

I. Psychosexual Revelation and Kamala Das's *My Story*

This thesis explores psychosexual revelation of Kamala Das in her autobiography, *My Story*. The events and actions recurring in this autobiography are oriented to her development of sexuality from childhood to womanhood. This life narrative depicts her inner self at the center. This written account is the psychic manifestation of a woman in a patriarchal society. Das as the representative figure of a patriarchal society, is dominated by her father and husband. She is treated as an object. As Das writes, “woman of the best Nair families never mentioned sex. It was their principle of phobia. They associated it with violence and bloodshed” (23). Due to which she has to repress her sexual desires for the innate goodness. But, Das being a member of the best Nair family deconstructs the canonical norms, rules and values. She boldly expresses her longing for sex, her homosexual relation as well as extramarital affairs. In post-colonial Indian society this sort of activity is considered as a social taboo. This research work formulates the psychosexual mentality as it studies the psychological and sexual aspect of Kamala Das in *My Story*.

Kamala Das, an Indian poetess and writer, was born on 31st March 1934, in Kerala, South India. She has authored many poems, novels, short stories and memoirs. As a bilingual writer, Das uses both native languages, Malayalam and English language in her writing. She writes under the pen name Madhavikutty and Kamala Suriyaa. Das is the daughter of V.M Nair, a former managing editor of Malayalam daily, *Matrabhumi* and renowned Malayali poetess Balami Amma. Due to her literary family background, she has a deep interest in writing from her early age. She is highly influenced by her mother and Uncle Narayan Menon. Das's uncle is also a prominent writer of Kerala. Though Das is deprived of formal education, she has been informally taught at home until she is fifteen. In the same year she got married to

K. Madhav Das and gives birth to a son next year. Early marriage followed by immature pregnancy distracts her from her marital life. Vikrant Rajput marks problems in Kamala Das marital life:

There was a considerable age difference between Kamala Das and her husband. This marriage was not a happy one. The age difference caused her frustration just after a few years of marriage. Their relations became hollow. Having the thirst for a sea at the age what she got was hardly a few drops of stinking water. All sweet moments were turned to bitter curses. What was missing in her life is well expressed by her poems. (200)

The age difference and early marriage of Das is creating problems in her life. The poems explain her dissatisfied married life.

Kamala Das's first volume of poems entitled "Summer in Calcutta" is published in 1965. Her other poetic creativity includes "The Descendants" (1965), "The Old Play House and Other Poem" (1973) and "A Night this Savage Rites" (1979). Das's poetry is rich in confessional themes. She expresses her personal experiences in her poetry. Concerning Das trend of writing poetry, critic Tilak Raghukul speaks:

The subject of Kamala's work comprises of "a woman" and the revelation of female experiences, be it trauma of an unhappy marriage or humiliation of a desire less surrender in sex or disgust at the male domination. Quest for love is certainly the perennial theme of Kamala's poetry. The poet studies love from many angles, and her treatment of the theme is characterized by increasing depth and intensity. (106)

Das frankly expresses her unsuccessful marriage, desires for sex, quest for love and identity in her writing. This is the first attempt to say about sexual needs in Indian women writing. Seema Chaudhary claims, Das is different from other writers because of “her daring portrayal of sex for the first time by any poet of India. So, she is also called “the queen of erotica” (2). *My Story* is another great work of Das. Like her poems, *My Story* is also the bold assertion of the self and her pre-marital and post – marital relationship. A.V.S Jannapura asserts, “*My Story* is the manifestation of Das poetry” (50). It is hard to say either Das derives poetry from a story or story from poetry. Her writing not only revolves around her personal experience, it also includes her relationship to other characters. After her husband’s death, she converts herself to Muslim from Hindu which pushes her “into the whirlpool of controversy” (171) in 1999. She dies in 2009 after her long sickness.

My Story is an autobiography, which reflects the personal experiences of Kamala Das. It is originally written in Malayalam language under the title “Ente Katha” in 1973. After fifteen years, she publishes this autobiography in English version in 1988. According to M. H Abram, autobiography is the “biography written by the subject himself or herself” and the emphasis is on the “author’s development of the self rather than other events or actions” (23). *My Story* is also the documentation of self-experience of Das from her childhood to adulthood. It includes her childhood life from age four. *My Story* develops through the colonial India, where Das is the victim of British hegemony in Missionary school. The plot develops with her childhood trauma, lesbian relations, hostel days, dissatisfied marital life, her experience of being a mother of three children, her longing for physical relation, and her days in hospital and at last her realization of reality that is death is inevitable.

The context in autobiography is inseparable. For Smith and Watson, the autobiographies should focus on “man and his action in specific historical and cultural context and assessed how he and his deeds were ‘representative’ of his times” (119). *My Story*, is an autobiography that represents the condition of females in post-colonial Indian society. Das is the representative female figure of Indian society. Critic Coppelia Khan opines that the Indian canonical history “has been a record of male experiences, written by men from male perspectives” and it is necessary to “reconstruct the female experience and full the blank pages and make the silence speak” (25). Like other women, Das is a victim of patriarchal convention. She has to go wherever her father takes her. She gets married in her early age, though she is not ready for it physically and mentally. She is treated by her husband as sexual object. Simon de Beauvoir describes the patriarchy time as “woman owns nothing, a woman does not enjoy the dignity of being a person; she herself forms a part of patrimony of a man: first of her father and then her husband” (114). Before marriage, Das is a victim of her father’s autocratic behavior after marriage, her husband’s brutality tortures her. She breaks the established rules of statuesque and rejects to be submissive, inferior and docile. Her revelation of sexual desire, quest for love and affection, flopped marriage and extramarital affair in her autobiography proves her as an iconoclast of her generation. Sheetal Thakur claims “*My Story* reveals for the first time in Indian English literature the open and frank confession of a woman writer of her sexual needs” (171). In patriarchal society women are treated as the object of beauty and sexuality. They have to follow their father and husband advice and involve themselves in the domestic works like cooking, cleaning and caring their children. Das frankly expresses her dissatisfied relation with her husband and her quest for identity. Indian critic Rama Rani Lal asserts, “In *My Story* she attempts to define her

identity as a woman and to create a space within her and around her in order to assert the legitimacy of her dreams and fantasies and to express her and frustrations” (198).

My story is the product of her psychological trauma. In the preface of *My Story*, Das states that she writes “continually, not merely to honor my commitment, but because I [she] wanted to empty myself of all the secrets so that I [she] could depart when the time came” (ii). This life narrative plays a vital role in the healing of wounds made by traumatic experience in her life. Smith and Watson define “the autobiographical writing functions at the mode of healing” as a “Scripto- therapy”. It includes the process of both “writing out and through traumatic experiences in the mode of therapeutic reenactment” (202). Das auto-journey into the past provides cathartic and catalyst for healing. She insists, “I have written several books in my lifetime, but none of them provided the pleasure the writing of *My Story* has given me” (ii). *My Story* includes her traumatic experiences of childhood days. Das says that she and her brother are “grown up more or less neglected” and she spends her childhood in loneliness (2). She used to write “sentimental poems. Each poem made her cry” (2). The childhood trauma remains with her even in her adulthood. She wants her husband “to be my [Kamala] father and mother”. She wants “conversion, companionship, and warmth. Sex is far from my [Kamala] thought” (80). Das is deprived of love and care from her parents. She wants to fulfill it from her husband but, her husband’s sexual abuse frustrates her. She expresses her psychic trauma in these lines:

When I was young and needed companionship for my emotionality, he had sent me away to my grandmother for a month only to be able to devote even his soul to the completion of a Rural Credit Survey Committee Report, which his favorite boss was at the time obsessed

with such subservience to his superiors may have built up his lackluster career briefly for a while, but it certainly destroyed my pride for him... as a marriage, in the conventional sense, mine was a flop. There is silence between the two of us that seemed to me interminable, although at times I broke them by a word or two about our little son or about the grocer's bill. (188)

My Story is the recollection of the traumatic experiences of Das from her childhood to adult. Here, trauma is not an effect of destruction more than that it is an energy for survival. *My Story* is a self-journey which helps Das gain self-identity which was lost in patriarchal society and provides her cathartic feeling.

My Story echoes different representative voices within a single genera. It includes the voice of a woman, a child, a wife, a lover, a mother and a writer. This autobiography has fifty chapters. Each chapter has their own titles and they are explicable in themselves. For example "Matrimony", "An Arranged Marriage", "The Brutality of Sex", "Like a Toy a Son", "Desire to Die" and so on. Each chapters is fragmented and not in chronological order. The narrator has her own unique narrative style. Indian critic Suresh Patel claims that Das's "narrative method is very bold and authentic" (3). It is the honest exploration of the frustration of an Indian woman who is crushed under the customs and tradition of Indian society. A.V.S. Jayaannapurna examines Das' narrative:

It cannot be denied, that Kamala Das's account was narrated objectively. A frustration is expressed throughout the narrative. But her self- portrayal is at the center. She has given voice to thousands of modern urban women. There are sympathetic emotions in which we feel empathy with the protagonist of the story. The autobiographical

self must be understood as socially and historically constructed and position the narrative in a complex world and discourse. The author reveals that a woman is naturally creative and if given a room of her own, she can defend herself and narrate the story of her life boldly. There is nothing unnatural in woman's literary creativity, though it cannot be a rival to her biological creativity. These autobiographical narratives are organized around the narrator's desire to come to a better understanding of events including emotion and play a critical role in regulating emotions. (50)

Similarly, Das's autobiography has a powerful language as it is an honest exploration of her inner experiences regarding female sexuality, unworkable marriage, longing for love and affection and so on. T.Sujani praises *My Story's* language as "structured to express powerfully her longings, frustration, sadness, happiness and the territory of her unconscious" (40). Her language cannot be separated from her "as a dancer cannot be from dance" (40). Das's unique way of writing autobiography presents her a revolutionary writer of her generation. Her bold and frank elaboration of her inner experience connecting with life is the matter of appreciation. It is the unconventional collection, which presents the freshness in the form of writing.

My story is confessional in theme. M. H Abrahams takes confessional writing as "the fact and intimate mental and physical experiences of the poet's own life and includes shocking details with which the poet reveals private or clinical matters about himself or herself, including sexual experiences, mental anguishes and illness, experiments with drugs and suicidal impulses"(167). Like the other confessional writer, Das exposes her mental and physical experiences of her own life. She is a victim of patriarchal standards. Her father's autocratic and husband's cruel and brutal

behavior leads her to live traumatic life. Das's suicidal attempt and suffering of nervous breakdown makes her similar to other confessional writer. Her confession of sexual experiences and cold relation to her husband is also included in the features of confessional writing. R. Tamil Selvi, compares Kamala Das with Sylvia Path:

... Kamala Das does not throw herself off the balcony. At this juncture, we are reminded of Sylvia Plath, another woman writer who also underwent the same trauma as Kamala did. Their stylistic and thematic concerns are similar, as far as form and content are considered. Both writers express themselves as victims of patriarchy, both use confessional voices, both are victims of authoritarian father figures, both are let down by husbands, both show a remarkable love for their children, both are prone to nervous breakdowns and show suicidal tendencies. (281)

Das breaking social restriction, frankly exposes her sexual experience and her bodily desires.

With no doubt, the autobiography of Kamala Das is the quest for self-identity in patriarchal society. Das's autobiography also explores her psychological construction that has been built during post-colonial Indian society. With her publication of this life narrative, it has shocked the reader as it encounters social conventions. The following section illustrates numerous critical receptions of Das' *My Story*.

K. Satchidanandan claims that Das's autobiography has multiple meaning. For her, Das's autobiography is the voice of every Indian women who are the Victims of patriarchal norms, values, rules and regulations:

Like other women's autobiographies, Kamala's too is a polyphonic text and the reader has to listen closely to hear its different voices and discern the diverse layers of its meaning. Here is a wife, sister, mother, daughter, a lover and a writer, a middle class woman seeking freedom from the bourgeois definition of women's intellectual and imaginative abilities, and a public defying patriarchal description to open new avenues of personal and professional experiences of women. (21)

My Story is the representative voice of the Indian women who is in the process of seeking freedom from patriarchal conventions. It includes the voice of a child, a mother, a lover, a writer and a woman in general. Das is a revolutionary writer who fights against male defined norms and values. Though her life narrative, she can establish her identity in patriarchal society.

Similarly, Sheetal Y. Thakur examines Das life narrative as the reflection of post-colonial Indian society where the impact of colonialism is still working. Though the British rule is no more in India, but the Indian native culture is evidently affected by the British culture. Das's mother is also affected by westernized patriarchal society. In this regard, Thakur says:

Kamala Das's life story is set in the once matrilineal framework of the Nair Tharvade. Colonization and the imposition of western notions of morality upon the native systems influenced her peculiar individual position. From the secure and serene warmth of the Nalukettu, both Kamala and her mother were taken away into rashness of a city culture. They were not accustomed to their new social set up. From a matrilineal and matrilocal framework that offered complete security to the women and their kids were thrust into a westernized patriarchal

society. Women who were habituated to gentle maternal care and consideration certainly at a loss in a male centered society. Men folk of Nayar Tharvad turned out to be efficient to cope with the emotional as well as economic requirements for their counterparts. (178)

Das and her mother's suffer in the westernized patriarchal society. Her father's close relationship with British people directly and indirectly affects their food habits, lifestyle and way of thinking. British culture is totally different from their culture. Nair culture is matrilineal, where complete security and freedom is possible for female. But city culture is patriarchal, where woman has to depend upon their counterparts for economical and other requirements. Das's father decision to shift from Kerala to urban area makes them to deprive from security, serenity and freedom. This autobiography is the product of anxiety and frustration created by uncomfortable lifestyle of western patriarchal society.

Likewise, Tamil Selvi in "A Kaleidoscopic view of Kamala Das's *My Story*" asserts that Das is an unconventional writer. She confidently admits her quest for sex, lesbian relation, and unsatisfied life with her husband and her extramarital affairs. She claims:

Kamala Das has presented herself as either too bohemian to care about revealing her sexual adventures and her periods of mental break down or the submissive with following dictates of her husband. And yet at every opportunity Kamala reverts to the unconventional women with no regrets about her work or her foci. In *My Story* Kamala Das, a famous poet for her honesty, tells of intense personal experience into her growth into womanhood, her unsuccessful quest for love and

outside marriage and her living in matriarchal rural South India after inheriting her ancestor's house. (278)

Though Das is the member of patriarchal society, she avoids to be submissive, loyal, and inferior like other female of Indian society. She boldly expresses her inner experiences of her growth into womanhood and her attempts to satisfy her bodily desires without caring social conventions. In a patriarchal society women are not allowed to speak her personal quest for her unique identity. But, Das speaks her sexual needs and her unsuccessful quest for love through this autobiography.

For Suresh Patel, Kamala Das is a confessional writer. Like other confessional writers, Das is the victim of patriarchal society, deprived of parental love, unsatisfied marriage, love for children, victim of mental illness and her suicidal attempt. Patel comments *My Story* as the manifestation of her poetry:

Kamala's autobiography seems to be the brainchild of her poetic cosmos. Her delineation of the episodes of life intermingles with the poem. It seems an honest confession of an Indian woman who is crushed under the customs and traditions. Her candid and bold statements underline the general predicament of a woman. She boldly writes about the marital disharmony, extramarital affairs, homosexuality and physical intercourse. She is an iconoclast of her generation with her uncommon courage and bold style. Her autobiography covers the life sketch of different people. She has given the best sketches of her grandmother and younger brother it reflects her sensitive outlook towards them. The death of her grandmother seems to be a painful experience for her. She also confesses her brother is ideal for her. Her auto-biography represents her as a domestic

housewife, a mother of three kids, and an isolated and independent human being. She seems to be rebellious, but very sensitive and touchy at heart. (3)

Das's poems and autobiography are similar in content as both of them contains her personal experiences. In *My Story*, she boldly confesses her homosexual relations, extramarital affairs, misalliance and her quest for love and affection. Besides her exploration of self, Das's writes about her grandmother and brother whose presence makes her happy and secure. Similarly, Das presents herself as the pathetic wife who is treated as a sexual object. Her honest confession is the representative voice of Indian woman. On the one hand, she is rebellious and on the other side, she is emotional and cannot leave her husband because of her love for children and her parents.

Correspondingly, Sezer Sabriya, in his paper "An Autobiography from a Postcolonial Perspective: Kamala Das My story" opines that *My Story* is a revolutionary writing which attempts to change the situation of third world country woman. In this regard, he argues:

Her female subjects make an effort to change the notions of what is female or feminine in Indian tradition. Das's writing of life shows the anger, rage and rebellion of a woman struggling in a men's world.

Das's struggle shows us that life is much harder for the third world women than men because they are doubly colonized; first, under the rule of colonial power, second by their own male dominated societies.

Indian women suffer because of inequalities and social oppression. The families arrange the marriages of Indian women when they are very young. They thus marry men they have not met before. They then

move to their husband's parent's home, where they are essentially servants. There are also other problems for women such as; the dowry system, bride-burning, male abuse, the ban against divorce, woman's isolation, job discrimination, female infanticide, poorly paid or unpaid female labor, high female illiteracy, the tradition of sati. (66)

The women in the third world are double marginalized. On the one hand, they are colonized by British rule. On the other, they are colonized by the male dominated society. The life of a woman in third world countries is not easy. They have to follow their husband and father's decision. There is no value of their own interests and desires. They have to limit themselves inside the house. They have no courage to speak even a single word against the society's rules and regulation. But Das presents herself bold and speaks against conventional standards. She shows her anger through her writing and becomes the spokesperson of all women in third world countries.

There has been many attempts to interpret and analyze Kamala Das's autobiography, but there is no substantial study of psychological and sexual aspect of Das. This research explores psychic manifestations of narrator regarding sex and sexuality.

Psychosexuality is a part of psychoanalysis as it studies the psychological and behavioral aspect of human sexuality. Regarding psychoanalysis, French theorist Monique Wittig claims that "psychoanalysis is the official discourse of sexuality" (114). And Peter Berry interprets that "many of the Freud's ideas concern the aspect of sexuality (97). Freudian psychoanalysis revolves around the human behavior determined by instinctual impulses remained in the unconscious level of the mind from the childhood. Freud asserts that the desires about the sex and fantasies are censored by the society. So, the study of psychosexuality is not sufficient without

studying Freudian psychoanalysis. Freudian psychoanalysis is a bridge to reach an unconscious level to the conscious level. This thesis aims to reveal those hidden psychosexual desires of Kamala Das which is censored by the patriarchal society. In this research, Das's social, behavioral and emotional aspect of sexuality is discussed, analyzed and interpreted from the Freudian psychoanalytic perspective and other psychosexual theories. The study of conscious mind and unconscious mind of Das, division of personality (Id, ego and superego), interpretation of Das's dreams, concept of Eros and thanatos, perversion and inversion, Oedipus complex and Electra complex as well as her suffering of hysteria are the key concept of this research. This research work examines *My Story* on the basis of these different aspects of psychosexuality.

Including introduction part, this thesis has following chapter division:

- I. Psychosexual Revelation and Das's *My Story*: An Introduction
- II. Psychosexual revelation in Das My Story: Analysis and implication
- III. Conclusion

II. Exploration of Inner Self and Patriarchy

This research attempts to explore psychological and sexual aspect of Kamala Das in *My Story*. Das's animalistic instinct to achieve immediate gratification, inclination towards her father and cold relation with her mother, her homosexual relationship, unsuccessful married life, the quest for love and sex, and her suffering from hysteria provide us insight to study the psychosexual part of her life. Primarily, this narrative is the documentation of the condition of a woman in the male dominated society, but it provides the background to explore Das's own psychosexual structure.

Das's autobiography is the record of her own experiences of her life. In Psychoanalysis, a piece of literature is an exploration of the desires of the unconscious mind of the author. The creative writing is a way to express his/her inner feeling which is suppressed since childhood. M.H Abrams, in *Glossary of literary Terms* defines literature and other creative writing as:

Literature and other arts like dreams and neurotic symptoms of the imagined or fantasized, fulfillment of wishes that are either denied by reality or are prohibited by the standard of morality and propriety. The forbidden sexual (libidinal) wishes come into conflict with, and are repressed by the censor into the unconscious realm of the artist mind, but are permitted by the censor to achieve a fantasized satisfaction in distorted form which serves to disguise their real motive and from the conscious mind. (249)

The literary work is analyzed with the conscious and unconscious mind of the writer. It means a literary work is the product of his/her disturbing psyche. Through this life narrative, Das expresses her deep-rooted desires from her early childhood. Das

confesses her inclination towards father, distraction to mother, her awareness to growth and sexuality, homosexual relations, dissatisfied relation with husband, extramarital relation and her quest for love and sex.

Kamala Das begins to write her autobiography when she has first serious heart bout and admitted in hospital. Doctor suggests her to write, “to distract her mind from the fear of sudden death” (II). The repressed desire is creating problems in her life from long time. This autobiography becomes a platform to express her inner repressed desires and wishes so that it can provide her comfort and solace. Judith Harrison claims that “suffering is a particular system of discourse. If the word that is embedded in emotional pain can be removed from psychic structure, then perhaps pain can be carried around by language and finally unburdened” (21). Das expresses her happiness after writing *My Story*. As she says, “ I have written several books in my lifetime, but none of them provided me pleasure the writing of *My Story* has given me”(II). Das confesses her inner suppressed feelings which are said to be a crime to discuss openly. But being revolutionary, she exposes her unfulfilled sexual desire and her effort to fulfill it.

Das’s inclination towards sexuality is from her early age. When she sees “frock had a large spot of blood on it and hot blood flowing on my [Kamala] thigh. She “felt happy” because she thinks that she “could be a mother” (59). Her excitement to be a mother shows her desire to be mature in her early age. In Nair society, the exploration of sexual desire by a female is unacceptable. “Women of good Nair families never mentioned sex” (181). But, Das has no consideration of social, cultural, religious values and expresses her quest to fulfill her deep-rooted sexual desires.

Human psyche can be divided into three parts: Id, ego and superego. For Freud, id “is the unorganized part of the personality structure that contains a human's

basic, instinctual drives. It is the source of our bodily needs, wants, desires, and impulses, particularly our sexual and aggressive drives.”(105, *Introductory*). Id is the animalistic emotions, feeling and desires of the unconscious mind. It is the container of libidinal desires which is always starving for immediate gratification without caring of social acceptance. So, it is asocial, lawless, immoral, irrational side of human psyche. Regarding Danial and Paul, “id is the oldest and most primitive psychic agency, representing the biological foundations of personality. It is the reservoir of basic instinctual drives, particularly sexual (libidinal) drives, which motivates the organism to seek pleasure” (1). Id also called “pleasure principle” (2) as it seeks immediate gratification, though it is unacceptable in the society.

Das’s id dominated personality too runs after immediate gratification. Social convention, norms, values and tradition do not hold any significance in the way to fulfill her desires. Her pre-marital and post-marital relation does not take societal standard as her limitation. Her attraction to the opposite sex is always hidden in her unconscious mind. She is motivated by pleasure principle. At the beginning of her adolescent period her inclination towards the opposite sex is higher. She is sexually attracted to “a boy of eighth standard”. Though he is punished because of his stupid behavior, Das is fond of his foolishness too, and “wants to marry” him. As she writes in chapter six, “The Village School”:

There was a boy in the eighth standard, which was adjacent to my class in the same dusty hall. He was handsome and had a dimple in his right cheek which was appeared only when he smiles. I could hardly take my eyes off his face. I was so infatuated with his charm. Once when he wrote some obscenity at recession the blackboard, the class master slapped him hard. Govinda Kurup, left the class immediately. At that

moment I wanted to follow him and tell him that if he was wicked, I was fond of wickedness too. One day I told my grandmother lying close to her at night I want to marry Govinda Kurup. (19)

Das is in her early age of thirteen, but her sensual fixation towards the opposite sex is higher than normal. Sensual attraction in her early age clarifies her unfulfilled desires of the unconscious mind which is unknowingly determining her behavior. She is born in patriarchal Indian society where “sex is not fashionable as it is now” (23). But being courageous and bold, she exposes her heterosexual and homosexual relationship as well as extramarital affairs.

Kamala Das is driven by the pleasure principle. She seems to be pleased to reveal her sexual attachment with the opposite sex. In the patriarchal society, sex is not subject to confess, but for her it is openly expressible. She frankly talks about her meeting with, “intelligent and well-read person” (144) on the breakfast invitation in summer. Das is attracted by that man. She feels “relaxed and happy when suddenly his [man] hands move to my [Kamala] thigh and rested touching it lightly” (144). She further elaborates her instinctual desires of her body which is not fulfilled by her husband. Das undergoes untamed obsession for sexual desire. For the fulfillment of her libidinal desires, she develops her relation with many other male partners. Among them is Carlo, her pen friend. She goes with Carlo to satisfy her unconscious desire. She expresses her pleasant feeling of love and care with Carlo in “Pen Poetry prize”:

He offered himself as a stiff drink, he offered to help me forget and in the afternoon I lay in his white arms drowsily aware that he was only water, water, only a pale green pond glimmering in the sun. In him, I swarm, all broken with longing, in his robust blood I floated, drying on

my tears. Carlo reminded me of the pond at Nalpat where I used to lie sunning my face and my growing limbs. (152)

Das's growing of sense of sexuality along with physical and psychological growth is clearly presented in *My Story*. Her id instinct forces her towards the opposite sex before and after marriage. But her ego personality blocks to fulfill her libidinal desires. It does not disappear from Das's unconscious psyche rather it directly or indirectly determining her behavior.

Ego is our ordinary social self that experiences, feels, thinks and decides. It develops after a child becomes six months old. This part of personality is a moral, social, legal and flawless because it mainly uses conscious memory. According to Freud "ego is that part of the id which has been modified by the direct influence of the external world... ego seems to bring the influence of the external world to bear upon the id and its tendencies, and endeavors to substitute the reality principle for the pleasure principle which reigns unrestrictedly in the id." (12, *Id and Ego*). The ego is based on the reality principle, whereas, superego is morality principle. Ego is another part of human personality which shows her ordinary social self that thinks, decides, feels and does everything by realizing its consequences.

Das autobiography speaks about her personality from the beginning. She is courageous, creative, intelligent and thoughtful. She expresses every bitter experience in autobiography instead of blurting them loud and hurting the family and friends. Her id personality is concerned with immediate pleasure, but later on she is guided by ego and superego personality. These principles work logically and consciously to deal with the external world in terms of sexuality. Das is conscious and sensitive in every situation even she does not have a happy married life. She cannot divorce her husband because she is socially and morally conscious about their family relationship which

will be broken after her divorce. She also realizes that broken marriage is “distasteful like attack of leprosy” (97). She also cannot get the other bride groom and will “misfit everywhere.” In chapter 25, she exposes her awareness and long lasting vision:

I could not admit to all that my marriage had flopped. I could not return home the Nalpat house a divorcee, for there had been good will between our two families for three generations which did not want to ruin. My granduncle, the poet Narayan Menon had married from my husband’s families and besides my best friend in the world, Malati, was a member of that family... a broken marriage is distasteful as horrifying as an attack of leprosy. If I had at that time to listen to the dictates of my conscience and I left my husband, I would find it impossible to find another who would volunteer to marry me. I was misfit everywhere. (97)

Das’s id personality always run to fulfill libidinal desires, but her ego personality does not let her do such social censored activities. During her extramarital relationship with Carlo, she accepts love from him. But she “blushed purple” when Carlo says “you can marry me” and requests her “to leave indifferent husband and come to my [Carlo] country” (115). She rejects his proposal and says “we can probably have a love affair, but I am not divorcing kind” (115). She remembers her two little son’s face and covers her id instinct with ego instinct.

Similarly, self-analysis is the dominant characteristics of ego and superego. She shows her capacity of self-analysis in Chapter 46 entitled, “The Columnist”. She reveals herself as a useless house wife:

I was useless as a housewife anyway. I could not pick up a teapot without gasping for breath. Illness and my writing helped me to turn in

to the island. People had to go out of the way to visit me. If someone who did not like me walked into my drawing room. I sensed the secret hostility and refused to see him or her. I withdrew my head into my closed quilt and remained in close bedroom. I wanted only love and kindness, hate of any kind would ruin my work. I did not have little strength to brush my hair. I was useless, but the writing was possible and certainly brought me happiness. (202)

Self-analysis is the medium to find out her negative and positive sides of her activities and its effect to other people who remains in her periphery.

The reality and morality principle repress her psychosexual feeling and experiences towards Carlo and other unnamed male partners. Gradually, she develops superego personality after she becomes ill. She discovered that “death was nothing but closing of the lotus at dusk and probably temporary”. She develops the superior view on death and reality. She further elaborates “I [she] have been obsessed with the idea of death. I (she) have come to believe that life is mere dream and death is the only reality” (213). Das realizes the truth of life and death. She shows her capacity of self-awareness which is the dominant feature of ego. She recognizes her responsibilities towards her sons and tries to fulfill their wishes. She writes her attempt to entertain her sons in chapter 31, “A Holiday in Panchgani”:

... I wrote a letter inviting my sons Monoo and Chinnen, to a tea party that was to take place on Saturday under the largest tree near the hotel’s wall I signs my name as squirrel, and immediately posted it. When my children received the letter, they clapped their hands in joy. When Saturday comes, I put them to sleep after lunch and arranged under the tree paper plates full of pastry and almonds. At four I wake

up the boys and dressed them in their red cardigans and took them to the party. (126)

Das explains her social self who devotes herself to make other happy without caring her illness. Her devotion towards family clarifies her victory of ego and superego personality over id personality.

To know about Electra complex, it is necessary to know Oedipus complex first. The Oedipus complex is the experience or feeling of a male child to have sexual relation to the parent of opposite sex. Oedipus is the Greek mythological character of 5th century BC who kills his own father Laius unknowingly and marry his own mother Jocasta. Freud uses this term first time in the *Interpretation of Dream* as “Oedipal desire”. Freud defines, Oedipal desire as “psychological phenomenon innate to human being, and the cause of much unconscious guilt” (296). Though, psychosexual development begins with oral stage, libidinal instinct develops in a child with phallic stage. Phallus stage includes the children of three to five. In this stage, the child develops an unnatural feeling of sexual desire towards his mother and hostility towards his father. The sexual drive is also called libidinal desire. Psychosexual development has particular significance. Firstly, in oral stage child gets sublime from breast feeding. Secondly, in anal stage a child gets satisfied by emptying his\her bowels. Similarly, in phallic stage a child takes his mother as the source of satisfaction. It is also known as the Oedipus complex. He takes mother a source of object of desire, but the presence of father obstructs him. The father becomes the rival of the child. The male child suffers from the fear of being robbed of their sexual organ called castration. According to Freud, “the Oedipus complex is brought about castration complex” (5, *Dissolution.*). Because of the fear of castration, the child diminishes the impression of the Oedipus complex and gradually employs a defense

mechanism of displacement. This process shifts his sexual desire from mother to other women in general. Regarding the idea of the Oedipus complex, Freud asserts in

Psychology of Love:

During the phase of normal Oedipus complex, the child is seen as being affectionately attached to the parent of opposite sex. While hostility predominates in his relation with the parent of the same sex, we have no difficulty in extrapolating from this result where boys are concerned. His mother was the first love object; she remains so, passionate and as his passionate striving are reinforced and he comes to a deeper understanding of the relationship between father and mother, the father is inevitably become a rival. (309)

The Oedipus complex is the attachment of a son to his mother and detachment to his father.

According to Freud “Oedipus complex can be enlarged to family complex” (271, *Introductory*). The birth of the newborn brother and sister create gaps between old child and parents as the new one overtake their place. This distance develops the sense of jealousy towards brother and sister. But envy between brother to sister and sister to brother gradually change into love relation between them.

According to Freud, Electra complex is “female Oedipal attitude”. Carl Gustave Jung defines Electra complex in *The Psychology of Unconscious* as, “the jealousy of a daughter towards mother is Electra complex, from the myth of Electra, who took revenge on her mother for the murder of her husband because she was in this way deprived from her father” (20). After birth, a female child attaches to the mother later on phallus stage, she knows that she is lack of penis. She blames her mother for her castration and devalues all the

women in general as they all are lack of penis. She attaches with a father and distracts from the mother. She wants to compensate loss penis by giving birth to a baby from her father. When she is not able to fulfill her desire gradually she moves to other male figures. Freud asserts in the *Psychology of Love* that “the child always blames mother not give her proper genital and also accuses “the mother has given the child little milk and not nursed it for enough” (317).

Kamala Das is also suffering from Electra complex. Das’s coldness towards mother is seen, when she calls her mother “vague” and spent most of her time “composing poems” without caring her Family and children (2). Das claims that the relation of her father and mother is “mismatched”. She marks her father and mother dissimilarity in chapter two “The Park Street”:

My mother is vague and indifferent and spent her time lying on her belly on a large four-poster bed, composing poems in Malayalam. We had not a full time maid at that time. So, we grew more or less neglected... my mother did not fall in love with my father. They were mismatched. But my mother’s timidity helped to create an illusion of domestic harmony which satisfied the relatives and friend. Out of such union were born the first two children my brother and I, bearing the burden of a swarthy skin and ordinary features. (5)

Das is explaining only the negative aspects of her mother. This proves that there is a hostile relation between Das and her mother. Freud believes that initially, a female child is attached to the mother. Later, in phallus stage her inclination towards father increases. Das glorifies her father, as he is the “supporter of Mahatma Gandhi” (4) and follows his rule of simplicity. After the marriage of her father, he “stipulated firmly that his wife was not to wear anything but khaddar preferably white or off

white” (3). She also praises her father hard working nature and his loyalty. She explains that, “the Nalpat family’s financial position at that time was precarious. All the jewelers had been sold for fighting off litigation and bankruptcy. My father was not an idle landlord. He worked for his living in Calcutta. This was a point in his favor” (5). Das valorizes her father at a greater range. She wants love from father more than that she expects something else from her father. In fact, she has a heterosexual inclination towards her father and her unconscious desire is to be close to her father. This is the consequence of penis envy. Das’s heterosexual inclination towards her father is seen when his father suffers from heart stroke. She writes in the subdivision of autobiography, “La Boheme”:

During the first week we received a telegram from my brother, which informed us that my father had collapsed with a heart attack. I took the first flight of home and reached Calcutta as soon as I could, to find my father lying drugged and unshaven on his bed in the corridor, facing the terrace. When he recognized me, he wept with emotion. For a month I stayed near him, sleeping on the terrace on a mattress laid out on the floor and looked after him soups and fruit juice. (154)

Das suffers from Electra complex in her whole life. Even having two sons still, she has a fixation towards the father. She cannot wait a single minute when she hears father’s sickness and remains with her father without thinking of her sons.

Girls blames her mother for her castration and devalues whole female as they are lack of penis. Das dislikes her mother along with her Ayah and mother in law. She says that she does not like her. Ayah is “vulgar and talkative woman” who liked to wander around making friends who “pay money for her delicious gossip”. She does not like her loud voice. She even does not like “the way she dressed”, “dark eye with

Kajal” and “mouth with beetle” (100). Similarly, she does not like her mother in law. Das asserts that she feels distressed when her mother in law sulked her “for spending too much time away from child and domestic responsibilities” (94). Anyway, she is not positive towards other females for her castration

The female child realizes her mother is the cause of castration. She shift’s her love and affection from mother to father. She develops hostile relations with her mother along with other woman since they have not a penis. Das wants to compensate it by giving birth to a baby from her father. In *My Story*, chapter 23, “Like a Toy, a Son” Kamala Das shows her penis envy when she predicts, “her baby is moving” in the womb:

The best way that she can be given to a teenaged girl is a live baby, a soft, smooth skinned doll that can bath powder and suckle to sleep... everybody flocked in then to admire the little one who had a high forehead and milky skin. I shrieked with delight when I saw him for the first time, I said “he looks so much like Lord Byron. I had wanted my son to look like him.” (88)

Das wants to overcome the anxiety of castration by giving birth to a baby. After her beginning of her periods she begins to fantasize herself as Kunti. For Jung, “fantastic thinking was seen to be scarcely conscious, but rose from unrealized wishes, desires and strivings which could only express themselves through veiled symbols in the form of fantastic structure not understood and not fully recognized (29)”. She feels happy because she is ready to be a mother and fulfills her desire and can regain the loss penis by giving birth to a son. In chapter 16, entitled “Mahabharata” Das speaks:

I felt happy to think that I could be a mother. I want to get a child for myself as fast as I could. I had heard from my grandmother the story of

Kunti, the mother of Pandavas and had been impressed with her method of getting sons. Kunti had prayed to the sun god to grant her a son and thus Karna, the beautiful one was born, wearing on her earlobes, Kundals that shone like the sun. After the bath, alone in my room, I bared my body to the sun and told the sun god that he ought to give me a son too. (59)

Das's is expressing a deep rooted desire for procreation, though she is under age, of giving birth to a baby. The desire of the unconscious mind to gain penis and a baby from her father.

The girl does not have castration complex. She has penis envy. This sort of envy force to have a baby from her father. She longs for love and affection from her father. When she does not achieve, it becomes "family complex" where attraction extends from father to brother. This process can be seen in Das inclination towards her elder brother. She takes him "a hero". She praises her brother in chapter 13 in "Lans Downe Road":

... as the children Calcutta fever attack us only simultaneously, so that we enjoyed the spell of rest, paint pictures together, seated on our sick bed and sticking stamps in our albums. If ever I had a personal hero in my childhood, it was my brother who stood first in every class in every school he went to, and begged all the prizes... I felt alone and lost for between us even in the silence. We shared was a pure kind of communication, interminable dialogues that went on and on like that of the wind with the earth or of the sun with trees. (48)

The unfulfilled desires to get love and care, Das shifts her attraction from father to brother. The unsuccessful attempt to get love and affection from brother create

anxiety upon her. She cannot fulfill her desires because of social norms and social standards. To achieve her desire for the phallus, she shifts her desire from her father to brother, then to other male, which is seen in chapter 16, “Mahabharata”:

At thirteen, I went to Malabar for my summer vacation, I fell in love with a student leader who had been jailed for his revolutionary activities. He did not reciprocate, for his only interest was political, philosophies and could quote effortlessly from their book. He had eyes that rolled upwards, showing only their whites whenever he grew excited. I tried to spend as much time as I could get in his company, but he did not once touch my head or show any particular fondness of me. (60)

The indifference of student leader creates obstacles to fulfill her desires. So, she shifts her interest to art tutor from student leader. She describes him as “pale-complexion and tall”. He wears the “loose clinging dress of the rich Bengali” (67). Das is fascinated by his dress up and behavior. She realizes that “I [Kamala] loved him and expresses her temptation to kiss his mouth” (68) but he rejects her love and “without speaking another word he took me [Kamala] to my house.”(70) Das desires still remain unfulfilled.

In the pressure of her family, she gets married. On the one hand, there is a huge gap between her husband and her, on the other hand, her tortured sexual life creates distraction from her husband. Das writes her husband sexual exploitation in chapter 22 “The Brutality of Sex”:

I took off my sari which was of heavy gold tissue and sat on the bed. Then, without warning, he fell on me by the extreme brutality of the attack. I tried unsuccessfully to climb out of his embrace. Then, bathed

in the perspiration and with my heart palpitating widely, I begged him to think of God. (84)

Das's reveals her husband's brutal conduct and sexual harassment. The regular sexual exploitation creates anxiety and frustration in her life.

To satisfy her infantile desire, she is involved in extramarital affairs. She develops her relation with Carlo. Because of social standards, norms, rules and regulation she cannot be together with Carlo but her sensual attraction towards other male remains same. She is fascinated with an "extremely handsome young man who walked from the khaar gymkhana". She feels happy when she sees his 'gloss of his skin and the beauty of his smile' (107). The shift of Das's affection to young, handsome man is the consequences of her husband's coldness towards her.

Electra complex in the case of Kamala Das has been handled safely. Her fixation with her father and indifference to the mother and separation from the brother create anxiety in her life. She goes on to search other male partners to overcome the lack. The pre-marital and post-marital relation helps her to seek the original feminine womanhood which provides the resolution of Electra complex.

My story is the documentation of psychosexual development of Das from childhood to adulthood. For Freud, there are five stages of sexual development: oral, anal, phallic, latency and genital stage. In this autobiography, Das expresses her development from phallic stage. Das begins to describe her life history from the age of six. She uses her memory to express her pathetic childhood, her unfulfilled sexual desires, her husband sexual abuse and her quest for love and affection. The issues of sex are not allowed to express in patriarchal society. She suppresses each and every event related with sex and sexuality. Later, through this autography, she explores her psychosexual development from childhood to womanhood.

From the very beginning of this autobiography, Das feels a sense of loneliness. Das used to write “sentimental poems” (8) to get rid of it. The sense of loneliness hunts her. The cold relation with her parents and her friends are also not seemed “to want my [Kamal] company” (9). Her growing sense of sensuous is seen when she expresses her infatuation toward opposite sex. She explores her craze towards Govinda Kurup. She is highly “infatuated with his charm” (19). Furthermore, she is also interested in other sexual life from her early age. She tells about her grand uncle’s sexual life which shows her maturity toward psychosexuality:

My grand uncle like to see women glamorized with jewels and flowers. His second wife, my favorite aunt, was never seen even at night without her heavy jewelry, all gem–encrusted and radiant, and the traditional cosmetics of the Nair woman, the dab of turmic on the cheeks, the sandal line on the forehead, the collyrium in the eye and the betel in the mouth... there developed between two a strong bond that was radically sex based. At night she enslaved him with her voluptuous body. So, she could well afford to humor all the day. Each night she came to our house accompanied by her maids and lantern looking like a bride. She walked up the steep staircase of the gatehouse to meet her famous husband in their lush room, kept fragrant with license and jasmine garland... (21)

Das’s has curiosity about other sexual life shows her inclination towards sex and sexuality from her early age.

Das, after having period she sees herself matured. She feels happy to think that “I [Kamala] could be a mother” (59). She also expresses her self-awareness towards her beauty. She mentions:

I began to pay more attention to my toilet. I brushed my hair regularly before going to bed and washed my face three times a day. If ever I discovered a pimple on my cheek, I tinted it pink with lipstick to make it a pretty pimple. I removed my glasses at the slightest at provocation to expose my eyes, which I thought were rather lovely. (60)

At the age of thirteen, she is attracted towards a student leader. She tries “to spend much of the time to get his company” but “he did not once touch my [Kamala] hand or show a particular fondness” (60). Similarly, her art teacher rejection to love, make her more conscious on a quest for love and sex.

Das’s early marriage and a huge gap between her and her husband forces to get matured in her adolescence period. Her adolescence mentality suffers by the strict rules and values of patriarchal society. As she opines “it was customary for Nair girl to marry when she is hardly out of her childhood and it was also customary for the much older husband to give her nude shock by his sexual haste on the wedding nights... in the orbit of licit sex, there seemed to be only crudeness and violence”(24). Das expects “warmth and companionship” and “hoped that he would remove with one sweep of his benign arms the loneliness of my [Kamala] life” (80). But her husband’s sexual exploitation forces “to be unfaithful to him, at least physically” (90). So, she goes on in the quest for love and sex which gives her solace in her flopped marital life. Her inclination towards the opposite sex like Carlo, Bricklayer, a young, handsome man, visitor in Mumbai and the doctor, shows her dissatisfaction towards sexual life. But, she is satisfied when she meets the older man at the airport. She describes her meeting with that person as:

At the airport, I collided with the elderly man who had once fascinated me just by turning back to glance darkly at me. He drew me to him as a

serpent draws its victim. I was his slave. On that night, I tossed about in my thinking of his dark limbs and his eyes glazed with desires. Very soon we meet and fell into his arms. (174) 'You are my Krishna', I whispered, kissing his eyes shut. He laughed. I felt that I was a virgin in his arms. I carried him with me inside my eyelids, the dark God of girlhood dream... there were eighteen mirrors in his room, eighteen ponds into which I dipped my hot brown body. Beyond that room was an enclosed verandah where we stood together to look at the sea. The sea was only our witness. How many times I turned to it and whispered. 'Oh sea, I am at last in love. I have found my Krishna.' (175)

My Story depicts Das's psychosexual development from childhood to womanhood. She is every time becomes ready to be against societal rules and values at the cost of sweet libidinal feelings. She tries to fulfill her sexual desire from phallic stage, but at last she succeeds to achieve it in the adult stage. Therefore, *My Story* is the documentation of her psychosexual development from childhood to womanhood.

Eros is the drive of life, pleasure, sexuality, creativity, self-satisfaction and species preservation. It is also called motivational force of life. Danial K. Lapsley, and Paul C. Stey, defines id as "One of the two classes of instincts that motivate behavior. It is described as 'life' Instinct, the 'preserver' of all things', incorporating the elements of sexuality and self-preservation" (1). The life instinct deals with basic survival and pleasure. These instincts are important for sustaining and preserve life. Freud calls it "binding together" (9, *Introductory*). It is better known for love or sex instinct. Freud uses sex in a broader sense. It is not only the genital intercourse, but also love, sympathy

and affection that cover the wide range of a life giving and sustaining process. It also includes artistic creation. For Freud, “sexual instinct has to be extended to cover many things which could be classed under there productive function” (45, *Essentials*).

Similarly, thanos is the death instinct. It is the drive of aggression, violence, destruction or death which promotes alcohol, drugs, poor diet, self-harming, suicidal attempt and death. Death instinct works in silence which follow the aim of leading the living creature into the death. For Freud, thanos “aims to lead what is living into an inorganic state”. So, he defines it as “destructive things” (4. *An Outline*). It deserves to be called death instinct. They manifest themselves as destructiveness or aggressive impulses. Living being is the fusion of life instinct and death instinct. But an individual ethos dominated by Eros gets victory in reproduction and who is dominated by instinct of thanos gets victory in the destruction. Freud draws the distinction between ego instinct and sex instinct as “the former pressure towards death and later towards the prolongation of life” (30, *Beyond the pleasure principle*).

Das is guided by life instinct and death instinct at the same time. On the one hand, Das frequently expresses her optimistic feeling which provides energy to involve in creative and productive activities. On the other hand, pessimistic feeling leads to destruct her life. Das begins her autobiography with pessimistic tone. “Indifference” and “busy” (4) lifestyle of her parents makes to feel lonely. She writes “sad poems about dolls who lost their head and had to remain headless for eternity” (8). She seems to be guided by death instinct. Even in her school picnic program, she feels herself lonely and wonders “why I [Kamala] was born to Indian parents instead of to a white

loneliness and goes to the cemetery. For her “it was possible to love the dead as deeply as I [Kamala] loved the living” because “from the dead no harshness could emanate and cruelty” (10). She regrets as she does not have any friend to whom she can really open up. Das is shifted from British school to elementary school of her village, it provides her little bit pleasure because at British school, she is dying of “cultural death, but in this school, I [she] felt getting reborn into another kind of world where the hard eyed British were no longer my [Kamala] co-revels” (19). She feels confident and can expose her creativity without fear of anyone. She writes in “Children Theater” chapter 10:

My best performance was in the role of the Moghul NoorJahan and my best scene the one in which I was shown his visiting the battle ground after the gory war was over. The cardboard elephant was struck to a couple, whom may have been proud of my verses” (9). She feels anxiety and stool on which I sat with my right leg thrown over the cutout... the posture was uncomfortable. But there was such a silence in the auditorium that it seems they had forgotten the fact that a kid was playing the queen role. I felt intoxicated with the warmth of their responses. (35)

Das’s attempts to sustain her life through creativity, even she has not a favorable environment to expose her intelligence.

Das’s feeling of loneliness, unhappy married life and frustration provide environment to write this autobiography. It is Eros. Life and death instinct are inseparable, but the domination of Eros, sustain life. As a typical teenage girl, she feels happy and romantic to be close with her friends, particularly, Velu, Govinda Kurup and Carlo. Her constructive force of life is seen when she tries to adjust with

hostel friends. “By the time the year was out I [she] had begun to like roommates and the boarding ceased to resemble hell” (49) but it remains no longer. Das falls ill and father takes her away to Malabar. She meets with student leader in Malabar. She is attracted by a student leader and wants to spend “as much time as I [Kamala] could get” (60). Das’s attraction to the opposite sex is her life instinct. She expresses her optimistic feeling when she wants to be sad like Bengali heroines but cannot. Das’s pleased life is seen in Chapter 16, “Mahabharata”:

All the heroine of Bengali novels were supposed to bear in their eyes a sadness which made them irritable to their heroes. I too tried to look sad but, it was a difficult task for there were so many things that made me burst into laughter, and the world seemed so young, so happy, and full of promises. (60)

Das’s attraction to opposite sex makes her delight. The ego instincts brings positive feelings in her life.

Anxiety, frustration and loneliness make her pessimistic in life. Before marriage, she cannot get love and care from her parents. After marriage, her husband exploits her physically and mentally. She suffers from depression and mental illness.

Das expresses her husband’s brutality of sex in chapter 22:

Wherever he found alone in a room, he began to bare my breast and if I did not, he turned crude and brutal. His hands bruised my body and left blue and red marks on the skin. He told me of the sexual exploits he had shared with some of the maidservants in Malabar. (79)

When his fiancée goes to Malabar her anxiety level increases. She “felt lost and unhappy” (79). She expected her husband “to be my [Kamala] father and mother. She wants companionship and warmth”. She does not want “rough hands riding up my

skirt or tearing up my brassiere” (80). Her tone is less cheerful and pathetic. The language and behavior of the Das is becoming depressed, cynical and tensed. According to Freud death instinct inclines towards aggression, dissolution and eventually death. Das’s husband’s indifference to the children and lack of time to the family creates anxiety. This frustration leads her for suicidal attempt. She expresses her desire to die in chapter 25, “A Desire to Die”:

My husband left for his office early morning before nine and returned at ten in the night after our son had fallen asleep in his room on the baby cot beneath which old ayah spread her old mattress. There is no opportunity for the father to get know the child, or to learn to regard him as a distant personality... whenever I lay clutching my husband’s feet at night, I felt that his love was never to be mine it had luckier takers. One night I felt my family sleeping and went up to our terrace to gaze down at the winding road that led up to Danda and the fishing colony. I wanted for a moment to fling myself down, to spatter myself down. (96-97)

Kamala Das’s has unsuccessful marriage. It forces her for suicidal attempt. But, her involvement in the procreation sustains life. She becomes happy “when I [Kamala] saw him [baby] for the first time.”(80). Energy of sex motive is the sustaining force of life. Sex is not only a genital intercourse, but also a wide range of life giving activities. Das’s life instinct starts to show its domination when she is attracted to other males. Among them young bricklayer is one. Her attraction towards the brick layer “who had come from another village on contract” (89). Das wants to keep him “as a pet” and asks “him to kiss on my [her] mouth” (90). Her longing for love and sex goes deeper as her life instinct becomes stronger. The young man’s every activity,

delights her. He even goes to the hospital when her son is admitted in the hospital. The love and care of Youngman make her feel better in her hard situation. She cries as he holds her “close to his chest and kissed my wet eyes and said everything will be fine darling” (108). These sympathetic lines waters her barren life. She in response whispers “I am yours, do with me as you will, make love to me” (109). This expression of love covers her death instinct. Growing interest towards sex and sexuality is seen as the dominance of Eros over thanatos. This incident generates love, sympathy and tenderness in her life. The concept of sexuality does not include only the reproductive function, it also includes the meaning of artistic creation. Das begins to write autobiography serially for a newspaper. Through this autobiography she exposes her anger, frustration and dissatisfaction. In fact, this autobiography heals her mental anxiety.

Smoking, alcohol, drugs, poor diet, self-harming and suicidal attempt all are included in thanatos. Das begins to drink when she becomes pregnant for the second time. To decrease her mental stress, she wishes to drink. She writes “... I told her that I had a craving drink some alcoholic beverage she made arrangements for smuggling a bottle into the house” (102). Das’s desire to drink alcohol paved her path to write poem all night. After drinking I [she] sat up the night, writing poetry which “soothed her nerves” (102). She becomes alcoholic, but writing process helps her life to live a successful life. She becomes a popular writer. Das becomes nervous, when she is admitted in hospital. She imagines, “if death touches me [Kamala], the fragrance will leave my body and in its place will be an unbearable stench. Even [Kamala] sons who kiss my cheek now will then fill with horror” (180). Despite of different problems in her life, she faces challenges bravely. This proves that Das life is led by Eros rather than thanatos.

Generally, inversion and perversion refer to the deviation from normal sex. They indicate abnormal and repulsive sexual behavior that are unacceptable to the external world. Inversion refers to sexual attraction between the persons of the same sex. Regarding *psychology of love* Freud asserts, “men whose sexual objects is not women but men and women whose sexual object is not men but women, such people are called ‘counter sexual’ or, more exactly inverts and the fact is inversion” (119). The characteristics of inversion depend upon time. There is no particular time for the occurrence of inversion. It occurs before puberty or after puberty. It may be happened for a certain period of time or for whole life. It may be the result of painful experiences with the same sex. Kamala Das’ attraction towards the same sex indicates that she also has the problem of inversion. She is deviated from the normal sexual object. Das’s fixation towards her hostel friend Raji is inversion. She says “I was extremely fond of Raji, who was very disdainful to others but very kind to me [Kamala]” (41). Similarly, Das’s meeting with “eighteen years old girl” and “felt instantly drawn towards her” shows her infatuation for women. In chapter 20, “A Brush with Love”, she praises her beauty:

She stood at the doorway, smiling at us, revealing a fetching gap between her front teeth and a dimple on her right cheek. She was tall and sturdy with tense masculine grace... when her eyes held mine captive in a trance for a reason that I could not fathom, I felt excited. Her skin was bronzed with the sun. She was like an animal that had exposed itself to the magnificent fury of the season. The rains and the harsh, dry winds that swept the sand of desert....” (74)

Das expresses her love and affection towards that girl. She exposes her homosexual relation as she says “she kissed my [Das] lips “and the events of the bathroom where

the girl took her to the bathroom and “coaxed me [Das] to take baths with her”. She feels joy as she finds themselves like “honeymooners” (75).

For Freud “libido change its direction to move towards the inversion, after the painful experience with the normal sex object” (120). Das’s painful relations with her husband forces to have homosexual relations. After engagement when Das’s fiancée sexually abuses her, she calls her girlfriend again. She says “she kissed my lips and “holds me close to her, she rubbed her cheek against mine” (80). Das’s husband’s brutal and cruel behavior diverts her from normal sexual life to inversion. The main reason for inversion is the lack of access to the normal sex. Das’s unfulfilled libidinal desire for father, brother, student leader and a bricklayer leads to have homosexual relations.

Deviations from sexual goals are called perversion. Generally, the normal sexual goal supposed to be the union of opposite sex genital organs which lead to the sexual satisfaction. Perversion refers to the inappropriate replacement of sexual objects. The substitute of the genitals with the certain parts of the body like mucous membranes of the mouth and the anus provides a sort of excitement and pleasure. Regarding Freud’s *Psychology of Love*, “perversion is either (a) anatomical transgression of those areas of the body destined for sexual union or (b) a lingering over the intermediate relation to the sexual object, which would normally be rapidly on the way towards the final sexual goal” (128). Kamala Das’s fear with a normal sexual goal and tries to get sexual pleasure from kiss, touch, and look shows her deviation from the normal sexual goal. The replacement of genitals by other body parts like an anus, mouth and foot is perversion. Das most of the time runs away from conventional sexual intercourse and feel happy and get pleasure from a

kiss, touch and interested in listening to other sex stories. During her hostel days she is closer to Annie, who makes fake letter about his boyfriend. Her all friend does not like Annie but Das always hears her fake stories. She says that Annie shows her a letter in which her boyfriend has written “about the round, smooth breast of Annie” (44). And the story of that boy who “climbed over the wall and came to my bed last night where all of you were sleeping.” She goes to meet Annie even her friend Sarada clarifies “she is living in a world of make believe and that all the letters are found to be her own writing” (45). Similarly, Das feels extremely happy even her son was admitted in hospital because young handsome man “held me [Kamala] close to his chest and kissed my [Kamala] eye”. It proves abnormal sexual goal provides her more satisfaction rather than natural ones. For Freud, both inversion and perversion are social censored behaviors as they encountered with the social norms and values.

A dream is the disguise form of repressed desire. When an individual falls asleep, his unconscious mind becomes active and dream emerges from the unconscious mind. So, interpreting dream is “to discover unconscious material” (97, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*). Generally unconscious mind is full of libidinal desires which are censored in real life. These desires get transformed into the different images and symbols through dreams. The desires are property of the unconscious mind which get an outlet through dream and gives relief to the psyche of the unconscious mind. AA. Brill writes in *Fundamental of Psychoanalysis*, “... the dream is a mere jumble, a senseless mechanism but that represents a hidden wish” (23). For Freud, “dreams bring the recollection which the dreamer has forgotten, which are inaccessible to him when he is awake. Dreams make an unrestricted use of

symbol, the meaning of which is mostly the parts unknown for the dreamer” (39, *Interpretation*). Das’s dream also expresses her wish out of access from the conscious mind. Her husband’s sexual exploitation every time hurts her. Neither she can forget brutal attack nor can say this incident to other. It remains in preconscious level. The event of engagement mind “the rape is unsuccessful, but he offered me when I [Kamala] expressed my fear that I perhaps not equipped for sexual congress” (84). This incident is repressed in the unconscious mind of the writer and sometimes comes in the conscious mind in the form of a dream. When her husband is not at home, she dreams of a rape attempt:

One night I was lying asleep there was a knock at my bedroom. Then the door opened. I saw a man approaching on my bed... I sat on my bed in shock and dazed with horror’ I am not going to hurt you’ said as he drew closer to me.’ Go away, please go away’, I cried, but my voice sounded weak even to my ears. (100). There was to be a rape scene. I have a headache, I was measurably ill. I said ‘be kind to me and leave me alone.’ he smelt of stale liquor and under his weight. My legs become frigid and I wished to raise myself to vomit. Soon enough, after an incomplete rape, he rolled out of my body and lay inert at the feet of the bed hugging my cold feet. He kissed my toes.’ Won’t you forgive me child? He asked me. I was silent ‘will you talk about this to people? He asked me. His mouth on my skin is hot. ‘I shall forgive you ‘I whispered, ‘but go away, go away’ [...] then he fell asleep. (101)

The dream is the outcome of Das’s psychosexual pain and anxiety. Her husband’s sexual abuse is reflected on her dream. The unsuccessful rape is the unfulfilled sexual desire. Vomiting is the symbol of fulfilling of sexual desire.

But Das cannot vomit, symbolize her unfulfilled sexual desire. In chapter 42, “Bombay Hospital,” she vomits “green, resembling tangled seaweeds, and afterwards she felt completely cured” (174). It means she fulfills her unfulfilled dark desires from many years.

Das’s loneliness and insecurity regularly hunt her. From childhood, she suffers from loneliness as her father is “busy” and mother is “indifference” (3). Even after marriage, there is no communication between Das and her husband. She is always suffering from loneliness from childhood to adulthood. Critic Sachidanandan says that “the childhood trauma and the oppressive sense of loneliness and alienation seems to have stayed with Kamala even in her adulthood (xiii) the dream of being lonely is expressed in her dreams. In chapter 32 entitled Dr. Mr. Karunkaran she expresses her dream in the form of a poem: when I sleep; the outside/world crumbles all contacts/ broken, so, in that longer sleep/only/the world shall die, and I/ Remain just being/ Also being remaining.

Das’s sense of alienation continuously hunts her. The dream of being alone is also the outlet of her broken relationship with her parents. As she begins to write a serial autobiography in the newspaper, her parents become harsh towards her. She feels lonely in the world and the dream symbolizes her inner anxiety of being alone without her husband and parents. Freud declares, dream, jokes, tongue slip accident is the manifestation of unconscious desire. The dream of Das is the manifestation of her desire and feeling of the unconscious mind which she cannot express to other.

Hysteria is a psychological disorder caused by the repression of desires. Hysteria is also called the outcome of childhood traumatic

experiences. It is described as the medical condition thought to affect women. The repressed desire of the unconscious mind of the individual leads to severe attacks, loss of consciousness and depression. The unfulfilled desires of the unconscious mind unknowingly affect the mind of the patient. Freud claims that in the case of common hysteria, it is not occurring by “single major trauma, we find number of partial traumas, forming of provoking causes” (8, *Studies*). Due to the lack of their fulfillment of sexual desires, Das suffers from hysteria. The unconscious desires unknowingly disturb her mental as well as physical condition. Lack of parental love and unsuccessful married life is creating problems in her life. Her behavior is going to be abnormal from normal. She wished to “escape from home and walk on and on until at last my [Kamala] feet reached the end of the world” (103). She begins to “shed clothes, regarding them as a traps” (104). Her sudden change of behavior shows her mental disorder. Regarding symptoms of hysteria Freud assert:

The symptoms which able to trace back of precipitating factors of this sort, includes neuralgias and anesthesia of very kinds, many of which had persisted for years, contractures epileptic convulsions, which every observer regarded as true epilepsy, petit oral and disorders in the nature of tic, chronic vomiting and an anorexia, carries to the pitch of rejection of all nourishment, various forms of disturbance of vision hallucination etc. the duration of the hysterical symptom and the single occurrence which provoked it is some events in childhood that sets up more or less severe symptom which persists during the year that follow. (7, *Studies on Hysteria*)

There is no particular symptom of hysteria. But, all the symptoms arouse with the effect of normal mental processes with abnormal behavior and diverted into the wrong path. It is different from people to people. Das's "nervous breakdown", "ache in the right side of abdomen, breast", "coughed throughout the night", "nausea", "loss of appetite", "swollen foot and face", and "irregular and painful menstruation" (200) shows that she is also the victim of hysteria. She is hunted by hallucination. She has false thinking of a man attempting to rape her and becomes afraid. It shows her repressed fear of her husband who abused her sexually. These all symptoms are the outcome of hysteria.

Hysteria is the traumatic experiences of childhood. In childhood, Das is devoid of parental love and care. The Oedipal desire for her father is creating anxiety and frustration from her childhood. Krohn claims that, "the unconscious wish that produce neurotic within this type of personality involving in triangular Oedipal rivalries" (3). Das's lack of friendly relation with her father, she had to loss wishes for love and a baby from her father. Later, with her husband also does not provide her love and care. He only takes her as a sexual object. Das feels "his [husband] love was never to be mine. It had luckier takers" (99). There is "silence between us [Das and her husband]. She breaks it for "little sons or about grocery bill" (187). The frustration of losing father's love and husband's suppressive action torture in her whole life. Freud claims "once the child become a woman and in contradiction of the demands of the childhood, has married an inattentive man who suppresses her will, unstangily exploits her work and expends neither affection, nor money upon her, illness becomes the only weapon with which she can assert herself in life"(34). The symptoms of Das are the result of her trauma created by her

husband's indifference on her and her child. He is busy in his work and does not give time to Das and his sons. So, she suffers from mental disturbance.

Dream and her death instinct also portray her psychological disturbances. Like dream and fantasy, these hysterical symptoms helps to analyze the psychical process of Kamala Das.

III. Manifestation of Psychosexual Aspect in *My Story*

My Story is the expression of Kamala Das's mental and emotional aspect of sexuality in patriarchal society. Das begins to write when she is admitted in hospital after a serious bout. *My Story* is the revolutionary product of patriarchal society as it breaks the canonical rules made by patriarchal society. Das is a female figure of patriarchal society. She has to follow patriarchal rules and regulation. She is treated as only a sexual object and has to repress her sexual desire for outer goodness. But, Das presents herself a revolutionary figure and reveals her psychosexual growth from her childhood to adulthood.

From her childhood, Das is the pathetic character. Firstly, she is the victim of colonialism. Secondly, she is deprived of love from parents and husband. Das tries to achieve love and care in her whole life. She seems to be primarily led by the pleasure principle. She always runs after immediate gratification. The sense of infatuation towards the opposite sex increases in such a scale that she seems to be animalistic in nature. She is sensually attracted to other male. Social conventions and social values do not matter to her. Untamed sexual passion leads her to make relation to opposite sex. But, her ego personality appears more potential than id to prove herself a responsible wife and mother. It particularly enables for self-analysis of the circumstances. Ego does not block from the fulfillment of her id, but it permits in the non-destructive patterns. The ego helps her to control her id instinct from her destruction.

When a girl child enters in the phallic stage, her distance from mother is increased and the distance to the father is decreased. Das develops the gap to the mother as she believes that mother has sent her far from her father and brother. Father and brother are her love objects. Quite contrarily, the mother becomes the object of

anger and dissatisfaction. As a result, the two wishes; possessing phallus and receiving a child from her father remains strongly in her unconscious mind. It prepares her for later sexual roles. This is true in the sense that she is also not free from this complexity. Das's unconscious desire to have a penis and receive a baby from her father is not complete. Such complexity of receiving father's love is replaced by the desire of receiving love from other male partners and giving birth to a son.

My Story is the documentation of her psychological development of Das from childhood to womanhood. The sense of loneliness and frustration of her unsuccessful married life creates various mental and physical problems. She is sometime guided by death instinct and sometimes by life instinct. Anxiety and loneliness force her for suicidal attempt, but her involvement in creative works, giving birth to three sons and at last realization of the value of life shows her victory over death instinct by life instinct.

The society in which Das is living is patriarchal based. The women of that society have to undermine their wish and desires. Her husband's sexual abuse and his indifference to her and her son's sons creates anxiety and loneliness in her life. She cannot express her flopped marital life to others. It remains in the unconscious mind and it comes as the dream when her conscious mind rest and unconscious mind wakes up. She dreams of rape attempt by an old man well as being alone in the earth. These dreams are the symbol of the problem she is facing from long time. Das's problems of the unconscious mind come outside in the form of a dream. Besides these, her fantasy of being "Kunti" and "Dropati" in the age of thirteen shows her interests in sexuality from her early age. Like Kunti, she wants son before married. Similarly, she imagines herself as Dropati who has five husbands. It shows her unconscious desires of the mind which is determining her way of thinking and behavior. Das is deviated from

both sexual goal and object. As she has homosexual relations, she is deviated from sexual object and her inclination toward sensual pleasure like kissing, touching, interesting in other sexual life shows her deviation from the conventional sexual intercourse. Her avoidance of normal sex and involvement in other sexual goal is perversion.

Das's unsuccessful married life and dissatisfied sexual life troubles her every time. She becomes abnormal from normal. Fear of death and hallucination hunts her. She is afraid in a dream too. She suffers from hysteria. As hysteria does not have particular symptoms, she is attacked by the different unidentified disease. Semi hypnotized, vomiting, being unconscious, headache, pain in body parts are some of the symptoms. The doctor suggests her to write so that she can reveal her inner anxiety and frustration and becomes a healthy personality.

Despite the male dominated society, Das cannot remain silent to express the psychosexual development of her life. As the woman of patriarchal society, she faces challenges in the way of her psychosexual development from childhood to womanhood. She suffers from different ups and downs in the course of her quest of love and sex. At last, her psychosexual desires become intact and Das develops herself as a healthy and normal personality. Finally, her psychic buildup has got the foundation of sexuality. Das develops herself a revolutionary writer of patriarchal society.