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Memory as Excavation of Gratitude and Guilt in Saroo Brierley's *Lion*:

A Long Way Home

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By

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Letter of Recommendation

The thesis entitled “Memory as Excavation of Gratitude and Guilt in Saroo Brierley's *Lion: A Long Way Home*” has been prepared under my supervision by Rojina Baral. I recommend it for evaluation to the research committee.

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Approval Letter

This thesis is submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Rojina Baral entitled “Memory as Excavation of Gratitude and Guilt in Saroo Brierley's *Lion: A Long Way Home*” has been approved by the undersigned member of the research committee.

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Abstract

This research work deals about the construction of the narrator's subjectivity through the help of opposing experience of memory- thankfulness and guilt- in Brierley's autobiographical fiction Lion: A Long Way Home. It shows the role of memory in the construction of his self. The issue of root culture is presented through autobiographical perspective. Lion: A Long Way Home's flashback narration brings the memory of the protagonist as the ultimate search for the self or identity. Memory plays important role to dig out the sense of rootedness and rootlessness in the narrator. Moreover this research shows the reconnection with root culture after twenty four years. Memory plays the role of excavator to dig out the thankfulness and guilt in the narrator Saroo. His sense of alienation and fragmented self is presented as the guilt whereas his regained connectivity with the root is taken as gratitude.

Keywords: Subjectivity, Memory, Root Culture, Gratitude, Guilt.

Saroo Brierley's *Lion: A Long Way Home* (2013) is an autobiographical work that deals with the emotional journey of Saroo from India to Australia. He was lost in the streets of Calcutta when he was five years old and was later adopted by Australian parents. After being haunted by the memories of his hometown Ganesh Talai, India, he makes attempts to return there. With the help of Google Earth he is able to find out his home and returns India after twenty four years and gets reunited with his mother and his siblings. So, this text goes along with the theme of quest of root culture, importance of modern technology, and effects of being detached from root culture. This thesis discusses the role of memory in the construction of the subjectivity in Brierley's *Lion: A Long Way Home* through autobiographical perspective. This paper deals with the construction of the narrator's subjectivity through the help of opposing experience of memory: thankfulness and guilt. The protagonist suffers from a sense of alienation as he is haunted by the past memories of own native culture.

In the novel, Saroo narrates the past memories of his life through the use of flashback technique. Those memories connect the narrator with his root and rootlessness which arises in his life. Memories play an important role to dig out the sense of rootedness and rootlessness in the narrator. Gillian Koh defines rootedness as, "a strong sense of attachment to place and its accompanying socio-political culture" (1). When Saroo was in Australia he followed Australian tradition. His language and lifestyle are totally affected by the culture of Australia. But he lived with the memories of his Indian life. The book also includes different photographs of his adopted life, new parents, the orphanage where he lived previous, and photographs of his Indian family after meeting them. The writer includes those photographs to make his subjectivity reliable. Those photos are used as hard evidences to prove his

story. The research paper talks memory as excavation of gratitude and guilt. The narrator's memories help him to dig out those memories which make him both thankful and guilty. With those memories, he finds himself attached with his root culture but some memories make him regretful about his condition. When he remembers his past memories such as quality time with his mother and siblings, playing with his friends, spending time with his brother Guddu and roaming around his village, he feels grateful. And on the other hand, when he remembers that he does not know to speak his native language, his difficulties to spend time in village and the compulsion to stay at hotel makes him feel guilty. The opposing experience of memory- gratitude and guilty- help the narrator to construct his subjectivity. His gratitude makes him close towards his root and at the same time his guilty distances him from his root. He tries to maintain both things and construct his Indian self. Though Saroo wants to return to his native culture he feels difficulty to speak his own language.

This research aims to trace the memory of past history, culture and family roots of Saroo Brierley's medium of the exploration of self and identity. His Indian self is challenged when he returns to his native land after twenty four years. Neither he is able to adopt Australian culture totally nor he could forget his Indian culture. His present lifestyle, and language is different from his native way. His guilt emerges when he is unable to speak his mother tongue and feel uncomfortable to stay in village and had to go back to hotel. As the consequence of guilt, his subjectivity is reconstructed. His alienated and fragmented self is also the consequence of his guilt. Thus, memory is a powerful element in his life which has power to bring happiness and sadness at the same time.

Autobiographical texts are those which deal with the self of the writer. French theorist Philip Lejeune defines autobiography as, "the retrospective narrative in prose that someone makes of his own existence when he puts the principal accent upon his life, especially upon the story of his own personality" (1). Brierley's *Lion* is also an autobiographical text in the sense that Brierley talks about his own story of his past and present life. He connects his present life of Australia with his past life of India.

This thesis focuses on how the cultures, rituals, language, places and other associations function as the rootedness for the writer and how the writer presents the theme of rootlessness throughout the text. This thesis examines how the writer's self has been portrayed in relation to the rootedness and rootlessness of the narrator. It explores his connection or bonding with Indian foods, language and culture. But at the same time, it presents how he lives in a different culture in Australia that creates a sense of alienation. It also investigates how his Australian parents use his own culture such as putting an Indian map in his room and taking Indian food in order to show his embodiment in his culture. It furthermore scrutinizes whether the writer accepts all the given conditions as granted or shows some kind of resistance as an awareness of rootlessness.

After Saroo is lost from Calcutta and is adopted by Australian parents, he gets loving environment and parents in the new home but his mind is full of memories of India. His new parents also decorate his room with Indian objects and use his own culture to give him a familiar environment. From this too, his mind is not detached from his past memories. He always connects with his root culture. Memory becomes the excavator of gratitude, his rootedness in his Indian culture. When people get far from something there is memory which makes them to get connected with their lost associations. In the case of Saroo too, same thing happens. Even though he is miles

away far from his birthplace, he always reaches there through memory. His past memories never let him forget his family, society, and culture.

Brierley's *Lion: A Long Way Home* also shows the memory as the sense of guilt in Saroo. When he is far away from his birthplace he is in the condition of rootlessness in the sense that he is not feeling comfortable in second culture. He is in the process of adopting the second culture of Australia but he is not able to totally adopt it. His past memories make him guilty because he finds it difficult to speak his own mother language. His uneasiness to stay in small village area and the return to stay at the hotel also makes him guilty. This sense of guilt questions narrator's own subjectivity. His self goes through the process of reconstruction. Even when he is in Indian land, his Indian self is questioned because of his guilt. He needs translator to talk with his own people. His Indianness is challenged because of his adopted culture. Memory is something which makes him both near and far from his people and place.

His Australian parents also provide him Indian environment by taking him to Indian neighbor, to watch Indian films. Moreover they have decorated his room with Indian objects. All these things and activities make connection with his Indian root. In this case memory digs out his root that gives him a sense of gratitude. Through the help of his past memories he discovers his Indian self and returns back to his root culture.

Though memory excavates gratitude in Saroo, it digs out guilt in him too. His rootlessness situation is his guilt. He becomes a man like without culture in Australia. He neither totally forgets his root culture nor adopts Australian culture properly. He suffers from alienation and suffocation in second culture. His rootlessness condition creates problem when he returns back to his house. His difficulties to speak his own mother language, to stay in rural area are some of the consequences of his

rootlessness. When person detaches from his/her root culture s/he suffers from fragmented subjectivity.

The narrator tries to assure his memory as real. By bringing hard evidence he assures us that his memory is true. We can see different types of photos of different stages of his life. Further he shows us the map of India which was made by him to make his memory relevant. Every historian, autobiographical writers organized their memories with the help of different techniques such as: videotapes, scrapbook. In this book too, Brierley has used hard evidences especially photos.

Brierley's *Lion: A Long Way Home* talks about the emotional journey from India to Australia. It deals with the incredible journey of a young man who used Google Earth to rediscover his lost childhood home and meet his mother in India after twenty four years.

In the novel, many writers, news channels are fascinated towards the story of Saroo Brierley. Robin Banerji published news of Saroo as "Little Boy Lost Finds his Mother using Google Earth" (BBC News). For his own root culture Saroo starts to search with such strategy, "I multiplied the time I was on the train, about 14 hours with the speed of Indian trains and I came up with a rough distance about 1200 km" (BBC News). To return to his native culture he does lots of search.

Commenting on the novel, Alexis L. Loinaz writes, "Brierley's journey would take him full circle: more than two decades after he was torn from his Indian family, Brierley would reunite with his birth mother following a painstaking search for a hometown he barely remembered, using Google Earth" (1). Saroo's story is very emotional. Loinaz further writes, "This emotional journey of Saroo will melt hearts around the globe" (1). His story is also adopted in the film *Lion*.

A.O. Scott writes in his review of *Lion: A Long Way Home*, “Saroo is small and vulnerable, but also smart and resourceful, and even as he is exposed to horrifying cruelty, he is also hero of an adventure” (2). He further adds, “But memories of his long ago life haunt him, and the arrival of new technology raises the tantalizing possibility of a return to his first home” (2). Saroo returns home after twenty five years with the help of technology. Google Earth helps him to find his home. He has such an adventure in his life, so he is a hero of an adventure.

After returning to India, Saroo's story becomes media sensation. Chandana Arora praises the story, “It’s a staggering story. It was a media sensation from the day after he first met his mother Kamla in Khandwa” (2). Saroo’s story becomes so famous and it is adopted as film. The film is able to win many awards. Arora adds, “That is one touching story. The urge to find and cherish the roots is there, it one is lost, even in the midst of all comforts and love” (3). One audio review on this book says, “It is a very hopeful story because this little boy was lost in India who was lost in a city of millions lived on the street he met so many helpful people who saved his life.” It further adds, “It is a hard warming story because most of this book is not really about his time in India but it is about his time in Australia.”

Critics on the *Lion* have mostly talked about how Saroo comes back to his native place India after twenty four years and how he connects to the root. Showing departure from them, the researcher shows the role of memory to construct fragmented subjectivity of the protagonist. His desire to return to his biological mother and birth place talks about his attachment towards his root. One can't get pleasure life after departing from own root culture. When he was in Australia he became rootless. He didn't deny the culture of Australia totally nor could forget his own native culture. His lifestyle, uses of language shows Australian culture. His past

memories help him to return back to his culture and arises the sense of guilt in himself. Thus, the researcher shows the memory as a powerful tool to excavate gratitude and guilt in Saroo with the connection of rootedness and rootlessness and the researcher tries to show departure from other writers and critics in this paper.

This study borrows theoretical insights from *Life Writing and Autobiography* by Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson and *The Sources of Self* by Charles Taylor. Defining memory Smith and Watson write, "Remembering involves a reinterpretation of the past in the present" (16). They take memory as an important element for autobiographical writing. While someone is going to write his/her autobiography, memory becomes an important source. Excavation of memory leads to the digging of history, people, place and identity. The research paper is more related with memory and quest of selfhood and Smith and Watson's book have talked about this idea in detail. They define autobiography as, "the description of an individual human life by the individual himself" (113). Brierley's text is autobiographical writing. He talks about his past and memories in his book. Moreover, autobiography talks about the truthfulness of the narrator. The concept of universal 'I' or transcendental self also found in Smith and Watson's discussion.

Smith and Watson quote Daniel L. Schacter who claims: "Memories are records of how we have experienced events, not replicas of the event themselves" (16). This means that recollected memories are not the exact copy of previous events rather it gives the details of the way how someone experienced the past events. The process of recollecting the past our mind plays a role by being active and because of the activeness of it our personal intrusion is always there. In this sense we cannot mirror the past as it was. Memories to some extent assist us to know the experienced

events. All the experienced events do not come as it is rather they come according to present demand.

Memory is not a neutral and passive phenomenon. It is infected by the time and space of the narrator. In the act of remembering the protagonist is equally conscious about the present context. Memory in relation to context is significant issue of an autobiography. Smith and Watson take insight from Susan Engel while presenting the relationship between memory and the context. Engel claims, "Acts of remembering takes place at particular sites and in particular circumstances" (quoted in Smith and Watson¹⁸). In this statement Engel is clear that memory is always time and space bound act of human being. Similarly, Smith and Watson assert, "the memory invoked in autobiographical narrative is specific to the time of writing and the context of telling. It is never isolatable facts, but situated association" (18). They believe that memory and context are akin mental process.

The Sources of Self by Charles Taylor also talks about the issue of selfhood and modern identity. It traces the historical sources of the modern understanding of selfhood. Further it aims to contribute to the reconstruction of the understanding of selfhood. It claims that moral sensibilities play a central role in determining who we are and what it means to be self. Taylor writes identity "involves one's understandings of self as a person within a particular family, religion, profession, nation and so on" (7). He argues that the qualitative distinctions we make are intrinsic to the way we conduct our lives, they constitute an orientation towards the world. According to him, moral sources and moral frameworks are understood with the connection of human existence. He more focuses on an investigation of modern identities in Western civilization and the moral sources from which these identities are constituted. The concept of self is more linked with morality. Morality is related to the self by what

Taylor calls a framework. He further says that selfhood is dependent on the Good.

Taylor defines about the identity crisis as, "an 'identity crisis', an acute form of disorientation, which people often express in terms of not knowing who they are, but which can also be seen as a radical uncertainty of where they stand" (27). The research paper is also related with the ultimate search for narrator's self or identity so Taylor's theoretical insights about selfhood are relevant for the thesis.

The individual is the vessel that carries within it both the physical side and the immaterial side that manifests in ideas and emotions. For Satre, " Identity is the limiting concept of unification: it is not true that the in-itself has any need of a synthetic unification of its being; at its own extreme limit, unity disappears and passes into identity" (74). In the projection of being, the infinite possibilities of being are compromised. Sartre argues that the concept of identity is unnatural; recognition limits beings, which is ever changing. While the duality of being is an expected result of the conflict between the being in itself and being for itself, the limiting of it happens only in the existence of the other as Sartre writes," identity is the ideal of "one" and "one" comes into the world by human reality" (74).

Identity is not the unification of the natural duality that exists within, but it is a compromise to project a limited idea of being. However the self is the opposite of identity as Sartre says, "the self refers, but it refers precisely to the subject. It indicates a relation between the subject and himself" (76). The self is a personal concept that does not factor in the collective but allows the subject to exist beyond the scope of recognition. As Sartre puts it, the self refers to the subject, but at the same time it "does not designate being either as subject or as predicate" (76). While the identity dissipates the unity of being, "the self tries to restore it by giving the subject distance from recognition and reality" (77). From there, the conflict arises between the identity

and the self, at the same time the individual holds all those factors within, while projecting a separate image to the collective. The body self connection forms an important part of self recognition. Yet, the recognition of the body's experiences cannot be fully recalled. The essence of the experiences might leave some form of mark on the body as it ages and withers, but the intricate details of the experiences are lost within the folds of memory.

Brierley's *Lion: A Long Way Home* uses the flashback technique to narrate the emotional journey of Saroo from Calcutta to Australia. Throughout his memory the sense of gratitude and guilt emerges in his mind. As Daniel L. Schacter calls memory as, "records of how we have experienced events, not replicas of the events themselves" (quoted in Smith and Watson 16). We can see that Saroo Brierley also records the details of how he went through the process of gratitude and guilt. Through the help of autobiographical writing he is able to tell about his past and present life. His past and present memory helps him to discover his identity and makes him return to his native land.

As Smith and Watson have called memory a, "reinterpretation of the past in the present" (26) in *Lion: A Long Way Home*, the narrator also uses memory to interpret his past in his present life. With the help of his past memories he is able to come back to his own culture. In the novel, Saroo always remembers about his mother and other family members. Saroo writes, "In fact, the past was never far from my mind. At night, memories would flash by and I'd have trouble claiming myself so I could sleep" (9). He confesses that his past memories never let him sleep peacefully at night; he is always distracted by his memories. Further he writes, "But although repeated revisiting, searching the past for clues, might have disturbed some of the evidence, much of my childhood experience remains vivid in my memory" (13).

Lion: A Long Way Home could be regarded as the search for self of an Indo-Australian boy. It is the story which captures the growth of the boy to a matured adult who while trying to trace his family origin, roots and migration discovers his personal, family and collective Indian-Australian self. Thus, the exploration of self or identity through the memory is central line of the text. Through his past memories, he is able to find out his home and returns back to it. Memory, here becomes the medium of self discovery that evokes past, family roots and cultural identity.

Likewise, Linda Anderson in her book *Autobiography* has discussed about memory. She claims, "To remember is not to restore something previously lost, to find a link in a chain which was previously missing. Rather the past can only be known belatedly, restructuring in the present what had previously been thought of as past"(61). Act of remembering does not bring everything about the past in the present. Moreover, past comes in a delayed form. Through the remembering process events only could not be restored but in course of time we know it, we understand the value as well as meaning of the past either from our knowledge or by our analysis, which directly comes under the intrusion of the self. Memory is not an isolated phenomenon rather subjectivity if its holder comes along with.

An autobiography never is freed from the intrusion of its author. It cannot be merely objective presentation of the past event. In our recalling process of once experienced incident either we exaggerate or we understate certain aspect because our subjectivity does not let us to be purely objective towards the things. As Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson argue:

Remembering involves a reinterpretation of the past in the present. The process is not a passive one of mere retrieval from a memory bank. Rather, the remembering subject actively creates the meaning of the past in the act

of remembering. Thus, narrated memory is an interpretation of the past that can never be fully recovered. (16)

The autobiography's objectivity is always questionable because while recalling the past one always interprets it in search of the meaning of the past. It is reinterpretation of the past event/incident. In the case of Saroo also same thing is applicable. No doubt, *Lion* is an autobiography; it is fuelled with Saroo's way of interpretation. In this account he most of the reinterprets the events from his childhood to the age of thirty two. His then immature self is now matured and the mature meaning of the events he is trying to convey which is problematic. Here, past is not objectively unveiled because of the tactfulness of mind in the process of remembering.

According to Mieke Bal memory is 'travelling concept'. Anne Whitehead discusses this concept in her theoretical book *Memory: the New Critical Idiom*. Whitehead cites, "For Bal, then, concepts are not fixed but can travel 'between disciplines, between historical periods, and between geographically dispersed academic communities'. As they travel, their meanings change, and such mode of difference 'need to be assessed before, during and after each trip'" (3). Here it means that the concept of memory undoubtedly travels in fascinating ways between academic disciplines, across geographical space and in course of time. Memory itself is not static force rather it is movable so real and clear picture of the past is through the memory doubtful. The travel of memory over the time demonstrates that memory holds the history. People perform that 'travelling notion' of memory either in oral form or in written.

Saroo's subjectivity is questioned because of his rootless condition. The situation of identity crisis emerges in his life. He is an Indian Australian boy. Even though his root is Indian, his native identity is in crisis. Charles Taylor writes identity

crisis is, "an acute form of disorientation, which people often express in terms of not knowing who they are, but which can also be seen as a radical uncertainty of where they stand" (27). Saroo even does not able to speak his native language. His lifestyle is very different from his traditions one. The conflict between rootedness and rootlessness creates identity crisis in his life which is in the following:

My first language was almost completely forgotten, the Indians at high school had only spoken English too and so initially I experienced a kind of reverse of cultural shock. In the company of the international students I was for the first time stripped of my Indianness rather than being somewhat exotic, I was the Australian among the Indians. I did not speak Hindi, I only spoke out English in Australia with Indian people too. (116)

His identity is in inbetweenness because of his adopting second culture. Saroo's new culture disturbs his first and native culture. Even being an Indian, he is in dilemma to find out whether he is Australian or Indian. Even after returning to his native culture, his self is questioned.

The issue of rootedness and rootlessness is presented in the text through autobiographical perspectives. As one moves away from his root culture, there is a longing for it and a wish to return it. The narrator Saroo is far from his motherland and he has great desire to return to it. He always reaches to his country through the journey of dream. His connectedness, root is very important for him. Defining the concept of home, Theano S. Terkenli writes, "The idea of home is broad and profoundly symbolic, a parameter that infiltrates every relationship between humans and environment as humans reach out to the unknown and return to the known" (2). Home is very important thing in our life. Once we detached from our home, we are

longing to return to it. Same case happens with Saroo. His longing to return to his country is fulfilled with the help of his memory and google earth. Every second he breaths his mind is full of his past memories. Even his foreign parents play the great role to attach him with his root culture. They decorated his room with Indian objects, took him to show Indian films. Saroo mentions about these things in the text:

Mum had decorated the house with Indian objects- there were some Hindu statues, brass ornaments and bells, and lots of little elephant figurines. She had also put some Indian printed fabric in my room, across the dresser, and a carved wooden puppet in a brightly coloured outfit. All these things were sort of familiar, even if I hadn't seen anything exactly like them before. (5)

His Australian parents use Saroo's own culture in order to show his embodiment in his culture. They never let him forget his culture. These things also show that even he is in foreign land he is connected with his root culture. By using Indian culture his new parents also don't let him go away from his rootedness.

When the person goes far from his/her on root culture, they become rootlessness. They suffer from alienation, suffocation in second culture. They have difficulty to adopt another culture. Rootlessness means person without root culture, ownness, far away from home, family, relatives. In rootlessness condition person doesn't have any kind of attachment towards his own culture; he is far away from it. Jeane Moore defines rootlessness or homelessness as, "The homeless experience as a lack of belonging or being can result in a person being out of place"(144). Moore's definition of homelessness is similar to the narrator of the text *Lion: A Long Way Home*, Saroo Brierley. Saroo is far away from his birthplace, his mother, family members. He is also distanced from his Indian culture. While he is in the process of

adopting second culture, his sense of rootlessness creates guilt in his mind. He has faced cultural difference in Australia. He explains in his autobiography:

There were some big differences, and not just in taste: Mum remembers I noticed her putting red meat into the refrigerator once and ran up to her crying, 'Cow, cow!' For a child brought up a Hindu, to slaughter the holy animal was taboo. For a moment she didn't know what to do, but then she smiled and said, 'No, no it's beef.' Apparently that set my mind at rest. In the end, the delight I took in having abundant food close at hand overcame most matters of taste or culture.

(87)

For Saroo, cultural difference has serious implications. He cries when he finds beef for his dish which shows his rootlessness. In his Indian culture cow is treated as holy animal and after seeing the meat of that holy animal he becomes very emotional. By this we can see that he has difficulty to adopt second culture and this explains his sense of rootlessness.

Autobiography literally means the author's story. Smith and Watson quote German historian Wilhelm Dilthey who defines the genre of autobiography as, "the highest and most instructive form in which the understanding of life comes before us" (112). Through the autobiography of Saroo Brierley we are able to understand about his life. His memory brings his both rootedness and rootlessness in light. George Misch also explains autobiography as, "the description of an individual human life by the individual himself" (quoted in Smith and Watson 113). Saroo Brierley talks about his own life, his past memories, living memories through the text *Lion: A Long Way Home*. He always haunted by his past memories which he explains in the following way:

In fact, the past was never far from my mind. At night, memories would flash by and I'd have trouble calming myself so I could sleep. As a consequence of this and my determination not to forget, I have always recalled my childhood experiences in India clearly, as an almost complete picture- my family, my home, and the traumatic events surrounding my separation from them have remained fresh in my mind, sometimes in great detail. Some of those memories were good, some of them bad- but I couldn't have one without the other and I couldn't let them go. (9)

His memories are both good and bad. But he never lets them go because he lives in Australia with the help of those memories. If we are far away from our family and home we live with the memories of them. Same thing happens in the life of Saroo.

While talking about the memory, it is not only individual memory of Saroo rather it is the memory of other adopted children too. Autobiography not only talks about own memory but it becomes the representative of others too. According to Janet Varner Gunn there are two moments of reading: "by the autobiographer who, in effect, is reading his or her life, and by the reader of the autobiographical text who is also in the encounter with the text, rereading his or her own life by association" (quoted in Smith and Watson 140). Saroo is the adopted child and later he writes about his life. But when other adopted children of the time read this text they feel that they are reading about their own life. In the text too Saroo talks about the other adopted children in this way: "Mrs Sood herself arrived in Hobart, escorting another new adoptee, Asha, whom I remembered from the orphanage. When I was ten, Mom and Dad adopted a second child, Mantosh from India" (91). At the time of 1980s the adoption from India was famous. Many western people adopted children from India.

For this the orphanage Nava Jeevan orphanage, run by the Indian Society for Sponsorship and Adoption (ISSA) helps. Saroo mentions this in his text, "In the meantime, I would get to live in Mrs. Sood orphanage, called Nava Jeevan" (73). So, when other adopted children read the story of Saroo they feel that this is their own story. Saroo's memory is not only subjective but it is objective. He is the representative of those adopted children whose lives survive in the western countries.

Memories are important thing in our life. Narrated memory is an interpretation of a past that can never be fully recovered. Daniel L. Schacter has suggested, "Memories are records of how we have experienced events, not replicas of the events themselves" (quoted in Smith and Watson¹⁶). Saroo has determined not to forget his past. His mind is full of his past memories. His strong determination not to forget his past makes him return to his motherland. He explains his determination in the following words: "I hadn't forgotten my past or stopped thinking about my Indian family. I was still determined not to forget any detail of my childhood memories, and often went through them in my head, as though telling myself a story" (112). Further he writes, "Sometimes I would lie in bed, visualizing the streets of my hometown, seeing myself walking home through them, opening the door and watching over my mother and Shekila as they slept" (112). As Schacter defines Saroo records his memories in his autobiography as how he experienced events. His past experiences are expressed in beautiful way in the autobiography *Lion: A Long Way Home*.

While reading this autobiography, the question of relevant may arise in the mind of the readers. How can we believe the author? Are the all things expressed in the text are true or not? Some of these questions may come in the mind of reader. The researcher wants to assure that all the memories in the text are true. To make something truth and relevant the author should use different types of evidences such

as: photos, videos, interview, and scrapbook. Saroo Brierley also uses hard evidence such as the photographs in *Lion: A Long Way Home*. The photographs of different stages of his life, photographs of his new parents, the orphanage from where he gets new life etc are used in the text to make his story, memories relevant. He uses different dates like his adopted date, date of the discovery of his motherland, the date of returning home respectively: 25 September 1987, 31 November 2011 and 11 February 2012 respectively. *Life Writing and Autobiography* also talks that memory is organized differently in different historical periods. It writes, "In the early twenty first century, memory is organized by such artifacts as the scrapbook and videotape. But at other historical moments, cultures have used different means or technologies of memory" (17). Saroo also uses the photographs to organize his memories and make it relevant.

Memory plays the role of both good and bad in Saroo's life. Sometimes it becomes the source of rootedness and sometimes the source of rootlessness in Saroo. Memory is the source of gratitude in the sense that when he remembers his past memories he feels very happy. In that time he is also connected with his rootedness. Saroo writes,

Talking enthusiastically in Hindi to my fellow adoptees inevitably brought back the past very vividly. For the first time, I told Mum that the place I was from was Ginstlay, and when she asked me where I was talking about, I confidently, if a little illogically, replied, 'you take me there and I will show you. I know the way. (12)

After talking with his fellow adoptees in Hindi, the courage and energy comes inside him. After that only he shares about his place with his new parents. When people

meet someone from his country or culture, new enthusiasm arises inside him and he gets his ownness. Same things happen with Saroo after meeting his fellow adoptees. He further describes about his experiences with Indian fellow in the college of Canberra. He explains,

I began to feel comfortable just living in the Indian students' culture and company. We'd eat Indian food and go clubbing together, take trips to nearby towns or gather at someone's house to watch Hindi masala movies, those wonderful Bollywood blends of action, romance, comedy and drama. It wasn't false or forced; it was just a natural way of being. (117)

Saroo's sense of Indianness emerges after meeting his Indian fellows. He learns about many things about Indian culture from his friends. His past memories and his friends help him to connect with his Indian culture. Only after he meets his friend he is able to return to his country.

Memory is also the source of the guilt for Saroo. When he is in Australia he is in the condition of rootlessness. Neither he forgets his past memories nor he adopts his living memory. The environment of Australian people creates to him also connect him with rootlessness. Saroo explains, "Strange as I found Australia, for Mum and my teacher, hearing me talk about India must have been like trying to understand things that had occurred on another planet" (12). His new mother and other Australian people take India as the place from another planet. By this too we can say that his memory is the source of guilt upon him. He remembers another incident of being rootlessness,

My first language was almost completely forgotten, the Indians at high school had only spoken English too and so initially I experienced a

kind of reverse culture shock. In the company of the international students I was for the first time stripped of my Indianness rather than being somewhat exotic, I was the Australian among the Indians. (116)

He feels alone in the group of Indian people because he has forgotten his first language. His lifestyle is different from other Indians. He has forgotten his Indian culture, language. Even he is Indian boy; he becomes Australian among the Indians because of his rootlessness. He is in-betweenness in Australia. In this sense the memory is the excavator of guilt in Saroo's *Lion: A Long Way Home*.

As one moves away from being in itself, there is longing for it and a wish to return to it. The protagonist of *Lion: A Long Way Home* also face the same issue and there is doubt whether a return is possible as he moves from one state of being to another. It seems impossible to remain in the state of being in itself and the same time there is great desire to do so. The protagonist's wish to return to his motherland and to find his own identity is the driving factor of his self, subjectivity and identity. This thesis focuses on identifying the process of finding self or subjectivity by trailing back to family history and past. s

The self, the memory and the body are three interconnected elements in the search for identity. In this connection William says, "we have individuated various personalities by reference to character, attainments and memories, and without references to bodies" (17). The previous statement is contingent on the body being already identified and unchanging as he further asserts his views, "there has been no reference to bodies only in the sense that no such reference came into the principles used; but it does not follow from this that there was no reference to a body in starting to individuate at all" (17). Therefore, if the body is already identified, then the three other factors come into play more than the physical aspect. One should also note that

Williams was referring to identifying multiple personalities inside one person. Given the frequent use of terms "self", "identity", "root culture" throughout this paper, it tries to deal with search for self through the memory of family history both in personal and collective levels.

Memory brings both good and bad feelings in person's mind. In the case of the narrator, memory plays both roles. Sometimes his mind flies up above the sky with the desire of returning to his native land. And sometimes same memory makes him alone and alienated. Saroo describes about this in the text, "I moved back into my parents' home and went through a dark period of conflicting emotions: rejection, disappointment, bitterness, loneliness and a sense of failure" (130). He becomes lonely in foreign field even he has loving and caring parents. His memories sometime give him joy while remembering about his past life. He remembers the playground where he used to play, his mother, little sister and brothers. His past memories make him fly like the bird above the sky. He remembers, "I knew the bridge over the river where we played as kids and the nearby dam wall that restricted the river's flow below it. I knew how to get from the train station to our home" (134).

Saroo's determination of not to forget past memories makes him return to his homeland. After getting suggestion about the Google Earth from his friends, he starts to search about his land and after many attempts he is able to return to his root culture. His rootedness revives when he returns his village. He spends many times in the Google Earth to find his house. He mentions "This went on for months, it had been over a year since I started" (141). But he determines that in any case he can find his house. Further he says, "But I reasoned that even if it took years, even decades, you could eventually shift completely through a haystack, the needle would have to show

up if you persisted" (141). His deep determination and past memories help him lots to attach him with his root culture.

After more than 20 years of his lost, Saroo is able to unite with his root culture. It only happens because of his determination and his past memories. While searching about his home, his past memories also help him. He is able to reunite with his family, society and culture. Saroo has mentioned about the actual date when he found his lost home as 31 March 2011. After many years his rootedness becomes alive. He still remembers the day he finds out his home. He writes, "I sat staring at the screen for what seemed like an eternity. What I was looking at matched the picture in my head exactly. I couldn't think straight, frozen with excitement and terrified to go on"(148). He further writes, "I had found Burhanpur, and Khandwa and now vitally found Ganesh Talai, the area where I'd lived, where my Indian family might still be living, wondering what became of me"(157). His past memories help him to find out his lost motherland after more than 20 years. In this sense, Saroo's past memories is the excavation of gratitude.

Saroo's rootlessness problem occurs when he meets his family. His adopted Australian culture creates problem in his mother language. He forgets his native language and it creates problem when he comes back to his village. After rising in Australian culture, he looks like Australian not like Indian. His lifestyle, tone, sense of dressing is more Australian rather than Indian. And it is obvious too that one who raises in second culture he is being far from own culture. Same case happens in Saroo. He forgets his Indian language and he has guilt of this too. When he reaches Hotel Grand Barrack in India, he has some kind of guilt in his mind. He says, "From being in Australian, I simply wasn't used to paying more than the agreed amount, and I walked inside the hotel before I realized my mistake. I checked in, feeling like I was

carrying a culture clash around within me" (169). His difficulties to speak Hindi with Indian people also show his rootlessness condition. When he makes inquiry about his family in Ganesh Talai he confesses, "I don't speak Hindi, I speak English" (173) also show his rootlessness situation. He needs interpreter to speak with his family. He writes, "We had the help of an unlikely interpreter a woman who lived a few doors away, called Cheryl"(178). To need interpreter to talk with his own family is also the consequence of his rootlessness condition. When he remembers these things in present life, it becomes sense of guilt for him.

Thus, the autobiography with the personal growth of the author brings the collective self or identity of Indian Australian by going back to his past memories. Through his memories he reconnects with his lost family. The memory of India is reflected his Indian self too. Though the research is more focused on root culture it further suggests about the quest of Indian self or identity too. Saroo's memories play the role of excavation of gratitude and guilt in his life. It means it digs out the rootedness and rootlessness condition of Saroo. The quest of root culture, identity or self is expressed through the help of the memories of Saroo. The childhood memory of Saroo itself is his collective social and cultural self or identity as the Indian Australian decent. Same memory becomes the source for gratitude and guilt is revealed through Saroo Brierley's *Lion: A Long Way Home*.

Saroo Brierley's *Lion: A Long Way Home* talks about the issue of root culture through autobiographical perspectives. Further it also deals about the role of memory to excavate gratitude and guilt. It can also show the role of gratitude and guilt to reconstruct the subjectivity of the narrator. Brierley talks about his emotional journey from India to Australia. He was lost from the street of Calcutta and later adopted by Australian parents. Even he is in Australia his past memories of India always come to

his mind. His past memories always make him visit his native land in his dream. He always wants to reunite with his mother and other family members. He returns to his motherland after more than 20 years. The autobiography in flashback narration brings the memory of narrator as the ultimate search for his Indian self and his root culture. Keeping these issues into consideration, this research work has tried to trace the memory and self discovery of narrator in autobiography *Lion: A Long Way Home*.

This research paper traces the quest for root culture through autobiographical perspectives. Saroo is in the search of his root culture through the help of his past memories. He wants to return back to his motherland from Australia. Even he gets loving, supportive parents in Australia, he always remembers his mother who is in India. He always remembers about his Indian culture, society, his friends and especially his mother. He is in the in-betweenness condition. Neither he totally removes Indian culture from his mind nor he fully accepts Australian culture. His past memories always make him remembering about India. When people go far from their culture and society, they have deep desire to come return to them. Saroo is also very far from his society. But he has always deep desire to return back to his mother and family. He wants to return to his Indian self. The growth of boy and finally his search for his native culture itself is the quest of individual identity through the memory of childhood past. This research through the memory of person tries to deal with narrator's self discovery evoking the past cultural heritage as the autobiographical writing.

Memory here in Saroo's case plays role of both positive and negative. When he remembers his past memories sometimes he has feeling of gratitude and sometimes he has sense of guilt. The issue of both rootedness and rootlessness comes through his memories. When he remembers his past he himself connects himself with his root

culture. He feels joy and happiness when he remembers them. But sometimes when he remembers his past memories he feels guilt for it. He feels alone in the crowd. He has guilt that he becomes alone in the group of Indian fellows. He doesn't know to speak his mother language. His alienation and fragmented self is his sense of guilt or it is the condition of his rootlessness. Even he doesn't totally adopted Australian culture. He sometimes becomes awkward while accepting second culture.

To confirm his rootedness Saroo comes back to his native village after 25 years. He returns to his village through the help of Google Earth. His university's Indian fellows suggest him about Google Earth. He has deep attachment towards his village and his family. So he decides to return back to his village even after twenty four years of his losing. His past memories play important role in his returning to his village. He has blur images of his village and the location. Those memories help him to find out his village Ganesh Talai. His memories becomes his friend to search and return to India. Further his Indian friends and his adopted parents help him out to search about his village. His parents use Indian culture and materials with Saroo to make his embodiment with his culture. His living memory is full of his past memories which help him to figure out his Indian self and make quest of his root culture.

This research paper shows how memory works as an excavator of gratitude and guilt in Saroo Brierley's *Lion: A Long Way Home*. Since this text is a retrospective narrative of author's life, this research claims that both happiness and guilt excavated through memory simultaneously help the narrator reconstruct his subjectivity. Through the help of his memories, he connects himself with rootedness and rootlessness condition. He has deep determination of finding out native village and return to it. His Indian self is questioned and it is reconstructed after his rootless condition. This research in order to trace the quest for self basically deals with the

fragmented and alienated self of Saroo and connects it with his newly reconstructed self. The novel presents the story of the growth of the lost little Indian boy who was later adopted by Australian parents. The growth of the boy and finally his search for his hometown after twenty four years and self itself is the quest for individual identity through the memory of childhood past and his homeland. The images of his mother, brothers, and village help him to find out his own place. When he remembers his past, he becomes attach with his rootedness. But sometimes same memory creates sense of rootlessness upon him. He sometimes regrets about his decision to come with his brother in Calcutta. He lost from the street of Calcutta when he comes there with his brother Guddu. And he sometimes feels guilt when Australian people treat him as alien from another planet. His difficulties to feel comfortable in rural area and difficult to speak own native language is also the consequence of his guilt. And this guilt helps him to reconstruct his subjectivity. So, memory itself is very powerful things in person's life. It can play both positive and negative role in people's life. Saroo's quest of his root culture through the help of his past memories is shown in the research paper. His Indian self is revealed through the memory of the past in his autobiography *Lion: A Long Way Home*.

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