digital humanities field and beyond.

Future Directions:

The thesis attempted to study *Facebook* as an autofiction through an interdisciplinary approach. Since there is a dearth of research in approaching social media as literary texts, much more research can be conducted in this field. A larger corpus of data detailing the variety in gender, caste, culture and language could be used to better understand the *Facebook* platform as a part of life writing. Mapping the collected data to understand the networked patterns connecting the narratives would help trace autofiction development in the digital space. Gathering metadata from digital texts, such as timestamps, likes, shares, and comments, which provide additional context to the narratives. Monitoring the role of platform algorithms in shaping the visibility and spread of narratives is crucial in understanding how stories are received and interacted

with. As mentioned earlier, *Facebook* is a dynamic platform that has undergone innumerable changes since I started with the research. Using computational tools to analyze large datasets in the form of *Facebook* posts to identify patterns in themes, sentiment, and narrative structure can provide a better understanding of *Facebook* as an 'autodatafiction'.

A major transformation is *Facebook*'s evolution to Meta. The networked connection between *Facebook*, WhatsApp and Instagram has not been a part of this research. The vast possibilities in the creation of Metaverse will provide further opportunities for research based on the findings of the current thesis. The inclusion of the term 'autodatafiction' in the study of *Facebook* narratives enables a sophisticated investigation into how personal, autofictional storytelling interweaves with the digital traces users leave behind. This integrated approach provides a holistic view of narrative construction in digital spaces, blending qualitative narrative inquiry with the quantitative rigor of data analysis.

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Appendix I

Timestamp	What is your gender?	What is your age?	Where did you hear about confession pages?	How often do you read the confession page?	Why do you read the confessions?	What are the themes discussed in the pages?	What does confession mean to you?	Do you think the confessions are true?	Have you ever been bullied on the confession page?
3/21/2015 20:28:03	Male	16 - 25	classmates	not so often	time pass	pretty much proposals and breakup stories	boring time pass	not sure	no
3/22/2015 10:48:54	Female	16 - 25	on facebook	whenever i'm on facebook				not sure	no
3/22/2015 21:43:38	Female	16 - 25	through my housemates	really rarely, that is the first time that I come to this page	just to see what people thing and that just confirm that SFU is really bullshit and people really unfriendly here.	Confession about life and mostly about unfriendliness and problems at SFU	Something that your don't share easily and often ashamed of/scared to share	yes	no
3/23/2015 14:50:45	Male	16 - 25	on my own page...	i read it everyday...	reading confessions is my job..i'm heading Jai hind college confessions	everything is discussed...	Confessions page has made my life...so it means everything to me you can connect to me on jaihindconfession@gmail.com	yes	no
3/23/2015 15:09:01	Female	16 - 25	Saw it through Facebook newsfeed, from other friends' likes/comments etc.	Once or twice a week, depends if it shows up on newsfeed	Something to do / They're interesting / Sense of community =)	Relationships / SFU-related stuff / Real issues people are going through / Troll comments	Builds a sense of community for the students, lets us know that we aren't alone in certain things.	yes	no
3/23/2015 17:08:37	Female	25 - 40						no	no
3/23/2015 21:18:07	Female	16 - 25						not sure	yes
3/23/2015 21:36:24	Female	16 - 25	in a conversation	never			to me confession should be between the persons concerned. confession through a social	not sure	no

			with friends, this came up				networking site is cheap and when things can be sorted out between the two people or among the group members why include the whole world?		
3/23/2015 22:03:04	Female	16 - 25	from my friend.	rarely	its entertainment	i don't know	people brave enough to face the reality	yes	no
3/23/2015 22:40:20	Female	16 - 25	From school friends	Never	I don't	mostly juvenile love problems, I've heard	To bare your soul to the few people who matter, and to lighten your heavy heart, ridding it of any kind of guilt.	do not care	yes
3/24/2015 2:14:39	Male	25 - 40	Seen people browse in school	Almost everyday	Entertainment	Love stories, crushes, difficulties in school, difficulties in life, general trolling, questions about decisions, complains, politics, world and personal view	An open window into the minds and lives of fellow students without compromising or revealing identity; reddit or other boards	yes	no
3/24/2015 10:43:17	Male	16 - 25	FB news feed	Daily, as it is in my newsfeed	Either the comments or the confessions themselves may be funny	It depends on waht the confessor would like to discuss. Most of the time, it is about random happenings around the school. But other times, they are about other things, and some other times, it's just reposts of shit from reddit.	What kind of question is this?	no	no
3/25/2015 10:31:29	Male	16 - 25	Friends	Once or Twice a Day.	To see that I'm not alone with my school troubles and affirm that I am on the "better" end compared to the things confessed.	University Stress, Relation Troubles, Family Troubles, School Rivalry and Money Issues	Some are pitfall warnings for me some are just humour.	do not care	no
3/27/2015 22:25:18	Male	16 - 25	facebook obviously	whenever it appears on my news feeds	i get now know some stupid people and their	mostly about bullishit. I.e love, like and all those shits.	opening up ourselves hiding our identity lol	do not care	no

					thinking or activity				
3/28/2015 1:00:47	Female	16 - 25	facebook	not often	funny content	typo in the question btw. but mainly school and life	a confession is like sharing something that you never shared before	yes	no
3/28/2015 15:00:40	Male	25 - 40	facebook	very rarely	I dont	Crushes, peeves	Sometimes a relief, sometimes a blunder.	do not care	no
3/28/2015 15:09:30	Male	25 - 40	At Social Networking Site like Facebook	Rarely...Till date may be less than 5 times	First time to know what exactly is the confession page. And then for Job search.	No idea	Disclosing some core secrets to another person being anonymous	not sure	no
3/28/2015 22:34:20	Male	25 - 40						yes	yes
3/28/2015 23:28:12	Male	16 - 25						do not care	no
3/29/2015 11:06:45	Female	16 - 25	I hear about confession pages on facebook.	From 2 years	When i m free.. i like to read confessions.	Daily life problems.	According to me.. to express our feelings is confession.	yes	no
3/30/2015 7:15:58	Male	16 - 25	Friend's profile	Every single post, (almost) every single day.	To think deeper on certain matters, and enhance my views. To get a laugh, to learn more about the people in my community, to help them out with their problems if I can. I'm a frequent commenter	Student life, studying, relationships, depression, unusual occurrences both on and off campus.	The first thing I think of is SFU Confessions. Clearly, I'm obsessed. Confessing is the act of sharing something you have hidden in hopes of understanding, redemption, or simply release. Talking about things forces oneself to look at them more critically. Confessors hope to receive advice, affirmation, or sympathy. Obviously, not all "confessions" posted to SFU Confessions are like that. But that's what keeps people interested: the variety, variability, and community.	yes	no

					and my responses range from humorous and sarcastic to longer, thoughtful responses. I also use the opportunity to spread wisdom, positivity, and empathy, whenever I can. A bit of the notoriety I've gained IRL from being a prominent commenter never hurt either. ;)				
3/30/2015 9:31:08	Female	16 - 25	Friend	Daily	Sense of community	School, social situations	To unload your soul in a non-religious setting	no	no
3/31/2015 7:53:26	Female	16 - 25	It was suggested to me through facebook, and heard about it from friends	A few times a day, or when they pop up on my newsfeed.	Because they are entertaining, and develops a sense of SFU community	Sex, love, acedemics, and sometimes things I'd rather not know...	Getting something off of your chest.	yes	yes
4/1/2015 10:15:28	Female	16 - 25	Someone liked a confession and it was on my timeline	Everyday because I check Facebook everyday and everyday it is on my timeline	I don't read all of them but some of them are interesting or I can relate to some of them	Relationships/love, memes/jokes, depression/sadness/mental illness, pet peeves, interesting situations that occurred	It's just nice to read sometimes	do not care	no

4/3/2015 22:19:01	Male	16 - 25	I'm the one who created my page . Which is the CMRU Confessions. :D	I check the page every hour . You know being the admin .	The confessions ? It's just entertaining :D and the truths come out . It's fun .	About the girls mostly . And people propose at times. They never confess about the college .	Don't ask me :D		yes	yes
4/12/2015 12:16:11	Male	16 - 25	heard about it through friends	don't read it at all..	dont read it	dont know exactly	a feeling you have for someone that you haven't spoken about		not sure	no
4/19/2015 8:47:53	Male	16 - 25	Facebook	Once or twice every week	I find them entertaining		It means releasing that extra burden thats buried deep inside you		not sure	yes
4/22/2015 11:00:47	Male	16 - 25	facebook	once in a week	Just to know everyone's other side	love proposals, crush	To share feeling to someone you dont know, and to seek help to over come fear in doing something.		not sure	yes
4/25/2015 12:48:24	Female	25 - 40	On facebook.	Never	I don't read it.	Usually I see different groups of people/communities posting about themselves.			not sure	no
4/26/2015 0:02:39	Male	16 - 25	My friends	Rarely	ALL for fun	No idea	all for fun		not sure	no
5/4/2015 20:10:24	Female	25 - 40	online	once a month	jlt				yes	no
8/6/2015 10:54:37	Male	25 - 40	frnds	once in a week!	its fun!		depends on what confession one make!		not sure	no
9/21/2015 19:02:15	Male, Others	40 above							do not care	yes
11/18/201 5 0:57:40	Male	16 - 25							not sure	yes
11/18/201 7 14:00:57	Male	16 - 25	Class email	Never	Never I said	What I kow	Nothing		do not care	no

Appendix II

Timestamp	Email Address	Gender	Age	Education Qualification	Do you engage in Political discussion on Facebook?	Do you think one should share political content on Facebook?	How has your pattern of using Facebook changed in the last 1 year?	Do you follow any political parties/politician's Facebook profile?	Do you think that Facebook is an important platform for citizens engagement with public issues?	I generally post contents criticizing the Indian government's role in dealing with the Covid-19 crisis	I generally post contents supporting the Indian government's role in dealing with the Covid-19 crisis	What are your views about the role of Facebook as a political influencer?
10/25/2021 21:27:06	arijit.das.888@gmail.com	Male	33	Post Graduate	Yes	Yes	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	Yes	Yes	1	5	Significant but divisive; the platform is non-essential, so can be removed altogether; if existing, facebook should regulate content from all sides/camps of the political spectrum.
10/25/2021 21:28:32	bijendra1992@yahoo.com	Male	28	Post Graduate	No	No	Shared more content about Covid-19	No	Yes	1	1	I use FB to connect with Academic Community only
10/25/2021 21:30:13	sanjoy.eutopia@gmail.com	Male	35	Graduate	Yes	Yes	Shared more personal content	Yes	Yes	1	1	I think facebook do influence people but as it is a typical advertising platform so it is heavily biased towards political masters who have more money so it is not at all a level playing field for

												political discussions nor a good reflection of it. But using it for false political propaganda is well documented and effectively implemented by a lot of teams and will happen more
10/ 25/ 202 1 21: 35: 26	aurnab95@g mail.com	Male	26	Graduate	No	Yes	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	1	1	Facebook definitely creates polarization and influences the general public consensus.
10/ 25/ 202 1 21: 43: 41	royrosi2015 @gmail.com	Female	23	Post Graduate	No	No	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	1	1	No comment
10/ 25/ 202 1 21: 44: 26	mashmita87 @gmail.com	Female	34 yrs	Post Graduate	No	No	Increased the number of hours spent on Facebook, Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	Yes	Yes	1	1	Too much influence of Facebook

10/ 25/ 202 1 21: 48: 08	pramit.kuma r.pkgcm@g mail.com	Male	23	Graduate	No	Yes	Increased the number of hours spent on Facebook	No	Yes	1		1	I believe in a ethics not any political party
10/ 25/ 202 1 21: 50: 14	isattwikkum ardas@gmai l.com	Male	26	Graduate	No	No	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	2		2	Very influencing.
10/ 25/ 202 1 21: 55: 03	saptaparnira ha475@gma il.com	Female	23	Graduate	No	Yes	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	1		1	Since last year Facebook has definitely playsed a very important role for various kinds of discussion like covid 19 , bengal election and many more. Covid 19 pandemic brings everyone on Facebook and everyone shares their views . Specially for the political influencer it Facebook is becomes very helpful. It seems like facebook by itself playing the role of political influencer. To avoid the spreading of the virus it sometimes

												good but many time i have seen that it is trying to manipulate common people by posting the wrong information and common people are also responsible for believing those wrong information.
10/ 25/ 202 1 21: 56: 15	ghoshkatha5 0@gmail.co m	Female	23	Post Graduate	Yes	Yes	Increased the number of hours spent on Facebook	Yes	Yes	3	1	Quite significant.
10/ 25/ 202 1 22: 02: 08	das.bidisha1 996@gmail. com	Female	24	Post Graduate	No	Yes	Increased the number of hours spent on Facebook, Engaged in more political discussion in compariso n to Pre-Covid period, Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	5	2	Plays the most important role in influencing right now, therefore political parties are hiring people to handle their social media pages , mainly Facebook pages

10/25/2021 22:18:06	guhaambalika64@gmail.com	Female	34	PhD	No	Yes	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	Yes	Yes	1	1	".... social Sauron eye on the world of politics." (The Washington Post, 2014)
10/25/2021 23:04:17	joyeetamaeng20@efluniversity.ac.in	Female	22	Graduate	Yes	Yes	Engaged in more political discussion in comparison to Pre-Covid period	Yes	Yes	1	1	It is a platform that takes news from one end to the other real swift. Facebook is a good (political) influencer.
10/26/2021 1:58:32	agarwalameghna@gmail.com	Female	27	Post Graduate	No	No	Shared more content about Covid-19	Yes	Yes	3	2	Fb should provide correct information to the people
10/26/2021 2:04:19	imandal31@gmail.com	Female	27	Graduate	No	No	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	No	1	1	-
10/26/2021 3:21:44	anurag.mandal.57.57@gmail.com	Male	24	Graduate	No	No	Shared more personal content	No	Yes	1	1	Its a product that has potential to be weaponised

| 10/26/2021 7:14:40 | dmukulika@gmail.com | Female | 38 | PhD | No | Yes | Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down | No | Yes | 1 | | 1 | It is a public platform all kind of political influences are present the only deciding factor is probably who is good at marketing and branding a particular ideology. |
| 10/26/2021 9:24:15 | sribaschowdhury@stu.adamasuniversity.ac.in | Male | 19 | Graduate | No | No | Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down | No | Yes | 1 | | 1 | Facebook is a good platform for spreading awareness. However, it's a double-edged sword. As much as it can be used to sorrad awareness, it is equally prone to be the center of spreading misinformation and baseless rumors which can lead to big consequences. Facebook is the easiest target for any political to fabricate certain things and post them to create havoc amongst general public. So, in my opinion, policy changes have to be made wherein a system to verify whether a piece of information or any |

												post is correct or not should be there.
10/26/2021 9:50:55	somnath.bs @gmail.com	Male	36	Post Graduate	Yes	Yes	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	2	1	Facebook can influence massive numbers of people, so it is a major political influencer. However, it misuses this ability to serve its own ends, usually to make higher profits.
10/26/2021 13:22:48	arnab6203@ gmail.com	Male	23	Post Graduate	Yes	Yes	Engaged in more political discussion in comparison to Pre-Covid period	No	Yes	3	1	Facebook has been the eyes of 'Big Brother'. It encourages one to involve in political discussions and also controls or navigates the participants or the end users view point with the help of algrithms which are changing accordingly with time and location of usage.
10/26/2021 15:02:29	akilah.lakshmi@gmail.com	Female	31	PhD	No	Yes	Shared more personal content, Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family	Yes	Yes	2	2	Fb is a public sphere 2.0.

								during lock down				
10/ 26/ 202 1 15: 18: 51	shariqjalal12 3@gmail.co m	Male	35	PhD	No	Yes	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	Yes	Yes	2	1	FB has a major role in influencing people politically and with the current statements of its whistleblowers this seems more true
10/ 26/ 202 1 17: 43: 07	rahmatifidel @gmail.com	Male	35	PhD	No	Yes	Shared more personal content, Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	Yes	Yes	1	3	Facebook is mostly used for personal use and and networking with friends. But now a days facebook can also be used for publicizing politician and it can reach out the politician or users to reach out to the social domain if they already used regular platform such as parties, and political social media; Twitter and Linkdin .
10/ 26/ 202 1 19: 18: 17	myonusb@g mail.com	Male	28	PhD	Yes	Yes	Shared more personal content	No	Yes	2	1	It acts as magnifier of a message
10/ 26/ 202 1	jmahanta98 @gmail.com	Female	23	Post Graduate	No	No	Using Facebook to stay connected	No	No	2	3	No comments

20: 05: 24							with friends and family during lock down					
10/ 26/ 202 1 20: 32: 26	souryac@ya hoo.co.in	Male	33	Post Graduate	No	No	Shared more personal content	No	Yes	1	2	Very crucial
10/ 26/ 202 1 20: 46: 02	rahulroy110 81990@gma il.com	Male	31	Post Graduate	Yes	Yes	Shared more content about Covid-19, Shared more personal content, Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	5	3	Very much. But it's filled with false content, skewed discussions and hate more than actual points of discussion
10/ 26/ 202 1 21: 20: 23	A.shweta08 @gmail.com	Female	30	PhD	No	No	Shared more personal content	No	No	1	1	It should be restricted.
10/ 26/ 202 1 22:	aitijhya125r oy@gmail.c om	Female	27	Post Graduate	No	No	Shared more content about Covid-19,	No	Yes	3	3	It's not the right place to express political opinions because supporters of the opposition

41: 47							Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down					parties threaten excessively
10/ 26/ 202 1 23: 19: 23	torsa.ghosal12@gmail.com	Female	33	PhD	Yes	Yes	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	No	3	1	Facebook and its recommender algorithms certainly manipulate public opinion
10/ 26/ 202 1 23: 42: 44	ihazra@gmail.com	Male	50	Post Graduate	Yes	Yes	Shared more personal content	No	Yes	2	2	It's a tool to check one's own social group. Certainly not beyond that.
10/ 27/ 202 1 12: 07: 13	sadhusagnik@gmail.com	Male	23	Post Graduate	No	Yes	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	Yes	Yes	1	1	Very nice
10/ 28/ 202 1 16: 08: 37	ishitajana1702@gmail.com	Female	23	Post Graduate	No	Yes	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family	No	Yes	3	4	Facebook is very much political influenced platform

								during lock down					
10/ 30/ 202 1 9:2 1:4 1	gou86rab@g mail.com	Male	5	PhD	No	Yes	Increased the number of hours spent on Facebook, Shared more personal content	No	Yes	1		1	Facebook has the potential to create a democratic platform where people can express their political views freely.
10/ 30/ 202 1 11: 30: 59	kausheyee.b anerjee@gm ail.com	Female	37	PhD	No	No	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	No	1		1	People generally respond very actively on social platforms which gives a spontaneous reaction
10/ 30/ 202 1 11: 31: 12	debarshighos h1999@gma il.com	Male	21	Graduate	No	Yes	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	Yes	Yes	1		1	Sway opinions by showing content in accordance to the users' interest and can affect their political opinion
10/ 30/ 202 1 11: 34: 13	pravir.mukh erjee@stu.ad amasuniversi ty.ac.in	Male	19	Graduate	No	No	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	1		4	Non
10/ 30/ 202 1	riddhiman.c hattopadhya y@stu.adam	Male	19	Other	No	No	Using Facebook to stay connected	No	Yes	1		1	Facebook is an informal medium to stay connected to one's near &

11: 35: 29	asuniversity. ac.in						with friends and family during lock down					dear ones & that's the primary purpose for what it was created & I think it should serve this thing properly & shouldn't be a preaching platform for the political influencers
10/ 30/ 202 1 11: 35: 32	debosmita.sa rkar@stu.ad amasuniversi ty.ac.in	Female	21	Graduate	No	Yes	Increased the number of hours spent on Facebook	No	Yes	1	2	Social media platforms like Facebook, instagram are indeed great platforms and means of being a public influencer but that comes with its own plus and minuses so it honestly depends on the content and security measures taken on behalf of the person or people or organisation posting political content and often Facebook posts cause online brawls so again it's a matter of content and depends on how people will react among many other factors. I personally don't support it since we

							are only middle class people and posting something negative or political may or may not affect us personally so that that frankly varies from person to person whether if they are willing to post political stuff or not.
10/ 30/ 202 1 11: 37: 03	ananya2.roy @stu.adama suniversity.a c.in	Female	18	Graduate	No	Yes	Engaged in more political discussion in compariso n to Pre-Covid period	Yes	No	3	3	It's complicated
10/ 30/ 202 1 11: 37: 12	popeyroyroy popey@gma il.com	Male	21	Graduate	No	Yes	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	2	2	Every party should be changed in sevaral years
10/ 30/ 202 1 11: 37: 43	sanjoy.dutta @adamasuni versity.ac.in	Male	34	Other	No	No	Increased the number of hours spent on Facebook, Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family	No	Yes	1	2	Very strong

							during lock down					
10/ 30/ 202 1 11: 37: 57	nehasarkar0 @gmail.com	Female	22	Graduate	No	Yes	Shared more personal content	No	Yes	1	1	To connect to a wider range of audience I guess Facebook is somewhat important as a political influencer.
10/ 30/ 202 1 11: 38: 17	ozpratyay2 @gmail.com	Male	19	Other	No	No	Increased the number of hours spent on Facebook	No	Yes	1	1	I think Facebook just targets the younger audience for their benefit. Because generally the younger people get influenced or manipulated very easily. And as they spend more time on Facebook or any other social media, the companies' revenue increases by showing ads. That's it. And for their benefit, they can do anything. They develop algorithm to keep people hooked on their site. That's why I've permanently deleted my facebook account.
10/ 30/ 202 1 11:	ziko10biswa s@gmail.co m	Male	20	Other	No	Yes	Increased the number of hours spent on Facebook	Yes	Yes	1	1	It is free, open to world and easily accessible. So that is helpful.

38: 44												
10/ 30/ 202 1 11: 39: 42	ishitaduttadu tta@gmail.c om	Female	19	Graduate	No	No	Shared more content about Covid-19	No	Yes	1	4	Good
10/ 30/ 202 1 11: 41: 13	tonimukherj ee7@gmail.c om	Male	22+	Other	No	Yes	Shared more personal content, Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	Yes	Yes	3	3	I think it is a double edged sword. Good and bad both are equal outcomes .The Information society we live in, social media holds a major factor in political mobilisation. We have seen cases of Cambridge Analytica, Trump's incitement of violence in the Capitol Hill, BJP's infamous IT Cell and use of misinformation, other party's are also strengthening their soft power infrastructure.
10/ 30/ 202 1 11: 41: 21	sudeshna525 @gmail.com	Female	21	Graduate	No	No	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	1	3	Facebook is a contagious platform in a simpler way, anything controversial will spread out like a virus in no time, so in that case if

												anyone is posting anything good and bad about politics, it generates everywhere, reaching out to every people having a Facebook account. So I think that facebook is the best platform for conducting any kind of political influences.
10/ 30/ 202 1 11: 41: 33	alivabaidya @stu.adama suniversity.a c.in	Female	24	Graduate	No	Yes	Shared more personal content	Yes	Yes	1	2	People now days are very much impatient and they can easily criticize things people or anything can be easily a content for them. And obviously I would like to say that regarding political influences facebook plays a role like a medium through which we can raise our voice but yeah it was not always right I guess neither wrong sometimes as well . So definitely facebook is a great political influencer as it is easy for people to handle
10/ 30/ 202	mondalzara2 014@gmail. com	Female	20	Other	No	Yes	Using Facebook to stay	No	Yes	3	3	Social media use in politics refers to the use of online

1 11: 41: 57							connected with friends and family during lock down					social media platforms in political processes and activities. Social media platforms encompass websites such as Facebook, YouTube, WeChat, Instagram, Quora, QQ, QZone, Weibo, Twitter, Tumblr, Tiktok, Reddit, Baidu Tieba, LinkedIn, LINE, Snapchat, Pinterest, Viber, and VK. Political processes and activities include all activities that pertain to the governance of a country or area. This includes political organization, global politics, political corruption, political parties, and political values.
10/ 30/ 202 1 11: 42: 40	swastika.adh ikary@stu.a damasuniver sity.ac.in	Female	18	Other	No	Yes	Shared more personal content	No	Yes	5	5	It will be good.

10/ 30/ 202 1 11: 43: 17	ananya2.gho sh@stu.ada masuniversit y.ac.in	Female	19+	Graduate	No	No	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	3	3	None..
10/ 30/ 202 1 11: 44: 05	s09092002g @gmail.com	Female	19	Other	No	Yes	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	1	3	Posting our own views on Facebook will help us to reach others
10/ 30/ 202 1 11: 44: 38	sanjitabhatta charya@gm ail.com	Female	19	Other	Yes	Yes	Engaged in more political discussio n in compariso n to Pre-Covid period	No	Yes	4	1	Facebook has a vast reach and it targets a vast range of audiences of all the age groups. People often post things which can prove to be as some propoganda, or maybe influenced with personal vendetta. So, fb or social media in general can be proven very effective in the democracy if it shows everything with transparency.
10/ 30/ 202 1 11:	pratyoy.das @stu.adama suniversity.a c.in	Male	20	Other	No	Yes	Shared more personal content	No	Yes	4	2	Facebook is a important medium to share any views. Anyone can do share their

44: 49											thoughts about political views and people may be influenced by that. Sometimes it's wrong influence by false information also.
10/ 30/ 202 1 11: 45: 04	priti28ghosh @gmail.com	Female	18	Graduate	No	No	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	5	1	Bad
10/ 30/ 202 1 11: 45: 57	ayantikamaz umder83@g mail.com	Female	19	Other	No	Yes	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	3	3	Yes it is a great way to deliver or rather to spread the informations and news about politics to today's generation using the platform of social media as they are all the time engaged with the cell phones and the entire world of social media. I am quite sure non of them are aware of the news of politics or what is going on outside the world! So yes it's a great way to deliver the political related news and information through the

												platform of social media! And Facebook being a political influencer!
10/ 30/ 202 1 11: 48: 58	sinia.ghosh @stu.adama suniversity.a c.in	Female	18	Other	No	No	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	No	1	1	According to me facebook isn't really political influencer . It is good for entertainment purpose but the government issues are more dense to judged by social media or rather in facebook
10/ 30/ 202 1 11: 49: 30	naureen.moh ammad@stu. adamasunive rsity.ac.in	Female	19	Graduate	No	Yes	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	No	1	1	Facebook is ww famous platform it has both positive and negative effect on youths
10/ 30/ 202 1 11: 49: 38	shreyachakra borty810@g mail.com	Female	22	Post Graduate	No	Yes	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	1	4	Facebook can be a very useful tool to spread awareness about every aspect of life and living which includes political awareness, but it also needs a very responsible head on the shoulders as they can influence mass in negative ways as well. It all comes down to how

												responsible is the user.
10/ 30/ 202 1 11: 54: 40	sumedha7044@gmail.com	Female	20	Other	No	No	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	Yes	Yes	3	1	Facebook can cause someone big harm through political statements still it can be used as a plateform where people can get actual information of the world,not the artificially portrayed ones by media...
10/ 30/ 202 1 12: 01: 20	ankitaananya123@gmail.com	Female	20	Graduate	No	Yes	Shared more content about Covid-19	No	Yes	1	1	i dont involve in it
10/ 30/ 202 1 12: 07: 10	sayantani.saha@stu.adamasuniversity.ac.in	Female	18+	Graduate	No	Yes	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	1	1	According to me, Facebook has played a significant role in influencing politics in the world. It has given an opportunity to express the ideas and opinions of the people around the world. We can share our views regarding the democracy. But many people
10/ 30/ 202 1	ishanguha1111@gmail.com	Male	19	Other	No	Yes	Increased the number of hours	No	Yes	1	1	N/A

12:08:09							spent on Facebook					
10/30/2021 12:12:20	nagtithilekha@gmail.com	Female	21	Graduate	No	Yes	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	2	2	Facebook is a huge platform where people can share their views freely. So people should engage themselves in sharing their thoughts publicly both positive and negative issues so that their thought could be widespread and every issue which is raised can be solved with major public support.
10/30/2021 12:21:20	riniyadas414@gmail.com	Female	20	Graduate	No	Yes	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	No	1	3	.
10/30/2021 12:23:07	anisha.barik@stu.adamasuniversity.ac.in	Female	21	Graduate	No	Yes	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	1	2	I am not at all active on facebook,and I haven't posted much about covid 19 or about any political opinions. I'm not really against sharing political views on facebook but I do not have much interest in politics.

											So I keep myself out of these. But I've seen people raising their voice against the corruption caused by the politicians on facebook and thus they are directly influencing lots of people. Also,some people tend to spread fake news just to cause violence indirectly. So,I think if one knows how to use the Facebook platform for creating awareness correctly, Facebook may play a very vital role as a political influencer.
10/30/2021 12:43:38	deepan1.das@stu.adamasuniversity.ac.in	Male	20	Graduate	No	Yes	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	No	1	1	Facebook was never meant for political influencing site.. rather is is a way of connecting people as the name suggests 'Facebook'....as i am not mark zukerberg ....we all can use fb as we like..
10/30/202	arun.pradhan@stu.adama	Male	21	Graduate	Yes	Yes	Increased the number of hours	Yes	Yes	2	4	Through Facebook one can understand their

1 12: 50: 05	suniversity.ac.in						spent on Facebook, Shared more content about Covid-19, Engaged in more political discussion in comparison to Pre-Covid period, Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down					nation's political situation and the public opinion about their government
10/ 30/ 202 1 12: 53: 07	babai.bongaon@gmail.com	Male	20	Graduate	No	Yes	Increased the number of hours spent on Facebook, Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	2	4	I have no idea but yeah it's true that in political influences facebook has taken a big role.
10/ 30/ 202 1	angadbahal@rediffmail.com	Male	61	PhD	Yes	Yes	Shared more personal content,	No	Yes	2	2	It's wide social reach helps promote awareness and

12: 54: 40							Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down					messages have a great reach
10/ 30/ 202 1 13: 24: 39	chatterjeesag nik429@gm ail.com	Male	23	Graduate	No	No	Increased the number of hours spent on Facebook	No	Yes	4	2	.
10/ 30/ 202 1 13: 28: 38	rm1976579 @gmail.com	Male	18	Other	No	Yes	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	1	1	I dont have a facebook account
10/ 30/ 202 1 14: 02: 48	bose1999ani rban@gmail. com	Male	21	Graduate	No	Yes	Shared more content about Covid-19, Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	2	4	Facebook is a medium where one can express/share their knowledge with the others. In case of political propagandas I think Facebook has a ground to be a a political influencer as there are so many people who boast a a deep understanding of politics, so it can influence the

												younger generation to to pursue their own political views as they can represent our country in administrative areas specifically as IFS, IAS and IPS. There's negative impact also which are being spread by the sharing of falsified information, which may trigger the younger generation to adopt a misjudged view over political ground.
10/30/2021 14:20:25	kpratyush09@gmail.com	Male	23	Graduate	No	Yes	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	No	1	1	It is true that Facebook has over 2 billion active users thus, there is a high probability that the people's notion on politics will be affected. The in-built algorithms will recommend content based on user's search history and likes. Moreover, it will recommend content based on what majority people are seeing at that point in time. So, there are

												high chances that individual's views may be influenced by the majority's views.
10/30/2021 14:51:50	mainaksingha15@gmail.com	Male	20	Other	No	No	Shared more personal content, Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	1	1	The platform shouldn't be used for this purpose because most of the news that is shared is either wrong or fake.People do not get the right thing and also there is no way to check the legitimacy.
10/30/2021 17:50:58	harshalnighute07@gmail.com	Male	19	Graduate	No	Yes	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	Yes	Yes	2	4	Facebook plays important role to influence people to engage in political parties
10/30/2021 19:06:19	ankitsrivastava2@lupin.com	Male	37	Post Graduate	No	No	Shared more content about Covid-19, Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	No	1	1	Only negative influence on people. Facebook has been used for spreading political propoganda.

10/ 30/ 202 1 20: 50: 16	ankita.esl@g mail.com	Female	39	PhD	No	No	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	1	1	Maybe for other people, not so much for me.
10/ 30/ 202 1 20: 55: 41	debajyoti.gh osh@stu.ada masuniversit y.ac.in	Male	21	Graduate	No	No	Increased the number of hours spent on Facebook, Shared more personal content, Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	2	2	It helps to spread awareness and fake news also.
10/ 30/ 202 1 21: 06: 52	mir.tavseef @rediffmail. com	Male	30	Post Graduate	No	Yes	Shared more content about Covid-19	Yes	Yes	3	4	It is opinion maker as well as a medium of expressing the political opinion.
10/ 31/ 202 1 19: 46: 24	ahana.prince ss.ganguly@ gmail.com	Female	26	Other	No	No	Shared more personal content	No	Yes	1	1	I believe it works more in negatively influencing the people instead of having any good, solid discussion. Fanatical, farcical information are shared more.

10/31/2021 21:45:18	iamsharif9775@gmail.com	Male	21	Graduate	Yes	Yes	Shared more personal content, Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	Yes	No	3	1	As i was active in politics before 2021 WB Assembly Election and i also holded verious portfolios of All India Trinamool Congress Under Karimpur 1 Block I found facebook as a platform political parties use to manipulate one's thinking about the issues of the society and it's also used to speard fake news and making propogandas
11/1/2021 18:50:22	Jhillitewary@gmail.com	Female	46	PhD	No	No	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	No	1	1	It can be used as a medium to reflect ones political views. Personally I think Facebook is a storehouse for memories and staying connected with friends and families.
11/1/2021 20:11:58	pjbnrj91@gmail.com	Female	30	PhD	No	No	Increased the number of hours spent on Facebook	Yes	Yes	3	5	There is lot of scope for improvement
11/1/2021 20:30:07	sashrey123@gmail.com	Male	22	Post Graduate	Yes	Yes	Engaged in more political discussion in compariso	No	Yes	3	5	If used wisely it is good. If not, it is a horrifying tool to spread chaos.

							n to Pre-Covid period					
11/1/2021 20:45:14	basushrabani85@gmail.com	Female	36	PhD	Yes	Yes	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	3	3	One should use FB with due caution. Nobody should form political opinion through FB alone. It is a platform of debate and discussion. Not an authentic source of information.
11/1/2021 21:09:40	chakraborti.aritra@gmail.com	Male	36	PhD	Yes	Yes	Engaged in more political discussion in comparison to Pre-Covid period	Yes	Yes	5	5	As a popular social media platform, Facebook gives us an opportunity to voice our opinion quickly and easily. Unfortunately, it also provides ample scope for bullying.
11/1/2021 21:27:40	nathsouravdeb92@gmail.com	Male	24	Graduate	No	Yes	Increased the number of hours spent on Facebook	Yes	Yes	4	1	It provides more inside informations of poltitical agendas. But its mostly used negatively, such as it promotes hatred in forms of hate speech and also more violent activities.
11/1/2021 21:	bibhashpaul0007@gmail.com	Male	24	Post Graduate	Yes	Yes	Shared more personal content	No	No	5	1	Facebook is a new weapon of mass destuction. It is only play for Oppresor.

32: 14												
11/ 1/2 021 21: 36: 18	debarati.tiu @gmail.com	Female	37	PhD	No	Yes	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	2	1	It is very biased, and personally for me there is an increasing distrust on its algorithm which propagates a certain ideology, which, if blindly believed, can prove to be fatal for any secular democracy.
11/ 1/2 021 22: 41: 33	kunal.chatto padhyay@g mail.com	Male	62	PhD	Yes	Yes	Increased the number of hours spent on Facebook, Shared more content about Covid-19, Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	5	1	Facebook hugely limits my political posts so they don't appear in too many newsfeeds, while photos of mountains I have been to, of food I cooked, etc, or my PJs, get far greater visibility.
11/ 2/2 021 1:4 0:3 4	itsmeanjee@ gmail.com	Female	30	Post Graduate	Yes	Yes	Shared more personal content, Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and	Yes	Yes	3	2	I believe that FB has a major role to play in influencing, generating and disseminating political opinions.

							family during lock down					
11/ 2/2 021 1:4 4:5 1	rasusaru4@g mail.com	Female	27	Post Graduate	No	No	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	1	1	I see Facebook as tool to connect with people. I can say news spread very quickly on such platforms, so we should be very careful while what we are sharing.
11/ 2/2 021 7:1 3:3 1	das.shreyada s.shreya@g mail.com	Others	31	Post Graduate	Yes	Yes	Engaged in more political discussion in compariso n to Pre-Covid period	Yes	Yes	2	1	There's a wide gulf between "political influencer" and "political parties' influencer". In my opinion, Facebook plays the role of the latter in India. Truth be told, India is suffering from a threat to its people's right to dissent for a long time now. Hence, to share political choices openly is personally unsafe.
11/ 2/2 021 7:3 4:0 9	purbali4042 @gmail.com	Female	42	Post Graduate	No	Yes	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	5	1	As a social media platform it serves as a vanishing point for conflation of diverse ideologies.
11/ 2/2 021	jiamata@gm ail.com	Others	46	Post Graduate	Yes	Yes	Increased the number of hours	No	Yes	3	3	useful tool in the right hands

11:06:07							spent on Facebook, Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down					
11/2/2021 21:33:07	drsandesh2@gmail.com	Male	34	Post Doctorate	Yes	Yes	Increased the number of hours spent on Facebook, Engaged in more political discussion in comparison to Pre-Covid period, Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	Yes	Yes	5	1	Facebook playing great role, how ever facebook failed in detecting fake news
11/2/2021 21:38:17	basundharadasgupta0@gmail.com	Female	19	Graduate	No	Yes	Increased the number of hours spent on Facebook, Shared more content about	Yes	Yes	1	2	None.

							Covid-19, Shared more personal content, Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down					
11/2/2021 21:43:21	debrajbiswas001@gmail.com	Male	20	Other	No	No	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	1	1	Facebook, Like other social platforms, is a powerful tool which can be equally used both in spreading false propaganda, charity work, business and other important activities. It has served as an important cornerstone to sway people's thinking and gather support overtime and packs a serious power, which can be uplifting or deceiving in how that power is utilized.
11/2/2021 21:	debalinac.ajcbc@gmail.com	Female	38	Post Graduate	No	Yes	Using Facebook to stay connected	Yes	Yes	2	2	Facebook sure does have a political outreach but it is important

46: 40							with friends and family during lock down					to be aware and cautious about the data and information provided.
11/ 2/2 021 21: 55: 36	patnekar.mr unal@gmail. com	Male	45	Post Graduate	Yes	Yes	Engaged in more political discussion in compariso n to Pre-Covid period	No	Yes	5	1	The editors who censor content are biased and I have experienced it more than once.
11/ 2/2 021 22: 10: 32	nishathakur.j nu@gmail.c om	Female	35	PhD	Yes	Yes	Shared more personal content	No	Yes	5	1	I find Facebook a very important plateform where one can combine the personal views and political views and since eveyone can get the access to the opinion it gives a confidence to write share or read more. I also find the women participating in the political discussions which they normally don't do. Fb is a plateform for the silenced and thus its becoming a place where one can ask. Even though its a virtual non real world but one cannot ignore the speculative culture which is emerging with FB

												making no distinction between anyone. Everyone can join is the best thing about it.
11/2/2021 22:25:37	reachdebjani @yahoo.co.in	Female	55	Graduate	No	No	Increased the number of hours spent on Facebook	No	Yes	2	2	Not relevant
11/2/2021 22:39:31	sayanchattop adhyay11@ gmail.com	Male	23	PhD	No	No	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	3	1	To my understanding, if someone has to share political views, twitter will be held higher to facebook based on the amount of direct comments tagging the political leader or person related to the issue, political uploads and shares, or even to an extent "voting" is conducted virtually there which in twitter terms is known as "Poles". Facebook on other hand, seems to share general political gossips as a story or even in the format of memes, in a sarcastic, yet direct manner.
11/2/2	roselinbaxla @gmail.com	Female	35	Post Graduate	No	Yes	Using Facebook	No	Yes	1	1	Diplomatic

021 23: 19: 06							to stay connected with friends and family during lock down				
11/ 3/2 021 0:3 0:5 4	rindon.k@sri sriuniversity. edu.in	Male	35	Post Graduate	Yes	Yes	Increased the number of hours spent on Facebook	Yes	Yes	2	4	Biased
11/ 3/2 021 9:1 0:1 2	rabiranjanse n@gmail.co m	Male	47	Post Graduate	Yes	Yes	Increased the number of hours spent on Facebook	Yes	Yes	2	4	It is a political influencer but restricted to certain sections of mainly literate middle class persons. Still not a mass influencer in India.
11/ 3/2 021 14: 34: 54	oindrilladas1 7@gmail.co m	Female	28	Post Graduate	No	No	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	Yes	1	1	Social Media in general has massive influence on individuals. However, where it has the potential to provide diverse views what is ironical is that the AI code that is used in such massive forums filters the content to provide exactly the views which someone already believes in depending on past search history. This constricts the information into a

												narrow path thereby creating vastly divergent viewpoints and no leeway for discussions
11/4/2021 2:18:06	ruchi29arora@gmail.com	Female	26	Graduate	No	No	Using Facebook to stay connected with friends and family during lock down	No	No	1	1	Nothing as such I find it more productive way to stay in touch with people and. Being involved in various communities involving adoption food and travel

Appendix III

Timestamp	Email Address	Age	Gender	Nationality	Location (City/State Country)	Educational Background	Occupation	How many years have you been using Facebook?	On average, how much time do you spend on Facebook per day?	How frequently do you post on Facebook?	What types of content do you most commonly post on Facebook? (Select all that apply)	When posting personal stories or experiences on Facebook, how do you usually present them?	Do you consider the potential audience on Facebook when crafting your posts?	How do you prefer to engage with friends' and family's narratives on Facebook?	How important are likes, comments, and shares to you when you post your narratives on Facebook?	Do you believe the narratives people construct on Facebook accurately reflect their real lives?	Have you ever altered a personal experience in your narrative on Facebook to make it more appealing or interesting?	In your opinion, what is the primary purpose of sharing personal narratives on Facebook?	To what extent do you think societal norms and expectations influence the narratives shared on Facebook?	Do you think there is a difference in narrative practices among Facebook users from different parts of India?	Do you think there is a difference in narrative practices among Facebook users of Indian origin from different parts of the world?

3/14/2024 23:47:09	agnibha.majumdar@gmail.com	18-25	Male	Indian	Kolkata	12th	Student	1-5	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Photos	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Rarely	Liking their posts	Not important	Sometimes	No	For social validation (likes, comments)	Greatly	Maybe	Maybe
3/14/2024 23:51:01	yasmintasnima@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	Kolkata	PhD in English	Teacher	6-10	More than 2 hours	Weekly	Book related reviews or content, random stuff mostly bookish	As they happened, without alterations	Rarely	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts	Not important	Rarely	No	To document personal experiences	Greatly	Maybe	Maybe
3/14/2024 23:51:10	yangmuwaiba@gmail.com	18-25	Female	Indian	Kolkata	1st year	Student	1-5	30 minutes to 1 hour	Monthly	Photos	With some embellishments or creative alterations	Sometimes	Commenting on their posts	Somewhat important	Rarely	No	To document personal experiences	-Moderately	Yes	Yes
3/14/2024 23:54:53	shubhayu825@gmail.com	18-25	Male	Indian	Manchester, England	ICSE PASS and ISC PASS	Student	1-5	More than 2 hours	Rarely	Text, updates, Photos, Videos, Shared	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Sometimes	Liking their posts, Commenting on	Somewhat important	Sometimes	No	To keep friends and family updated	Greatly	Yes	Yes

											content from other users or pages			their posts								
3/14/2024 23:55:18	rasmitabarman05@gmail.com	18-25	Female	Indian	City	Running BSC	Study	1-5	Less than 30 minutes	Monthly	updates, Photos, Videos	Only the highlights or significant moments	Rarely	Commenting on their posts	Not important	Sometimes	No	To keep friends and family updated	- Slightly	Yes	Yes
3/14/2024 23:55:54	puitei.azyu@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	Aizawl	Phd Scholar	Researcher	11-20	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Text	Only the highlights or significant moments	Always	Liking their posts	Somewhat important	Sometimes	Yes	To document personal experiences	- Moderately	Yes	Yes
3/14/2024 23:59:13	aurnab95@gmail.com	26-35	Male	Indian	San Jose, California, USA	Master's in Electrical Engineering	Hardware Engineer	6-10	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Photos	As they happened, without alterations	Always	Liking their posts, Viewing without interacting	Somewhat important	Sometimes	Maybe	To document personal experiences	- Moderately	Maybe	Maybe
3/15/2024	paradigm2687@gmail.com	36-45	Female	Indian	Kolkata	Doctorate in Intern	Teaching Faculty	11-20	Less than	Rarely	Promotion of profe	I do not post perso	Always	Liking their posts	Somewhat imp	Sometimes	No	For social validation (likes, comments)	Greatly	Yes	Yes

4 0: 11 :4 8						ationa l Relati ons			30 min utes		ssion al matt ers	nal stories or experi ences			orta nt						
3/ 15 /2 02 4 0: 13 :4 2	mitra.ayus hman79@ gmail.com	36-45	Male	Indian	Kolkata	Post gradu ation	Commu nication manage r	11-20	1 to 2 hou rs	Wee kly	Text, upda tes, Shar ed conte nt from other users or page s, Revi ew	As they happe ned, witho ut alterat ions	Som etim es	Com ment ing on their posts , Shari ng their posts	Ver y Imp orta nt	Som etim es	May be	For social validation (likes, comments)	- Mod erate ly	Ma ybe	Yes
3/ 15 /2 02 4 0: 17 :1 3	chatterjeeb iswarup50 0@gmail.c om	18-25	Male	Indian	Kolkata	Unde rgrad uate	Student and part time privet teacher	1-5	Les s tha n 30 min utes	Rar ely	Phot os	Only the highli ghts or signifi cant mome nts	Som etim es	View ing with out inter actin g	Not imp orta nt	Nev er	No	For social validation (likes, comments)	- Not at all	Yes	Yes
3/ 15 /2 02 4 0: 17 :5 5	samyumax @gmail.co m	18-25	Fema le	Indian	Tamiln adu	PhD	Junior Researc h Fellow	1-5	Les s tha n 30 min utes	Rar ely	I don't post, but keep myse lf upda ted with the feed.	I do not post perso nal stories or experi ences	Som etim es	Likin g their posts	Not imp orta nt	Som etim es	No	To document personal experiences	Grea tly	Yes	Yes

3/15/2024 0:19:43	nazirj967@gmail.com	18-25	Male	Indian	Calcutta	MA	NA	6-10	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Shared content from other users or pages	With some embellishments or creative alterations	Always	Liking their posts	Somewhat important	Sometimes	Yes	To keep friends and family updated	Greatly	Yes	Yes
3/15/2024 0:21:12	enakshik147@gmail.com	36-45	Female	Indian	Texas	BA in English Honors, PGDM in Public Relations, Digital Marketing certification from University of Georgia	Marketing	11-20	1 to 2 hours	Monthly	Photos	Only the highlights or significant moments	Rarely	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts	Somewhat important	Sometimes	No	To keep friends and family updated	-Moderately	No	Yes
3/15/2024 0:25:01	anushkapan3@gmail.com	18-25	Female	Indian	Kolkata	undergraduate student	student	1-5	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Photos	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Never	Liking their posts, Viewing without inter	Not important	Never	No	To create a particular online persona	-Moderately	Yes	Yes

														acting								
3/15/2024 0:27:03	sushobhan.stars@gmail.com	26-35	Male	Indian	Kolkata	English	PhD Scholar	6-10	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Shared content from other users or pages	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Sometimes	Liking their posts	Somewhat important	Sometimes	Maybe	To document personal experiences	-Moderately	Yes	Yes
3/15/2024 0:27:24	sanyal.indrani7@gmail.com	18-25	Female	Indian	Kolkata	UG student	None	1-5	30 minutes to 1 hour	Rarely	Photos, Videos	Only the highlights or significant moments	Rarely	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts	Somewhat important	Rarely	No	To document personal experiences	Greatly	Maybe	Yes
3/15/2024 0:27:27	brokebrownie@gmail.com	18-25	Female	Indian	India, Kolkata	Undergraduate	Student	1-5	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Photos	Only the highlights or significant moments	Sometimes	Liking their posts	Somewhat important	Sometimes	Yes	To create a particular online persona	Greatly	Maybe	Maybe
3/15/2024 0:28:43	arynai.roy20@gmail.com	18-25	Female	Indian	Sonarpur, West Bengal, India	Undergraduate	Student	1-5	1 to 2 hours	Rarely	Photos	With some embellishments or creative alterations	Rarely	Viewing without interacting	Not important	Sometimes	No	For social validation (likes, comments)	Greatly	Yes	Maybe

3/15/2024 0:30:06	preranapaul01@gmail.com	18-25	Female	Indian	Kolkata, West Bengal	Currently pursuing Bachelor's degree in English Literature from Jadavpur University	Student	1-5	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Photos, Shared content from other users or pages	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Rarely	Liking their posts	Somewhat important	Sometimes	No	To document personal experiences	-Moderately	Yes	Maybe
3/15/2024 0:31:19	srishtii.dutta@gmail.com	18-25	Female	Indian	Kolkata	Undergraduate student	Student	1-5	1 to 2 hours	Daily	Photos	With some embellishments or creative alterations	Rarely	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts	Not important	Sometimes	Maybe	To document personal experiences	Greatly	Maybe	No
3/15/2024 0:31:53	sumedha7044@gmail.com	18-25	Female	Indian	Kolkata	Graduated in English Literature	Student (Masters)	6-10	1 to 2 hours	Rarely	Photos, Videos, Shared content from other users or pages	Only the highlights or significant moments	Sometimes	Liking their posts, Viewing without interacting	Not important	Never	No	To create a particular online persona	-Moderately	Yes	Yes

3/15/2024 0:32:20	rikeghosh65@gmail.com	18-25	Male	Indian	Kolkata	Under Graduate	Student	1-5	30 minutes to 1 hour	Rarely	Text, Photos	As they happened, without alterations	Rarely	Liking their posts	Not important	Rarely	Maybe	To create a particular online persona	-Moderately	Yes	Yes
3/15/2024 0:34:58	soniabitsy137@gmail.com	18-25	Female	Indian	Kolkata	BA (H) Journalism and mass communication	Human resource professional	6-10	30 minutes to 1 hour	Rarely	Photos, Shared content from other users or pages	As they happened, without alterations	Rarely	Liking their posts, Viewing without interacting	Not important	Rarely	No	To document personal experiences	-Moderately	Maybe	Maybe
3/15/2024 0:37:56	sayantikasaha1708@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	Davis, California, USA	Masters in English Literature	Editor	11-20	30 minutes to 1 hour	Rarely	updates, Photos, Videos, Shared content from other users or pages	Only the highlights or significant moments	Rarely	Liking their posts, Viewing without interacting	Very Important	Sometimes	Yes	To document personal experiences	Greatly	Yes	Yes
3/15/2024 0:	anoushkambwa2895@gmail.com	18-25	Female	Indian	kolkata	UG1	student	1-5	Less than 30	Rarely	Text, Photos, Shared conte	I do not post personal stories	Never	Viewing without inter	Not important	Sometimes	No	all of the above, could be a combination of the few, it really varies	-Moderately	Maybe	Maybe

									minutes		nt from other users or pages	or experiences		actin g				from person to person			
39 :5 3																					
3/ 15 /2 02 4 0: 40 :0 4	sritama05 mistry@g mail.com	18-25	Fema le	Indian	Kolkata	Passe d Madh yami k Exam inatio n and H.S Exam inatio n from Neba dhahi Balik a Vidya laya (H.S), Study ing Engli sh Litera ture (Hon ours) at Jadav pur Unive rsity, Kolka tar	Student	6-10	Les s tha n 30 min utes	Rar ely	Phot os	Only the highli ghts or signifi cant mome nts	Rar ely	Likin g their posts , Com ment ing on their posts	Som ewh at imp orta nt	Som etim es	No	To create a particular online persona	Grea tly	Ma ybe	Yes

3/15/2024 0:50:04	aritroghosh95@gmail.com	18-25	Prefer not to say	Indian	Kolkata	Pre Grad Student	Student	1-5	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Photos	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Always	Liking their posts	Not important	Sometimes	Maybe	Mainly for social validation but thats the case for every single social media. Putting oneself out into the dimensions of social media and going out into the real world is almost same. I say this because if one is going out in the world they are bound to face critcism or form opinions in other's minds. People pay attention to what you wear, your posture, your facial expression, your personality, accesories and so on. Humans absorb surrounding	Greatly	Maybe	Yes

information whether conciously or subconciously. These information serve to paint a mental image in their heads. A mental image of a nature that may not be the same as our own nature. This mental image can however be controlled. Imagine a picture with a woman wearing a light accent dress with a flower crown sitting on a flower bed. The idea that people get is that the girl is "innocent". The same way people try to act out certain aesthatics

																		such as "gothic","suburban","country", etc. Its not that people control other's opinions by creating spurious narratives but invent new components to funnel people's thoughts. Thats it. Thank you for coming to my ted talk			
3/15/2024 0:50:58	skmursed2003@gmail.com	18-25	Male	Indian	Village-Dakshin Durgapur,P.O-Durgapur Takar Bazar,P S-Namkhana,Dist-South 24 Parganas,PIN-743357	Higher secondary	Student	>20	1 to 2 hours	Rarely	Text	Only the highlights or significant moments	Sometimes	Viewing without interacting	Somewhat important	Sometimes	Maybe	Just time pass	- Not at all	Maybe	Maybe

3/15/2024 0:53:18	dasindrajit2004@gmail.com	18-25	Male	Indian	Kolkata	BA English Hons first year	Student	1-5	Less than 30 minutes	Weekly	Photos, Videos, Shared content from other users or pages, Reels	Only the highlights or significant moments	Sometimes	Liking their posts	Somewhat important	Sometimes	No	To create a particular online persona	Greatly	Yes	Yes
3/15/2024 0:54:19	tirna2roy@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	Pune	B.tech	Software engineer	6-10	1 to 2 hours	Monthly	Text, updates, Photos, Videos	As they happened, without alterations	Sometimes	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts, Sharing their posts	Not important	Rarely	No	To keep friends and family updated	-Moderately	Yes	Yes
3/15/2024 0:57:58	bhagya.vijayan@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	Bangalore	PhD	Assistant Professor	11-20	30 minutes to 1 hour	Rarely	Photos	With some embellishments or creative alterations	Always	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts	Somewhat important	Rarely	No	For social validation (likes, comments)	Greatly	Yes	Yes

3/15/2024 0:58:29	nikhilmadhu87@gmail.com	36-45	Male	Indian	Kerala	Pursuing PhD	Researcher and Educator	11-20	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	updates, Photos, Shared content from other users or pages	Only the highlights or significant moments	Sometimes	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts	Very Important	Sometimes	Maybe	For social validation (likes, comments)	- Moderately	Yes	Yes
3/15/2024 0:59:18	shreosi.biswas@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	Gurugram, Haryana, India	Masters in English Literature from Jadavpur University, Masters by Research from IIT Hyderabad	UGC Senior Research Fellow (PhD)	6-10	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Photos, Videos	Only the highlights or significant moments	Sometimes	Liking their posts, Viewing without interacting	Not important	Sometimes	No	To create a particular online persona	- Moderately	Maybe	Maybe
3/15/2024 1:09:50	mfahmmed@myamu.ac.in	26-35	Male	Indian	Hyderabad, India	PhD awarded in English literature	Assistant Professor	11-20	30 minutes to 1 hour	Rarely	updates, Photos, Shared content from other	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Sometimes	Liking their posts, Commenting on their	Somewhat important	Sometimes	No	Sometimes, it means to motivate others.	- Moderately	Maybe	Yes

											users or pages, Regarding education, International news, Motivational story, publications, against injustice and so on			posts, Sharing their posts							
3/15/2024 1:10:35	shadreula@gmail.com	18-25	queer	Indian	Kolkata/West Bengal/India	Undergraduate	Student	1-5	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Text, Shared content from other users or pages	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Rarely	Liking their posts	Not important	Rarely	No	connecting people	Greatly	Yes	Yes
3/15/202...	imandal31@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	UK	Graduate	Surgeon	>20	Less than	Rarely	Photos	I do not post perso...	Never	Viewing without	Not important	Sometimes	No	To document personal experiences	-Moderately	Maybe	Maybe

Timestamp	Email	Age	Gender	Nationality	Location	Education	Occupation	Range	Freq	Rarely	Content	Posting	Always	View/Like	Importance	Freq2	Y/N	Reason	Degree	M1	M2
4 1: 14 :0 5									30 min utes			nal stories or experi ences		inter acting							
3/ 15 /2 02 4 1: 14 :5 0	dirghangia rna@gmail .com	18-25	Fema le	Indian	Kolkata , West Bengal, India	PG in literat ure	Student	6-10	Les s tha n 30 min utes	Rar ely	upda tes	I do not post perso nal stories or experi ences	Alw ays	View ing with out inter acting	Not imp orta nt	Nev er	No	For social validation (likes, comments)	Grea tly	Ma ybe	Ma ybe
3/ 15 /2 02 4 1: 18 :1 3	sudeshna5 25@gmail. com	18-25	Fema le	Indian	Kolkata , India	Pursu ing Post- Grad	Student	11- 20	Les s tha n 30 min utes	Rar ely	Shar ed conte nt from other users or page s	As they happe ned, witho ut alterat ions	Som etim es	Likin g their posts	Not imp orta nt	Som etim es	No	To create a particular online persona	Grea tly	Yes	Yes
3/ 15 /2 02 4 1: 31 :5 5	divmat010 @gmail.co m	26-35	Fema le	Indian	Jaipur, India	Post- gradu ate	Phd scholar	6-10	Les s tha n 30 min utes	Rar ely	Text	I do not post perso nal stories or experi ences	Som etim es	Likin g their posts	Som ewh at imp orta nt	Som etim es	No	To keep friends and family updated	- Mod erate ly	Ma ybe	Yes
3/ 15 /2 02 4 1: 44 :0 2	rajrupa.m7 9@gmail.c om	36-45	Fema le	Indian	Kolkata	Persu ing Ph.D	Researc h Fellow	11- 20	Les s tha n 30 min utes	Rar ely	Text, upda tes, Shar ed conte nt from other	Only the highli ghts or signifi cant mome nts	Som etim es	Likin g their posts	Som ewh at imp orta nt	Som etim es	No	To share a particular personal experience	Grea tly	Ma ybe	Ma ybe

											users or pages										
3/15/2024 2:10:51	csudip16@gmail.com	26-35	Male	Indian	Hyderabad	PhD (Engineering)	Machine Learning Engineer, MNC Bank	6-10	1 to 2 hours	Weekly	Photos	With some embellishments or creative alterations	Sometimes	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts	Not important	Rarely	Yes	To document personal experiences	-Moderately	Yes	Yes
3/15/2024 2:21:22	sahanaswrp@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	Bangalore	PhD Management	Associate professor	6-10	30 minutes to 1 hour	Rarely	Photos	Only the highlights or significant moments	Sometimes	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts	Somewhat important	Rarely	Maybe	To create a particular online persona	Greatly	No	Maybe
3/15/2024 3:24:33	sawandas037@gmail.com	18-25	Male	Indian	Kolkata	Perusing B.Sc. in Physics	Student	1-5	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Photos, Shared content from other users or pages	With some embellishments or creative alterations	Rarely	Liking their posts	Not important	Sometimes	Maybe	To create a particular online persona	Greatly	No	Yes
3/15/202...	Jhillitewary@gmail.com	55>	Female	Indian	Kolkata	Phd	Assistant professor	11-20	Less than	Rarely	Text, Photos, Shar	As they happened,	Sometimes	Liking their posts	Somewhat imp	Sometimes	No	To document personal experiences	-Moderately	Maybe	Maybe

4 5: 23 :4 2									30 min utes		ed conte nt from other users or page s	witho ut alterat ions		, Com ment ing on their posts	orta nt						
3/ 15 /2 02 4 5: 40 :0 9	choudhury amrita59@ gmail.com	26-35	Fema le	Indian	Katihar , Bihar	M.A, B.Ed.	Student	1-5	1 to 2 hou rs	Dail y	Phot os	I do not post perso nal stories or experi ences	Nev er	Likin g their posts	Som ewh at imp orta nt	Rar ely	No	To document personal experiences	- Slig htly	Ma ybe	Ma ybe
3/ 15 /2 02 4 6: 52 :1 6	roopsa.upa dhyaya@g mail.com	18-25	Fema le	Indian	Hooghl y	Unde rgrad uate studyi ng	Student	1-5	Les s tha n 30 min utes	Dail y	Text, Phot os	As they happe ned, witho ut alterat ions	Alw ays	Likin g their posts	Ver y Imp orta nt	Som etim es	No	To keep friends and family updated	Grea tly	Yes	Yes
3/ 15 /2 02 4 6: 54 :3 1	saaksshi.ro y26@gmai l.com	18-25	Fema le	Indian	West Bengal	Julien Day Scho ol, Kalya ni (2010 - 2023) , Curre ntly Study ing B.Sc Physi	Student	1-5	Les s tha n 30 min utes	Wee kly	upda tes, Phot os	Only the highli ghts or signifi cant mome nts	Alw ays	Likin g their posts	Ver y Imp orta nt	Som etim es	No	To keep friends and family updated	Grea tly	Ma ybe	Ma ybe

						cs at Jadavpur University															
3/15/2024 7:03:31	roselinbaxla@gmail.com	36-45	Female	Indian	Kolakata/West Bengal	M. A B. Ed in English	Teacher	11-20	30 minutes to 1 hour	Monthly	Photos, Videos	As they happened, without alterations	Always	Commenting on their posts	Somewhat important	Sometimes	No	To document personal experiences	Greatly	Yes	Yes
3/15/2024 7:05:10	forkers.holy.adamas.student@gmail.com	18-25	Female	Indian	West Bengal	Masters	Student	1-5	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	I don't post updates since I use it for saving progress in games.	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Never	Viewing without interacting	Not important	Rarely	No	For social validation (likes, comments)	Greatly	Yes	Yes
3/15/2024 7:32:20	sreyashisircar@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	West Bengy	English Honou u	Service	11-20	30 minutes to 1 hour	Daily	Videos, Shared content from other users or pages	As they happened, without alterations	Always	Liking their posts	Not important	Sometimes	Maybe	To document personal experiences	Greatly	Yes	Yes

3/15/2024 7:33:55	sudeshnaghorui411@gmail.com	18-25	Female	Indian	Kolkata	Completed masters	Student	6-10	1 to 2 hours	Weekly	Videos, Shared content from other users or pages	Only the highlights or significant moments	Sometimes	Liking their posts	Somewhat important	Sometimes	Yes	To document personal experiences	-Moderately	Maybe	Maybe
3/15/2024 7:46:52	sh.bhattacharya10@gmail.com	18-25	Female	Indian	Kolkata, India	Master's in Art's	Subject matter expert	1-5	1 to 2 hours	Rarely	Photos, Videos, Shared content from other users or pages	As they happened, without alterations	Rarely	Liking their posts	Not important	Rarely	No	For social validation (likes, comments)	Greatly	Yes	Yes
3/15/2024 7:49:05	popipramanik2@gmail.com	18-25	Male	Indian	Rampurhat West Bengal	Currently studying in Jadabpur University department of physics,BSc 1St year	Student	1-5	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Photos	With some embellishments or creative alterations	Sometimes	Liking their posts	Somewhat important	Rarely	No	For social validation (likes, comments)	Greatly	Maybe	Yes

Timestamp	Email	Age	Gender	Nationality	Location	Education	Occupation	No.	Time	Frequency	Post type	Posting style	Col14	Interaction	Importance	Col17	Col18	Purpose	Col20	Col21	Col22
3/15/2024 8:10:02	nabanita.sengupta@gmail.com	46-55	Female	Indian	Kolkata, West Bengal, India	PhD	Assistant Professor	6-10	Less than 30 minutes	Weekly	updates, Photos	Only the highlights or significant moments	Sometimes	Commenting on their posts	Somewhat important	Sometimes	No	both points 1 & 2	Greatly	Maybe	Maybe
3/15/2024 8:12:59	jishnu.paul.in@gmail.com	18-25	Male	Indian	Kolkata	Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm D)	Studenr	6-10	1 to 2 hours	Rarely	updates, Photos	As they happened, without alterations	Always	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts	Very Important	Sometimes	No	To keep friends and family updated	Greatly	Maybe	Yes
3/15/2024 8:15:36	richa@christuniversity.in	46-55	Female	Indian	Lavasa	PhD	Research and Teaching	11-20	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Photos	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Sometimes	Liking their posts	Somewhat important	Sometimes	No	A combination of all the above	Greatly	No	No
3/15/2024 8:16:15	shrabana0096@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	West Bengal	Ph D scholar	Student, Research Scholar	1-5	1 to 2 hours	Monthly	updates, Photos, Videos	Only the highlights or significant moments	Sometimes	Sharing their posts	Somewhat important	Rarely	No	To document personal experiences	Greatly	Yes	Yes
3/15/202...	basushrabani85@gmail.com	36-45	Female	Indian	Chittaranjan, West	PhD	Service	6-10	Less than	Rarely	Text, updates, Phot	Only the highlights	Sometimes	Liking their posts	Somewhat imp	Rarely	No	To document personal experiences	Greatly	Yes	Yes

4 8: 17 :5 6					Bengal, India				30 min utes		os, Shar ed conte nt from other users or page s	or signifi cant mome nts			orta nt						
3/ 15 /2 02 4 8: 38 :3 4	biswas.ano mitra@gm ail.com	26-35	Fema le	Indian	Kolkata	Ph.D	Teachin g (Univer sity)	11-20	Les s tha n 30 min utes	Rar ely	Shar ed conte nt from other users or page s	With some embel lishm ents or creati ve alterat ions	Som etim es	Likin g their posts , Com ment ing on their posts	Not imp orta nt	Som etim es	Yes	To document personal experiences	Grea tly	Yes	Yes
3/ 15 /2 02 4 8: 50 :4 6	bhavanisin gh2109@g mail.com	26-35	Male	Indian	Delhi NCR	PhD schol ar	Lecture r	11-20	30 min utes to 1 hou r	Rar ely	Shar ed conte nt from other users or page s	I do not post perso nal stories or experi ences	Nev er	Likin g their posts	Not imp orta nt	Alw ays	No	For social validation (likes, comments)	- Mod erate ly	No	Yes
3/ 15 /2 02 4 9: 07 :0 8	sarkarneha barasat@g mail.com	18-25	Fema le	Indian	West Bengal	Pursu ing Maste rs	Student	6-10	Les s tha n 30 min utes	Rar ely	Text, Phot os	Only the highli ghts or signifi cant mome nts	Som etim es	View ing with out inter actin g	Som ewh at imp orta nt	Rar ely	No	To create a particular online persona	Grea tly	Yes	Ma ybe

3/15/2024 9:08:35	mukherjeer342@gmail.com	18-25	Male	Indian	Kolkata	HS passed	Student	1-5	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	I do not use facebook	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Never	Viewing without interacting	Not important	Sometimes	No	To make friends maybe	-Moderately	Maybe	Maybe
3/15/2024 9:18:32	sujana.biswas@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	Kolkata	M.A in English and M.S.W	Educator	6-10	1 to 2 hours	Weekly	Photos, Videos	Only the highlights or significant moments	Always	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts	Somewhat important	Sometimes	Yes	To keep friends and family updated	Greatly	Yes	Yes
3/15/2024 9:22:39	sreoshi35@gmail.com	18-25	Female	Indian	Kolkata	Btech	Student	1-5	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	I dont post	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Never	Liking their posts	Not important	Sometimes	No	For social validation (likes, comments)	-Moderately	Yes	Yes
3/15/2024 9:39:58	ananya6899@gmail.com	18-25	Female	Indian	Kolkata	Mtech biotechnology	Student	6-10	1 to 2 hours	Rarely	updates, Shared content from other users or pages	Only the highlights or significant moments	Never	Liking their posts, Sharing their posts	Not important	Sometimes	No	To keep friends and family updated	Greatly	Yes	Yes

3/15/2024 10:03:23	chandrimahalder870@gmail.com	18-25	Female	Indian	Kolkata	BA Undergraduate	Student	1-5	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Photos	Only the highlights or significant moments	Sometimes	Liking their posts	Not important	Sometimes	Maybe	To document personal experiences	Greatly	Yes	Yes
3/15/2024 10:03:53	purbali4042@gmail.com	36-45	Female	Indian	Kolkata	M.A. Net	Teaching	6-10	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	updates	With some embellishments or creative alterations	Never	Commenting on their posts	Somewhat important	Sometimes	Maybe	For social validation (likes, comments)	Greatly	Yes	Yes
3/15/2024 10:09:34	mehtanitika03@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	Arizona, USA	MA Educational Psychology, MS Psychology	PhD Student Educational Psychology	11-20	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Shared content from other users or pages	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Rarely	Liking their posts, Viewing without interacting	Not important	Sometimes	No	To document personal experiences	-Moderately	Maybe	Yes
3/15/2024 10:33:37	gayathrisureshbabu2@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	Jodhpur	PhD	Doctoral Scholar	6-10	30 minutes to 1 hour	Monthly	Text, updates, Photos, Videos, Shared content from	With some embellishments or creative alterations	Always	Liking their posts	Very Important	Sometimes	Maybe	To create a particular online persona	Greatly	Yes	Yes

											other users or pages										
3/15/2024 10:37:36	debraj.litmasters@gmail.com	18-25	Male	Indian	Krishnanagar, Nadia, West Bengal	Bachelor's Graduate	Graduate student	11-20	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Text, I post content very rarely other than comments.	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Sometimes	Viewing without interacting	Not important	Rarely	No	To create a particular online persona	Greatly	Maybe	Maybe
3/15/2024 10:39:48	pujita.das.4u@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	Kolkata	Msc Physics	Educator	11-20	More than 2 hours	Rarely	Photos	Only the highlights or significant moments	Never	Liking their posts	Not important	Rarely	No	To document personal experiences	Greatly	Yes	Yes
3/15/2024 10:50:53	sharmilakayal@gmail.com	36-45	Female	Indian	Indian	Ph.D.	Teaching	11-20	1 to 2 hours	Daily	Text, updates, Photos, Videos, Shared content from other users or	With some embellishments or creative alterations	Sometimes	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts	Very Important	Rarely	No	For social validation (likes, comments)	Greatly	Yes	Yes

												page s										
3/ 15 /2 02 4 10 :5 1: 53	debarshigh osh1999@ gmail.com	18-25	Male	Indian	Barasat , North 24 pargana s	M.A	Student	6-10	1 to 2 hou rs	Dail y	Text, upda tes, Phot os, Shar ed conte nt from other users or page s	With some embel lishm ents or creati ve alterat ions	Alw ays	Likin g their posts	Not imp orta nt	Som etim es	No	To document personal experiences	- Mod erate ly	Yes	Yes
3/ 15 /2 02 4 11 :1 3: 14	diya6r@g mail.com	26-35	Fema le	Indian	Bolpur	Docto rate	Assista nt Profess or	11- 20	30 min utes to 1 hou r	Wee kly	Text, upda tes, Phot os, Shar ed conte nt from other users or page s	With some embel lishm ents or creati ve alterat ions	Som etim es	View ing with out inter actin g	Not imp orta nt	Som etim es	No	To create a particular online persona	- Mod erate ly	Yes	Yes
3/ 15 /2 02 4 11 :1 9: 51	subhasnata .mohanta2 1@gmail.c om	26-35	Fema le	Indian	Kolkata	M.A, Phd Pursu ing	Assista nt Profess or	11- 20	Mo re tha n 2 hou rs	Rar ely	Phot os, Shar ed conte nt from other users or	Only the highli ghts or signifi cant mome nts	Rar ely	Likin g their posts	Not imp orta nt	Som etim es	No	To document personal experiences	Grea tly	Yes	Yes

											pages										
3/15/2024 11:20:42	chuckybiswas@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	Bolpur	MBA	Assistant	11-20	30 minutes to 1 hour	Rarely	Photos	As they happened, without alterations	Sometimes	Liking their posts, Viewing without interacting	Not important	Never	No	To keep friends and family updated	- Moderately	Yes	Yes
3/15/2024 11:21:07	tuhi1997@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	Kolkata	PG	Student	6-10	1 to 2 hours	Rarely	Text, Videos	Only the highlights or significant moments	Rarely	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts	Somewhat important	Rarely	No	To document personal experiences	- Moderately	Yes	Maybe
3/15/2024 11:28:27	antaramitra21@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	Kolkata	Btech	IT Professional	6-10	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	updates, Photos	As they happened, without alterations	Always	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts	Not important	Rarely	No	For social validation (likes, comments)	Greatly	Yes	Yes
3/15/2024 11	ranimadhura7@gmail.com	46-55	Female	Indian	Kolkata	B.A. Hons.	Service	6-10	30 minutes to 1 hour	Weekly	Text, Photos, Shared conte	Only the highlights or signifi	Sometimes	Liking their posts	Somewhat important	Sometimes	No	To document personal experiences	- Moderately	Yes	Yes

:3 8: 29											nt from other users or pages	cant moments									
3/ 15 /2 02 4 11 :3 9: 49	soumyajitdc98@gmail.com	26-35	Male	Indian	Kolkata	PGD Sports Management, MBA (Pursuing)	Media personnel (Sports correspondent and producer)	11-20	Less than 30 minutes	Daily	Videos	Only the highlights or significant moments	Sometimes	Liking their posts	Somewhat important	Sometimes	Maybe	It depends time to time. Sometimes it maybe to raise a voice. Sometimes to prove a certain agenda or to share my opinion on a certain topic. Sometimes it's just basic photo dump for a specific incident of life.	-Moderately	Yes	Yes
3/ 15 /2 02 4 11 :4 5: 43	debjanighosh66@yahoo.com	36-45	Female	Indian	Kolkata	PhD	Assistant Professor	11-20	30 minutes to 1 hour	Rarely	Text, updates, Photos, Videos, Shared content from other users or pages	As they happened, without alterations	Sometimes	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts, Sharing their posts,	Not important	Sometimes	No	To keep friends and family updated	-Slightly	Yes	Maybe

														Viewing without interacting							
3/15/2024 11:51:23	lesalove39@gmail.com	36-45	Female	Indian	খড়দহ	Bsc hons	Central Government service	11-20	30 minutes to 1 hour	Rarely	Photos, Shared content from other users or pages	As they happened, without alterations	Always	Viewing without interacting	Not important	Never	No	To document personal experiences	- Not at all	Yes	Yes
3/15/2024 12:02:52	pjbnrj91@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	Kolkata	M A PhD in History	Part Time Guest Lecturer in JadavpurUniversity	6-10	More than 2 hours	Rarely	updates, Photos, Shared content from other users or pages	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Always	Liking their posts	Somewhat important	Rarely	No	For social validation (likes, comments)	Greatly	Yes	Yes
3/15/2024 12:04:46	gargisamanta3@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	Hyderabad, Telangana, India	MA in English	Academic Editor	11-20	30 minutes to 1 hour	Rarely	Text, Photos	Only the highlights or significant moments	Sometimes	Liking their posts, Commenting on their	Somewhat important	Rarely	No	To create a particular online persona	- Moderately	Yes	Yes

													posts, Viewing without interacting								
3/15/2024 12:04:55	monicaminz2708@gmail.com	18-25	Female	Indian	Bhubaneswar	Post Graduate	Lecturer in English	6-10	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Photos, Shared content from other users or pages	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Never	Liking their posts	Not important	Rarely	No	To document personal experiences	Greatly	Maybe	Yes
3/15/2024 12:14:34	bhadra.101.amrita@gmail.com	18-25	Female	Indian	Shyamnagar/West Bengal/India	UG	Student	1-5	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Text, Photos	As they happened, without alterations	Never	Liking their posts	Somewhat important	Rarely	No	To document personal experiences	-Moderately	Maybe	Yes
3/15/2024 12:15:13	akshita.email@gmail.com	18-25	Female	Indian	West Bengal, India	Pursuing Masters	Student	1-5	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Photos	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Sometimes	Viewing without interacting	Not important	Sometimes	No	To document personal experiences	-Moderately	Maybe	Yes
3/15/2	jasleen734@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	Madhya Pradesh	PhD Research	Phd researc	6-10	Less tha	Rarely	Text	I do not post	Sometimes	Viewing with	Somewhat at	Sometimes	No	For social validation	Greatly	Yes	Yes

Timestamp	Email	Age	Gender	Nationality	City	Education	Occupation	Count	Time	Frequency	Content	Posting style	Always/Never	Activity	Importance	Freq2	Y/N	Motivation	Degree	Q1	Q2
024 12:19:28						Scholar	h scholar		n 30 minutes			personal stories or experiences		out interacting	important			(likes, comments)			
3/15/2024 12:24:29	anurag.mandal.57.57@gmail.com	26-35	Male	Indian	Thane	Bachelor of Engineering	Self employed	11-20	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	None	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Never	Viewing without interacting	Not important	Rarely	No	To keep friends and family updated	-Slightly	Maybe	Maybe
3/15/2024 12:32:54	mdmahasweta95@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	Kolkata	M.Phil in English	Freelancer	11-20	30 minutes to 1 hour	Rarely	Text, updates, Shared content from other users or pages	With some embellishments or creative alterations	Always	Liking their posts	Not important	Never	No	To document personal experiences	Greatly	Yes	Yes
3/15/2024 12:40:35	swatiagch@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	Kolkata	Pursuing ph.d.	Teaching	>20	30 minutes to 1 hour	Daily	Text, updates, Photos, Videos, Shared content from other users or	Only the highlights or significant moments	Always	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts, Viewing with	Very Important	Never	No	For social validation (likes, comments)	Greatly	No	No

											pages			out interacting								
3/15/2024 12:46:10	ganguly96lecter@gmail.com	26-35	Male	Indian	West Bengal	PG Diploma holder	Digital Marketing	11-20	30 minutes to 1 hour	Rarely	Text, Photos, Shared content from other users or pages	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Always	Viewing without interacting	Somewhat important	Never	No	I rarely post—if I do, it's to post jokes or share I need help. Consumption patterns have changed, rapidly, since I first signed up.	Greatly	Yes	Yes
3/15/2024 12:46:58	harshabardhanpal00@gmail.com	18-25	Male	Indian	Bongaon	B.SC	None	1-5	More than 2 hours	Daily	Text, Videos, Shared content from other users or pages	Only the highlights or significant moments	Sometimes	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts	Somewhat important	Rarely	Maybe	To document personal experiences	-Moderately	Yes	Yes
3/15/2024 12:52:31	parjanya.sen@anthro.ox.ac.uk	26-35	Male	Indian	Oxford	PhD	Asst Prof in English, Deshbandhu College for Girls & Postdoctoral Fellow, School of	11-20	More than 2 hours	Daily	updates, Photos, Shared content from other users or page	As they happened, without alterations	Sometimes	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts	Somewhat important	Rarely	No	To document personal experiences	Greatly	Yes	Yes

								Anthropology and Museum Ethnography, U. of Oxford				s, Cat videos										
3/15/2024 12:52:50	maityswatilekha7@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	Howrah, W. B, India	PhD pursuing	Researcher and Guest Lecturer	11-20	30 minutes to 1 hour	Weekly	updates, Photos, Videos, Shared content from other users or pages, Awareness on Animal Rights, Fund appeal and Adoption Appeals for street	As they happened, without alterations	Sometimes	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts, Sharing their posts	Somewhat important	Sometimes	No	Social media works as a platform where various issues, specifically which are not in the mainstream, can be expressed and explored; it creates a space for shared experiences amongst individuals, who without these platforms, would be pushed to the margins of indifference and oblivion. Specifically, as an animal rights activist,	Greatly	No	Yes

											anim als							based out of suburbs in South Asia, the importance of social media is tremendous; it helps me to get across the experiences and obstacles faced on individual level in a sexist, anthropocent ric society, to a wider audience only through social media.			
3/ 15 /2 02 4 13 :0 2: 10	maitygargi 085@gmai l.com	26-35	Fema le	Indian	Kakdwi p	MA	Pvt Employ ee	1-5	Mo re tha n 2 hou rs	Dail y	Text, upda tes, Phot os, Vide os, Shar ed conte nt from other users or page s	With some embel lishm ents or creati ve alterat ions	Rar ely	Likin g their posts , Com ment ing on their posts	Ver y Imp orta nt	Som etim es	Yes	To document personal experiences	- Mod erate ly	Yes	Yes

3/15/2024 13:14:48	jaydeepd517@gmail.com	18-25	Male	Indian	Kolkata	I completed my schooling at Dum Dum Krishna Kumar Hindu Academy . Now I'm pursuing BTech at Narula Institute of Technology.	Engineering	1-5	1 to 2 hours	Rarely	Photos	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Sometimes	Commenting on their posts , Sharing their posts	Somewhat important	Sometimes	Yes	To document personal experiences	-Slightly	Yes	Yes
3/15/2024 13:26:06	pro.mimi93@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	Pune	Masters	Working	6-10	Less than 30 minutes	Weekly	updates, Photos	With some embellishments or creative alterations	Always	Liking their posts , Commenting on their posts	Somewhat important	Rarely	No	For social validation (likes, comments)	Greatly	Yes	Yes

3/15/2024 13:26:22	sd2454190@gmail.com	18-25	Male	Indian	Kolkata	B.Sc	Student	1-5	1 to 2 hours	Monthly	Shared content from other users or pages	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Sometimes	Liking their posts	Somewhat important	Sometimes	Maybe	To keep friends and family updated	-Moderately	Maybe	Maybe
3/15/2024 13:28:19	sreemoyeechakraborty0@gmail.com	18-25	Female	Indian	Naihati, West Bengal	Currently pursuing Post Graduation	Student	1-5	30 minutes to 1 hour	Monthly	Text, Photos	Only the highlights or significant moments	Always	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts	Somewhat important	Sometimes	No	Social validation is there and creation of a persona is there but majorly it is for documentation	-Moderately	Maybe	Maybe
3/15/2024 14:47:32	basakkounish2023@gmail.com	18-25	Male	Indian	Kolkata	ICSE, ISC, BA (ongoing)	Student	6-10	30 minutes to 1 hour	Monthly	Text, Photos, Shared content from other users or pages	With some embellishments or creative alterations	Always	Liking their posts, Viewing without interacting	Somewhat important	Rarely	Yes	To create a particular online persona	Greatly	Yes	Yes
3/15/2024 14:51:38	nagtithilekha@gmail.com	18-25	Female	Indian	Sodepur, North 24 Parganas, West Bengal	MA in English language and Literature	Student	1-5	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Photos	Only the highlights or significant moments	Sometimes	Liking their posts, Commenting on	Not important	Rarely	No	To document personal experiences	-Moderately	Maybe	Yes

														their posts							
3/15/2024 15:21:40	shabananasreen321@gmail.com	18-25	Female	Indian	Kolkata	Research Scholar	Guest Faculty	6-10	1 to 2 hours	Monthly	Photos	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Always	Liking their posts	Somewhat important	Sometimes	No	To document personal experiences	Greatly	Maybe	Maybe
3/15/2024 15:31:42	m23id1005@iitj.ac.in	18-25	Female	Indian	West Bengal	Post Graduate	Student	11-20	1 to 2 hours	Daily	Shared content from other users or pages	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Never	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts, Sharing their posts	Somewhat important	Sometimes	No	To keep friends and family updated	-Moderately	Maybe	Yes
3/15/2024 15:40:00	sayanighoshsaha@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	Kolkata	M.A in Mass communication & PR management	Manager in Digital Marketing	11-20	1 to 2 hours	Monthly	updates, Photos, Videos, Shared content from other users or pages	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Rarely	Liking their posts	Somewhat important	Rarely	No	For social validation (likes, comments)	Greatly	Maybe	Maybe

Timestamp	Email	Age	Gender	Nationality	Location	Education	Occupation		Time	Freq	Content	Posting		Activity	Importance			Reason			
3/15/2024 16:17:36	margaretmaryvejoy@gmail.com	36-45	Female	Indian	Thrissur, Kerala	M.A, B.ed	Teacher	>20	More than 2 hours	Rarely	Text, Photos, Shared content from other users or pages	As they happened, without alterations	Always	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts, Viewing without interacting	Not important	Rarely	No	To keep friends and family updated	-Moderately	Yes	Yes
3/15/2024 16:22:27	andalitasarkar@gmail.com	36-45	Female	Indian	Kolkata	M.A. B.Ed.	Teacher	11-20	30 minutes to 1 hour	Rarely	Photos	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Never	Commenting on their posts	Not important	Never	No	To document personal experiences	Greatly	No	No
3/15/2024 16:25:20	archishmansaha7@gmail.com	18-25	Male	Indian	Kolkata	Currently pursuing English Hons	Student	1-5	30 minutes to 1 hour	Rarely	Photos	Only the highlights or significant moments	Never	Liking their posts	Not important	Rarely	No	To create a particular online persona	Greatly	Maybe	Yes
3/15/2024 17	Souviksikdar61@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	Kolkata	M.A	Housewife	11-20	30 minutes to 1 hour	Rarely	Shared content from other	As they happened, without ut	Sometimes	Liking their posts, Com	Somewhat important	Sometimes	No	To document personal experiences	-Moderately	Maybe	Maybe

:05:52											users or pages	alterations		menting on their posts							
3/15/2024 18:21:41	itsmeanjee@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	Baidyabati, West Bengal/ Bhubaneswar, Odisha	Ph.D. pursuing	Assistant Professor	11-20	30 minutes to 1 hour	Rarely	Text, Photos, Shared content from other users or pages	With some embellishments or creative alterations	Sometimes	Viewing without interacting	Not important	Never	No	To create a particular online persona	Greatly	Yes	Maybe
3/15/2024 21:12:13	somnath_bs@yahoo.com	36-45	Male	Indian	Kolkata	Post-Graduate	Assistant Professor	11-20	1 to 2 hours	Weekly	Text, Photos, Shared content from other users or pages	Only the highlights or significant moments	Always	Liking their posts, Viewing without interacting	Not important	Sometimes	No	To keep friends and family updated	Greatly	Maybe	Yes
3/15/2024 21:29:57	ritamg923@gmail.com	26-35	Male	Indian	Kolkata	MA in English Language in Literature.	PhD Research Fellow	6-10	30 minutes to 1 hour	Rarely	Text, updates, Photos, Videos, Shared content from	Only the highlights or significant moments	Rarely	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts,	Somewhat important	Sometimes	No	To document personal experiences	Greatly	Yes	Yes

												other users or pages			Sharing their posts							
3/15/2024 21:45:25	mainaksingha65@gmail.com	18-25	Male	Indian	Jangipur, Murshidabad, West Bengal, India	Currently pursuing MA in English language and literature	Student	6-10	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Photos, Shared content from other users or pages	As they happened, without alterations	Never	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts	Somewhat important	Rarely	No	To document personal experiences	Greatly	Yes	Yes
3/15/2024 21:56:19	sombhadradutta2011.sd@gmail.com	18-25	Female	Indian	Kolkata	MA	Student	6-10	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Photos	Only the highlights or significant moments	Always	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts	Somewhat important	Sometimes	No	To document personal experiences	Greatly	Yes	Maybe
3/15/2024 22:42:04	dishaa.dey.14@gmail.com	18-25	Female	Indian	Kolkata, WB, India.	UG Sem 1	Student	1-5	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Photos	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Sometimes	Liking their posts, Viewing without interacting	Somewhat important	Never	Yes	To create a particular online persona	- Moderately	Yes	Yes

3/15/2024 22:50:26	arundatisusheela@gmail.com	18-25	Female	Indian	Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh	BA Hons. Eng	Student	6-10	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Photos, Shared content from other users or pages	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Always	Liking their posts, Viewing without interacting	Not important	Rarely	No	For social validation (likes, comments)	Greatly	Yes	Yes
3/15/2024 23:26:13	rajsarkar2150@gmail.com	36-45	Male	Indian	Aligarh	Humanities	Student	6-10	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Text, Photos	With some embellishments or creative alterations	Sometimes	Viewing without interacting	Not important	Never	Yes	For social validation (likes, comments)	Greatly	Yes	Yes
3/15/2024 23:52:20	rushab8@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	USA	BA, Diploma in ECCE	Teacher	11-20	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Photos	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Rarely	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts, Viewing without interacting	Not important	Rarely	No	To keep friends and family updated	- Not at all	Maybe	Maybe

Timestamp	Email	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Location	Education	Occupation	#	Time	Freq	Content	Personal	Col1	Col2	Importance	Col3	Col4	Purpose	Col5	Col6	Col7
3/15/2024 23:53:11	csanjukta24@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	India	PhD	Assistant Professor	6-10	30 minutes to 1 hour	Rarely	Text	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Sometimes	Liking their posts	Somewhat important	Sometimes	No	To keep friends and family updated	Greatly	Maybe	Yes
3/16/2024 0:00:42	rythnandi@gmail.com	18-25	Male	Indian	Kolkata	Pursuing BA	Student	1-5	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Photos	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Never	Liking their posts, Viewing without interacting	Not important	Never	Maybe	For the purpose of logging into other apps or websites	Greatly	Yes	Yes
3/16/2024 0:04:37	vishwa.d.mistry@gmail.com	18-25	Male	Indian	USA	12th Grade	Student	1-5	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Photos	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Never	Viewing without interacting	Not important	Never	No	To keep friends and family updated	Greatly	Yes	Yes
3/16/2024 0:05:49	akashbhadra205@gmail.com	18-25	Male	Indian	Kolkata/WB/India	1st year undergrad, highest level of education = class 12,	Student	1-5	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	nothing	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Never	Viewing without interacting	Not important	Rarely	No	To keep friends and family updated	Greatly	Yes	Yes

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3/16/2024 2:34:42	rajdeeppaulpersonal@gmail.com	18-25	Male	Indian	Kolkata	MA English Literature	Editor	11-20	1 to 2 hours	Rarely	Photos, Shared content from other users or pages	With some embellishments or creative alterations	Always	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts	Very Important	Sometimes	No	To create a particular online persona	-Moderately	Yes	Yes
3/16/2024 9:02:24	majiprotiti@gmail.com	18-25	Female	Indian	Kolkata	Studied at St. Claret School (from 1st to 10th standard) and at DPS Megacity (from 11th to 12th standard). Currently pursuing B.A. English Hono	Student	1-5	30 minutes to 1 hour	Monthly	Text, Photos, Videos, Shared content from other users or pages	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Always	Liking their posts	Not important	Rarely	No	To create a particular online persona	Greatly	Maybe	Maybe

					urs from Jadav pur Unive rsity.																
3/ 16 /2 02 4 10 :1 7: 43	tuhin.hem @gmail.co m	26-35	Male	Indian	Chicag o, USA	PhD, Depar tment of Comp arativ e Litera ture, New York Unive rsity	Assista nt Profess or	11-20	1 to 2 hou rs	Wee kly	Text, upda tes, Phot os, Shar ed conte nt from other users or page s	Only the highli ghts or signifi cant mome nts	Rar ely	Likin g their posts	Som ewh at imp orta nt	Som etim es	May be	To document personal experiences	Grea tly	Ma ybe	Yes
3/ 16 /2 02 4 12 :1 7: 27	palditi@g mail.com	18-25	Fema le	Indian	Howra h	MA(Engli sh)	Student	1-5	30 min utes to 1 hou r	Mo nthl y	Phot os, Vide os	Only the highli ghts or signifi cant mome nts	Som etim es	Likin g their posts	Not imp orta nt	Rar ely	No	To keep friends and family updated	Grea tly	Yes	Yes
3/ 16 /2 02 4 14 :5 4: 13	rubel.dop2 014@gmai l.com	36-45	Male	Indian	West Bengal	B.Tec h	Postal Assista nt	1-5	Les s tha n 30 min utes	Dail y	upda tes, Phot os	Only the highli ghts or signifi cant mome nts	Alw ays	Com ment ing on their posts	Som ewh at imp orta nt	Som etim es	Yes	To document personal experiences	Grea tly	Yes	Yes
3/ 16 /2	saikatairin dia@gmail .com	55>	Male	Indian	Kolkata /West	Aircr aft Maint	Retired	11-20	1 to 2	Mo nthl y	Text, upda tes,	Only the highli	Alw ays	Com ment ing	Ver y Imp	Alw ays	Yes	To keep friends and	- Mod	Yes	Yes

02 4 15 :0 9: 09					Bengal/ India	enanc e Engin eer			hou rs		Phot os, Vide os	ghts or signifi cant mome nts		on their posts	ortant			family updated	erate ly		
3/ 16 /2 02 4 19 :3 9: 20	thuptensan gemento@ gmail.com	26-35	Male	Indian	Arunac hal Pradesh	Mass Com muni cation s	Unempl oyed	6-10	1 to 2 hou rs	Wee kly	Shar ed conte nt from other users or page s	With some embel lishm ents or creati ve alterat ions	Som etim es	Likin g their posts	Som ewh at imp orta nt	Rar ely	Yes	To create a particular online persona	- Slig htly	Yes	Yes
3/ 16 /2 02 4 20 :0 4: 54	pauddy@g mail.com	36-45	Fema le	Indian	Kolkata	Phd	Indepen dent researc her	6-10	Les s tha n 30 min utes	Dail y	upda tes, Shar ed conte nt from other users or page s	I do not post perso nal stories or experi ences	Alw ays	View ing with out inter actin g	Som ewh at imp orta nt	Som etim es	No	To create a particular online persona	Grea tly	Yes	Yes
3/ 16 /2 02 4 20 :1 0: 15	abhijeetjoy 48@gmail. com	26-35	Male	Indian	Purba Bardha man	M.A. in JMC	Busines s	11- 20	1 to 2 hou rs	Dail y	Text, upda tes, Phot os, Vide os, Shar ed conte nt from other users or	As they happe ned, witho ut alterat ions	Som etim es	Likin g their posts , Com ment ing on their posts	Ver y Imp orta nt	Som etim es	May be	To document personal experiences	- Mod erate ly	Yes	Yes

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3/16/2024 20:26:40	asushrita@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	Kolkata, West Bengal, India	Ph.D. scholar	Assistant Professor	6-10	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	updates	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Always	Liking their posts	Somewhat important	Sometimes	No	For social validation (likes, comments)	Greatly	Yes	Maybe
3/16/2024 20:37:23	berylred654@gmail.com	26-35	Male	Indian	Bankura, West Bengal	Eng (Hons.) & MBA (HR & Marketing)	Business	11-20	30 minutes to 1 hour	Monthly	Photos, Shared content from other users or pages, Stories	Only the highlights or significant moments	Sometimes	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts, Sharing their posts, Viewing without interacting	Somewhat important	Rarely	Maybe	Sometime to spread something among friends or the society in lesser time than in person.	Greatly	Maybe	Maybe
3/16/2024 23:4	soumilidutta29@gmail.com	18-25	Female	Indian	Kolkata	High Secondary	Student	1-5	30 minutes to 1 hour	Rarely	Photos	With some embellishments or creative	Sometimes	Liking their posts, Commenting	Very Important	Rarely	Maybe	For social validation (likes, comments)	-Moderately	Yes	Yes

7:53												alterations		on their posts							
3/17/2024 8:03:37	rajbala@lnmiit.ac.in	36-45	Female	Indian	Jaipur	PhD	Teaching	11-20	30 minutes to 1 hour	Rarely	updates, Videos, Shared content from other users or pages	I do not post personal stories or experiences	Rarely	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts	Somewhat important	Rarely	Maybe	For social validation (likes, comments)	-Moderately	Maybe	Maybe
3/17/2024 13:23:14	reema.sukhija@gmail.com	36-45	Female	Indian	Indore	PhD	Teaching/research	6-10	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	updates	Only the highlights or significant moments	Always	Liking their posts	Not important	Sometimes	No	For social validation (likes, comments)	Greatly	Maybe	Maybe
3/17/2024 14:16:57	moutitas.dey@gmail.com	36-45	Female	Indian	Kolkata	PhD in Physics	Associate Professor	11-20	30 minutes to 1 hour	Weekly	Photos	As they happened, without alterations	Sometimes	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts, Sharing their posts	Somewhat important	Sometimes	No	To document personal experiences	-Moderately	No	Yes

3/17/2024 19:12:51	karmakersanjib045@gmail.com	18-25	Male	Indian	Barasat	Higher Secondary pass	Student	1-5	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Text	Only the highlights or significant moments	Sometimes	Liking their posts	Somewhat important	Rarely	Yes	Interact with new people and keep all (known or unknown to me) updateed	- Moderately	Maybe	Maybe
3/17/2024 19:17:11	souryachowdhury1@gmail.com	36-45	Male	Indian	Kolkata	M.Phil	Government officer	>20	1 to 2 hours	Weekly	Text, Photos, Videos, Shared content from other users or pages	With some embellishments or creative alterations	Sometimes	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts, Viewing without interacting	Somewhat important	Sometimes	Maybe	To create a particular online persona	Greatly	Maybe	Maybe
3/17/2024 19:40:14	shreyadas.hu@gmail.com	26-35	Non-binary woman	Indian	Delhi	BA and MA in English, Fulbright FLTA Scholar	English Trainer	11-20	More than 2 hours	Weekly	Text, updates, Photos, Videos, Shared content from other users or	With some embellishments or creative alterations	Sometimes	Liking their posts, Commenting on their posts	Somewhat important	Sometimes	No	To create a particular online persona	Greatly	Yes	Yes

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3/17/2024 19:52:03	sashrey123@gmail.com	18-25	Male	Indian	Kolkata	Masters in English Language and Literature	Student	1-5	30 minutes to 1 hour	Weekly	Text, Photos, Videos	With some embellishments or creative alterations	Always	Liking their posts	Somewhat important	Sometimes	Yes	For social validation (likes, comments)	Greatly	Yes	Yes
3/18/2024 1:21:11	sushmitabhatt.9518@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	Bangalore	BA	HR	6-10	Less than 30 minutes	Weekly	updates, Photos, Videos	With some embellishments or creative alterations	Sometimes	Liking their posts	Not important	Sometimes	Yes	To document personal experiences	-Moderately	Yes	Yes
3/24/2024 1:58:10	prakrutibhatt27@gmail.com	26-35	Female	Indian	Bhavnagar, Gujarat, India	Humanities (English Studies)	Research Scholar	11-20	Less than 30 minutes	Rarely	Text, updates, Photos, Shared content from other users or pages	Only the highlights or significant moments	Always	Liking their posts	Somewhat important	Sometimes	No	To document personal experiences	Greatly	Yes	Maybe