

CHAPTER FOUR

INNER WORLDS:

PSYCHOANALYSIS AND AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL

SUBJECTIVITY

“One way of thinking about psychoanalysis is to say that it is aimed at setting free the narrative or autobiographical imagination” (Coetzee and Kurtz 3).

“One’s real world is not what is outside him. It is the immeasurable world inside him that is real” (Das 103).

This chapter attempts to make a psychoanalytic reading of select Indian English self-narratives in order to understand yet another dimension of subjectivity formation and identity construction. Laura Marcus in her chapter “Autobiography and Psychoanalysis” from *Autobiography: A Very Short Introduction* (2018) traces the role of psychoanalytic elements like desire, dreams and the unconscious in some of the earliest autobiographers like Rousseau and Saint Augustine. As she writes, “The concept of unconscious mind in dreams or words through our symptomatic actions is found in Augustine and also seen in the writings of Romantic autobiographers like Wordsworth and De Quincey” (Marcus 54).

Indian researchers have often studied the Lacanian nature of psychoanalysis as instrumental in identity formation in the poetry of Kamala Das or in the fiction of Khushwant Singh. The thesis *Dynamics of Power and Sexuality in Selected Texts of Khushwant Singh: A Study* (2015) by Prasenjit Dutta Roy uses the psychoanalytic theories of Freud, Lacan and the power theories of Foucault, Althusser to explore the intermingling of power and sexuality in some of the novels and short stories of Khushwant Singh. Seema Rani studies Singh as a psycho-analyst in her article “Khushwant Singh as a Psycho-Analyst: A Study of his short stories Kusum and The Riot” (2016). Themes of female sexuality, love and desire in Kamala Das’ poems are dealt with in Bhoori Singh’s 2010 thesis *The Themes of Sexuality in the Poetry of Shiv K Kumar and Kamala Das*. Tawhida Akhter in the essay “Poetry of Kamala Das: A Psychoanalytic Review” (2013) offers a psychoanalytic reading of Das’ poetry. A psychoanalytic reading of the self-narratives of Indian English writers is also significantly essential in order to grasp the workings of their minds, dreams, desires, instincts and sexuality that lead to their imagined selfhood. The psychologist Erik Erikson studied Gandhi and his autobiography from Freudian angles in his work *Gandhi’s Truth: on the Origins of Militant Nationalism* (1969).

The primary texts selected for this chapter are Jawaharlal Nehru’s *An*

Autobiography (1936), Mulk Raj Anand's *Seven Summers: A Memoir* (1951), Dom Moraes' *My Son's Father* (1968) and *Never at Home* (1992), Kamala Das' *My Story* (1977), Khushwant Singh's *Truth, Love and a Little Malice* (2002) and Salman Rushdie's *Joseph Anton* (2012).

Relevant Theoretical Frame

Sigmund Freud analysed a scene relating to sibling rivalry in Goethe's autobiography from the Oedipal viewpoint. A critical analysis of da Vinci's childhood dream is also found in Freud's *Leonardo and a Memory of His Childhood* (1910). *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899) is a collection of a series of analysis of Freud's own dreams. In the chapter entitled "Dream as Wish-Fulfilment" Freud writes, "Our first dream was an act of wish-fulfilment; another may turn out to be a fear fulfilled; a third may embody a reflection; a fourth may simply reproduce a memory. So are there other wish dreams, or is there perhaps nothing but wish-dreams?" (Freud 137) The thought-content underlying the dream work is what Freud's theory is based on (148). Freud differentiated between the manifest content, which is the actual image and events of the dream and the latent content which is the hidden psychological meaning of the dream. Paul Ricoeur, Susan Sontag, Crick and Mitchinson have time and again critiqued Freud's dream interpretation. Crick and Mitchinson, for instance, disregard dreams as the way to the unconscious. In 1983, in a paper published in the science journal "Nature", Crick and Mitchinson put forth a reverse learning model which likened the process of dreaming to a computer in that it was "off-line" during dreaming or a specific phase of sleep. According to the model, one dreams in order to forget and this involves a process of 'reverse learning' or 'unlearning'.

Freud elaborates on infantile sexuality, sexual aberrations, libido, adolescent sexual identity in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905) trying to focus on repressed childhood sexuality and its connection with the unconscious. In the essay "Infantile Sexuality" Freud mainly argues that children have sexual urges which lead to the development of adult sexuality through psychosexual development. He throws enough light on the significance of childhood for the origin of sexual life and the libido fixated self. For Freud, libido is far more than mere pleasure—it is rather a life drive for self preservation.

The nature and roles of ego, id and superego in identity formation are best explicated in Freud's *The Ego and the Id* (1923) "The ego represents what may be called reason and common sense, in contrast to the id which contains the passion," writes Freud (25). The function of instincts and drives in the unconscious as well as the conscious, their role in controlling the libido, guilt, morality towards personality formation find special focus in this collection of essays. Freud and his ideas have, however, been critiqued time and again for being male-centric, self-centric, subjective and generalized. Leonardo S. Rodríguez aptly opines in his essay "The Oedipus Complex from Freud to Lacan" (2016), "...the Oedipus complex designates a psychological drama that may well be typical, but which as a personal drama is not universal, as it evolves according to a number of variations" (Rodríguez 10).

Jacques Lacan again presents a revisionary reading of the psychoanalytic concepts of Freud. Ideas from structuralism, psychology, existentialism and philosophy together contribute towards the formation of Lacanian psychoanalysis which throws considerable light on the nature of ego and "I". Lacan writes in his essay "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience" (1966):

The mirror stage is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation— and which manufactures for the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality that I shall call orthopaedic—and, lastly, to the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject's entire mental development. (Lacan 3)

The ego according to Lacan is only an alienated mirror image of the self which is actually fragmented and not unified. The mirror stage of Lacan occurs roughly between the ages of six to eighteen months when the infant strives to recognize itself through the whole image. It echoes Freud's stage of primary narcissism. As Sean Homer explains in *The Routledge Critical Thinkers Edition on Jacques Lacan*, (2005) "The mirror image, therefore, anticipates the mastery of the infant's own body and stands in contrast to the feelings of fragmentation the infant experiences. What is important at this point is that

the infant identifies with this mirror image” (Homer 25). Clarifying Lacan’s stance he further writes, “The function of ego is, in other words, one of mis-recognition, of refusing to accept the truth of fragmentation and alienation” (25). The “I” in the mirror stage thus entails a constant struggle between the ideal, imaginary gestalt and the fragmented reality, giving rise to the alienated ego. In other words, Lacan’s “Imaginary stage” is significant to metaphorically study imagined self-perception, identification through mirror reflection.

Lacan placed the greatest emphasis on the role of language in psychoanalysis and the unconscious in the 1950s. His papers “The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis” (1952) and “The Insistence of Letter in the Unconscious” (1957) best elucidate this. He argues that the unconscious, “I” and ego are all constructions of language and that we are subjected to the symbolic order. Lacan viewed subjectivity as the discourse of the Other—a point very vital for autobiographical study as well. The Other for him stands for the discourse and desire of those around us. Clarifying Lacan’s formulation of the “I” in symbolic stage Sean Homer writes, “Lacan argued that the ‘I’ in speech does not refer to anything stable in language at all. The ‘I’ can be occupied by a number of different phenomena: the subject, the ego or the unconscious” (Homer 45). Further he opines, “Lacan de-essentializes the ‘I’ and prioritizes the symbolic, the signifier, over the subject. It is the structure of language that speaks the subject and not the other way around” (45). The term Other would be used in the Lacanian context in this chapter to mean the discourse and desire of those around.

The chapter also aims to study the role of trauma, death instinct in the construction of autobiographical subjectivity. Freud introduced the term “death instinct” in his essay “Beyond the Pleasure Principle” (1920) where he dwells upon how experience of trauma repeats itself knowingly or unknowingly. Freud calls this experience “traumatic neurosis”, an unwished for repetition of trauma as a result of some risk to life (Freud 18). Cathy Caruth in her work *Unclaimed Experiences: Trauma, Narrative and History* (1996) theorizes the belated impact of trauma on the human mind with Freud and Paul de Man as her references. She defines trauma as an “overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which response is delayed, uncontrolled and repetitive” (Caruth 11). She argues how a whole new

perspective on history and subjectivity is imparted by the experience of trauma.

For Lacan, Oedipus complex and phallus both signify symbolic structures and metaphors. He conceptualizes “desire” as a much broader and more abstract term than that of Freud’s wish or “libido”. Desire according to him always means a kind of lack in the subject and the Other. To quote Lacan from his Seminar XI in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, “The desire of the Other is apprehended by the subject in that which does not work, in the lacks of the discourse of the Other...” (Lacan 228). The lack is what, according to him, leads to the creation of desire. Moreover, elaborating this, Sean Homer aptly notes, “To become a subject, one must take a position in relation to the desire of the Other” (Homer 74). Freud’s psychoanalysis thus takes a structuralist and phenomenological turn through Lacan’s intervention. While Freud conceptualized the unconscious as being beyond language, Lacan believed the unconscious to be structured like language. Shoshana Felman writes in “Beyond Oedipus: The Specimen Story of Psychoanalysis”(1983), “Lacan, on the other hand, strives to make the psychoanalytic movement recognize what it misrecognizes, and thus reintegrate the repressed—the censored Freudian text—into psychoanalytic history and theory” (90-91). Further, identifying the contradiction in the theories of these two psychoanalysts Kay Stockholder writes in the article “Lacan versus Freud: Subverting the Enlightenment” (1998), “Lacan's conception of language, integral to all his thought, is at odds not only with Freud's conception, but entirely undermines Freud's essentially Enlightenment world” (Stockholder 361). However, using both Freudian and Lacanian tools as yardsticks, this chapter aims to study the role of psychoanalytic tropes in the construction of autobiographical subjectivity.

Freudian analysis of psychosexual development and Lacanian reading of “objet petit a”

The pleasure principle which Freud regards as the driving force of id or the unconscious is found dominant in the self construction of many writers like Mulk Raj Anand, Dom Moraes. Anand’s *Seven Summers: A Memoir* is replete with instances of childhood sexuality, fantasies, Oedipus complex, thus making it a rich text for a psychoanalytic reading of autobiographical subjectivity. Saros Cowasjee writes in the “Introduction” to this memoir that *Seven Summers* recreates, in Anand’s own words, “the first seven

years of my own half unconscious and half conscious childhood” (Cawasjee ix).

The psychosexual development of Anand’s mind can be witnessed from his obsession with his mother’s body and the sibling rivalry which accounts for the overwhelming influence of the Oedipus complex. Anand relates how as a child of two-three years he was filled with jealousy for his brothers Prithvi and Ganesh because of their closeness to his mother. A comprehensive study of sexual manifestation of childhood, the existence of sexual impulse in Freud’s essay “Infantile Sexuality” can be best explained through Anand’s childhood experiences. According to Freud, a child’s pleasure principle and sexual gratification get expressed through “autoeroticism”, like thumb-sucking or sucking mother’s breast. Time and again Anand relates instances of sucking his mother’s breast along with his siblings. To quote Freud, “The sexual gratification originates during the taking of nourishment” (Freud 62).

As a small child, Anand presents sexually charged depictions of many elderly women like that of aunt Aqqi, aunt Devaki and Gurdevi. He intensely describes their bodies, looks and colour from the viewpoint of an adult, despite being a child narrator. Relating his experience with aunt Aqqi Anand writes, “As aunt Aqqi bent down to kiss me, I smelt the acrid smell of her armpits and tried to disentangle myself from the coils of her embrace. But she pressed me to her bosom. And soon I was filled with the sense of a rich, luscious young body...” (Anand 14). Again, his attraction towards the middle aged woman Gurdevi is evident when he says, “Even for so little a child, I was conscious of the sensuous pleasure of being fondled by Gurdevi” (16). Yet another instance of sexual fantasy is seen in his encounter with aunt Devaki, “...hard as two mangoes were her breasts as she pressed me to her bosom to soothe me...” (Anand 24).

All these instances reveal the libido centric bent of the author’s mind where the id or unconscious played the vital role. The fantasies repressed in Anand’s mind seep through the narrative of this memoir. As he grew up into an adult, the ego and super ego gradually took shapes and nullified the urges of infantile sexuality or Oedipus complex. A picture of his half conscious childhood speaks out a lot about the role of repressed desires and fantasies in the construction of the author’s identity. Similar psychosexual orientation also appears in Dom Moraes’ memoir *My Son’s Father*. He recounts how at the age of ten he was overpowered with sexual fantasies for an aunty

aged about thirty. He depicts his attraction towards her breasts as objects of desire. To quote him in this context, “Sex was very much on my mind at sixteen...Aunt E in fact remained the centre of my diffused lust” (Moraes 104). He further relates his overwhelming lustful inclination towards women in Rome at one instance.

In the words of Lacan, these writers therefore always experienced a kind of lack of which the women and their body parts served as the objects of desire. In Lacanian context, the name of the father plays an important role in the formation of the Oedipus complex. As Sean Homer writes in the essay “The Oedipus Complex and The Meaning of the Phallus”, “‘Name-of-the-Father’ is a signifier that breaks the mother/child couple and introduces the child into the symbolic order of desire and lack” (Homer 51). Lack and desire form the root of their sexual longings since childhood. A similar vein runs in R. K. Narayan’s memoir too. In the ninth chapter of *My Days* the psychoanalytical tropes of lack and Lacanian desire for the Other become explicit when Narayan narrates how repeatedly he used to fall in love as a young boy. The imagination of lack is echoed when he says that he suffered from “a phase of impossible love-sickness” (115). He expresses a “longing for love” in a society where girls were only meant to be treated as sisters. For him, they became objects of desire: “Any girl who lifted her eyes and seemed to notice me became at once my sweetheart, till someone else took her place” (Narayan 115). A girl in green sari caught his deep attention followed by his obsession with another girl on the terrace and then his devotion towards a pen friend before he finally found the love of his life in Coimbatore whom he eventually married.

Dom Moraes’ dominant id or libido centric self is witnessed whenever he brings in references of sexual inclination towards women at different phases of his life. For instance, his Oxford days were marked by physical intimacies with many young girls and women, which even hindered his study of English literature there. Moreover, even during his visit to India with his wife Judy and son, he narrates instances of being fixated to other women like his friend Lily and her physical appearance. Again, during his visit to Kathmandu, Moraes got into an extramarital affair with a young English researcher. As a result of this, he narrates how his relationship with his wife Judy got doomed. To this list of “objet petit a” then got added the actress Leela Naidu who became his second wife. His lack thus shifted from one lover to another, one signifier to another, the desire being never fulfilled.

The psychosexual development of Khushwant Singh can be traced from his very childhood, as he recounts in his autobiography *Truth, Love and a Little Malice*. He begins his account acknowledging how he had become an “inveterate voyeur” even at the age of four. Elaborate depiction of women’s body and sexuality is something that recurs all throughout his self-narrative, establishing the role of libido and pleasure principle in the construction of his subjectivity. Infantile sexuality is equally evident in Singh’s identity as in the narratives of Mulk Raj Anand and Dom Moraes.

Remembering his formative years of life Singh is seen mostly recounting the development of his sexual desires in the chapter “Infancy to Adolescence: School Years”. The very first paragraph of this chapter manifests Singh’s obsession with his phallus and libido. Through Lacanian lens, this only implies Singh’s identification with lack and sexual difference which later recur throughout the narrative. He identifies his growing manhood with the capability to impregnate women by fulfilling his lack. Singh portrays a bigger picture of sexuality of his school friends too, apart from his own self. In fact, the repeated and explicit depiction of male genitals and female body exemplify his overpowering drives which he tried to channelize through his autobiography and such other literary works. “I grew from a granny-loving child to a sex-obsessed adolescent”, (27) writes Singh. Moreover, narrating his childhood fantasies he expresses, “I developed a compelling desire to see women in the nude” (Singh 28). Time and again he details elaborately his sexual encounters with varied women—his acquaintances and also prostitutes. His obsession with sexual instincts, libido and women as objects of desire are further reinforced in his literary compositions like *The Company of Women* (1999), *Sex, scotch and Scholarship* (2012), *Love and Sex: Selected Writings* (2014), *On Women: Selected Writings* (2014). It seems appropriate to bring in Freud’s theory of sublimation from his work *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1929) in this context. To quote Freud, “Sublimation of the drives is a particularly striking feature of cultural development, which makes it possible for the higher mental activities— scientific, artistic and ideological—to play such a significant role in civilized life” (20). He explains that libido or unfulfilled urges of the unconscious is redirected towards positive and socially acceptable behaviors through sublimation. Writing extensively on all the women he met channelized Singh’s endless desire through sublimation.

In Lacanian understanding, as he writes in Seminar XI, “Man’s desire is always the desire of the Other” (Lacan 235). Lacan further writes, “A lack is encountered by the subject in the Other, in the very intimation that the Other makes to him by his discourse” (Lacan 228). The lack which Kamala Das experienced in the discourse and actions of her husband and their family life led to her desire of the Lacanian Other. It was always the desire of the Other that recurred through her life. She experienced lack in her husband and in his discourse, which in turn compelled her to constantly defer her lover and seek for the Other.

According to Das in *My Story*, her husband always craved for only physical fulfilment in their conjugal life. As she writes in the chapter called “The Brutality of Sex”, “I was at that time deeply in love with him and would have undergone any torture to be able to please him, but my body was immature and not ready for lovemaking. For him such a body was an embarrassment...” (Das 72). She often regards loveless physical communion with her husband as “rape-like”. She discovered a lack of love and understanding in him at every stage of their marital life. This made her obsessed with having a lover, whose identity and nature she herself was never certain of. The lack she found in him made her desire for it even stronger. In Das’ words:

I yearned for a kind word, a glance in my direction. It became obvious to me that my husband had wished to marry me only because of my social status and the possibility of financial gain. A coldness took hold of my heart then. I knew then that if love was what I had looked for in marriage I would have to look for it outside its legal orbit. I made up my mind to be unfaithful to him, at least physically. (Das 75)

Chapters like “A Greed of Love” reveal her obsession to find a lover. Her model of the ideal lover is constantly deferred—the chain of signification where the lack is never ending. She mentions her different encounters with lovers in her chase for the same—many of them often seeming imaginary. Her extra marital love-making with her cousin at her grandmother’s place, her affair with her pen-friend Carlo are some of the many signifiers in her desire for the Other to satisfy the lack. Her subjectivity is thus continually signified by the lack. Towards the end of the book, Das turns to Lord Krishna as her imaginary partner, for love and companionship.

Merrily Weisbord in *The Love Queen of Malabar* writes how she found it difficult to reconcile with what Kamala expressed to her at a later date as opposed to what she wrote about her husband twenty years ago in *My Story*. She regarded her experiences with her husband as rape. Weisbord was rendered puzzled by Das' paradoxical reactions. Das sought for a spiritually rich nature of intimacy very paradoxical in nature. Her idea of love and love making grew from the Hindu prayer book *Gitagovinda* as she relates to Weisbord in one of the conversations. Her concept of "beautiful love" often seems obscure. Most of her love poems were about her husband's boss whom she considered to be her true lover. Her love for him as if compensated the void in her marriage. Weisbord was amazed by the "recklessness of Kamala's desire" (37). She negates the idea of Kamala being seen as the "alluring other" by many Indian men. "In her mind, love was associated with tragedy and beauty, not crude marital duty, and she yearned to be Anna Karenina, Madame Bovary, or Juliet for a love-crossed Romeo" (Weisbord 36).

Kamala wished to breakthrough from the objectification and loveless intimacy she experienced in her marital life. She looked for intelligent love which would educate her, inspire her for her poetic ventures. Her search for such a lover made her switch from one to another throughout her life. She shared with Weisbord how her husband's boss educated her in various ways. Sadiq Ali sang Urdu poetry to her and spoke passionately about love. The ideal love relationship for her was never the one which included penetrative sexual intimacy as inferred by Weisbord too. "She says her husband never really slept with her but always with an imaginary male lover" (127).

However, imagination always overpowered Das' love relationships. As Weisbord observed, "It is difficult to separate sexual fact from fiction in Kamala's life, and critics still argue about whether the men in *My Story* are imagined or real" (200). After meeting her Muslim lover Das herself regarded most of her affairs to be imaginary: "I had imagined love affairs but I never had what I imagined before" (qtd. in Weisbord 145). It is therefore very difficult to gauge the nature of Kamala's relationship with her lovers when imagination often took the front seat. Her conversion is yet another instance of her attempt to break free from a restricted space in the Hindu society where a widow was often looked down upon as an outcast. Her ardent love for Krishna even shifted towards Mohammed later. The desire and discourse of the Other

in the symbolic order creates the unconscious in Lacanian study of the psychoanalytic subject. As Terry Eagleton observes while analyzing Lacan, “The unconscious is, so to speak, 'outside' rather than 'within' us — or rather it exists 'between' us, as our relationships do” (Eagleton 150). The Lacanian subject gets manifested in Rushdie from the very beginning of the memoir when he is given death sentence by Ayatollah Khomeini. The predominance of the Other in the symbolic structure is echoed when Rushdie writes, “Soon enough the language of literature would be drowned beneath the cacophony of other discourses, political, religious, sociological, post-colonial, and the subject of quality, of serious artistic intent, would come to seem almost frivolous” (Rushdie 114). The cacophonous discourses invariably echo Bakhtinian polyphony and heteroglossia. India was the first country to follow the discourse and ban the book. Khushwant Singh was one of the journalists to call for its ban in *Illustrated Weekly of India*. An overwhelmingly positive response from India on *Midnight's Children* (1981) made Rushdie desire the same in case of *The Satanic Verses* (1988). This instance exemplifies how the desire of the Other made him desire for more. As Lacan conceptualized in *Ecrits*, “If desire is an effect in the subject of the condition that is imposed on him by the existence of the discourse, to make his need pass through the defiles of the signifier, it must be posited that, produced as it is by an animal at the mercy of the language, man's desire is the desire of the Other,” (201). Religion is a significant Other towards which he directs his desires, by attacking the same in his book. Rushdie's *Haroun and the Sea Stories* (1990) was the result of his son Zafar's desire to have a book written specifically for him by his father.

His unconscious became the manifestation of the desire of the Other as he became a complete puppet in their hands following the accusation on his book. He was left with no freedom of speech or action. An exhausted Rushdie expresses, “His life and death were both becoming other people's property. He was a fair game” (Rushdie 183). One half of the world wanted Rushdie to apologize for his wrongs—they wanted their desire to become his. One such instance is when “The Daily Telegraph” published the results of a Gallup poll where the majority of respondents agreed that he should apologize for his “misdeeds” (242).

Rushdie had to succumb to the worst circumstance when the Egyptian President Zaki Badawi urged him to reclaim and reaffirm his Muslim identity by signing a

document, promising a worldwide campaign to lay the fatwa issue to rest. They somehow eagerly wanted Rushdie to adhere to their desires, as he writes, “They wanted to acknowledge him as a member of the Muslim intelligentsia. That was their most earnest desire” (Rushdie 274). He, however, signed the document very unwillingly, conforming to the symbolic structure, ending up guilt-stricken later. They thus forced him to call himself a devoted Muslim rather than a secular humanist. After ten years of his fatwa, Imam Bukhari along with other Muslims fiercely opposed Rushdie’s Indian visa. “Imam Bukhari said that Muslims would ‘object according to the constitution’ but if some devout Muslim decided to kill the blasphemer he would have the support of all Muslims” (Rushdie 570). The symbolic structure in the world as the Other thus dominated him and his unconscious yet again.

Lacan’s “objet petit a” refers to a constant sense of lack we experience in our lives. In the words of Sean Homer, “The *objet a* then is at once the void, the gap, the lack around which the symbolic order is structured and that which comes to mask or cover over that lack” (88). Taking Rushdie’s love relationships into consideration, the lack seems to linger from one lover to another—Clarissa, Marianne, Elizabeth to Padmalakshmi. They all assume the role of “objet petit a” at some point of his life although the lack remains and Rushdie’s desire is never fully realized. “L’objet petit à” is that other that the subject yearns for which he thinks might complete him. It may be personified in a real person (a “love object”) but it is significantly psychical. Martin Murray also clarifies that Lacanian “objet a” refers to an object of desire somewhat similar to Freud’s fetish (Murray 148). The feeling of lack which occurs since infancy as a result of detachment from mother continues to recur in many other forms in all the future relationship he has with the women.

Rushdie in *Joseph Anton* glorifies the unique physical features of his first wife Clarissa Mary Luard which drew him towards her—her “green eyes” or “her tightly curled russet hair”. However, their bond of love, marriage, parenthood eventually ended in bad terms. Initially each other’s object of desire, twelve years after their marriage Rushdie and Clarissa discovered lacks within themselves. Clarissa lacked interest in many things which he favoured, like that of staying in a city life. Yet another difference between them crept up as a result of her inability to conceive a second child owing to his genetic disorder. That in turn led to almost an end of their conjugal life and

physical bonding. Rushdie acknowledges how a lack of sexual interest led him shift his desire towards another woman, the Australian writer Robyn Davidson. She became his next “objet petit a”, “They were strongly attracted to each other but in every other way incompatible” (Rushdie 67).

He regarded his marriage with the American novelist Marianne Wiggins to be a mistake just after a year of their togetherness. He continued to like her intelligence, wit, beauty but found something lacking and enigmatic about her every time. “But she had become mysterious to him and sometimes he thought he had married a stranger. A woman in a mask” (11). Pointing to his never ending desire and lack, Marianne once told Rushdie, ““You are always talking about what you have lost. But it is obvious how many things you have gained”” (105). The marriage later ended on a very ill note with Marianne falsely accusing him of domestic violence. This is clearly evident of how his chasing for the object of desire always remained incomplete. Despite a bitter ending of their relationship, he still depicts how he missed Marianne, the feeling of lack being still on. The next signifier in this chain was none other than Elizabeth West. Yet another new connection and spark marked the meeting of Rushdie and West. The new object of desire in the form of West again began temporarily fulfilling his lack. This unsatisfied lack or “objet petit a” is reinforced when Rushdie himself acknowledges, “No woman’s love could easily assuage the pain of so many ‘black arrows’. There was probably not enough love in the world to heal him at that moment” (Rushdie 264). Black arrows naturally refer to the charges imposed on Rushdie. Similar to the instance in case of Clarissa, differences began to creep up between Elizabeth and Rushdie when she was unable to conceive a second child after Milan. The former desire was then overpowered by distance between them. Moreover, his utmost desire to settle in New York as against Elizabeth’s wish to stay in England bridged a huge gap in their love story leaving Rushdie conclude, “Sometimes, love was not enough” (561). However, for the lack of love and broken relationships, he perceived himself as considerably responsible when he writes, “Whatever wounds his life had inflicted on him, the wounds he inflicted on Clarissa and Elizabeth were worse. He had loved them both but his love had not been strong enough” (Rushdie 568). The last one in this chain of signification was the Indian actress Padmalaxmi whose beauty and charm dragged Rushdie from Elizabeth and his family. Padmalaxmi being the new object of love and

desire, Rushdie divorced Elizabeth after eight long years of their marriage. He significantly writes, “‘You saw an illusion and destroyed your family for it’, Elizabeth would tell him, and she was right. The Phantom of Liberty was a mirage of an oasis. She seemed to contain his Indian past and his American future” (578). Again, not many years past their union did Rushdie began discovering traits of selfishness, competitiveness in Padma, labeling their relationship as unstable and illusory. “There were many years when he thought of it as a great love affair, a grand passion, and so, he believed, did she. Yes, it was unstable, and yes, perhaps it was doomed...” (607) writes Rushdie on his affair with Padmalaxmi. Lack therefore crept up again in the chain of signification.

Rushdie had dreams of his father following the latter Anis Ahmed Rushdie’s death. Those dreams were just opposite to the kind of relationship that he actually shared with his father—the ideal good relationship that he otherwise desired and wished for. He writes, “In those dreams he was invariably affectionate, witty, wise, understanding and supportive: the best of fathers” (Rushdie 88). This is a clear instance of Sigmund Freud’s interpretation of how dreams perform the role of wish fulfilment (Freud 137). Rushdie never had a healthy relationship with Anis since his boyhood. This owed to the fact that his father often drank heavily and spoke foul besides condemning Rushdie’s aim to become a writer. He also mentions of having dreams of vindication where his wrongdoers apologized him. This is yet another instance of dreams as mediums of repressed wish fulfilments.

Moraes’ subjectivity is also intertwined with a feeling of lack—within himself, and in his friendships, relationships. “I felt that something was lacking in most of my friendships, because in few of them did I find people with any true awareness of the world...” (Moraes 22). He yearned to be an ideal husband but some feeling of lack always hindered his path. He is found accusing his own drunk, detached nature for his troubled relationship with his first wife Judith. His inability to compose poetry during a particular longer phase of his life added to his constant feeling of lack: “I still couldn’t produce any poetry. I scribbled bits and pieces down, but I knew that they were uniformly terrible, and my hand seemed to have lost its power to fit pieces together on the page. My personal life was far from satisfactory, partly as a result of this” (Moraes 124). The void in his poetic bent of mind ruined his personal life as well as his

psychological stance.

Khushwant Singh's autobiography portrays one of the best examples of Lacan's formulation of lack and "objet petit a". Since his childhood Singh perceived women as objects of desire. He mentions of a nurse who developed his conviction that women were objects of love and lust. It was a never ending lack for him, shifting the desire from one woman to another in the chain of signification. Talking of his relationship with the elderly lady Roma Biswas he narrates, "This was not even true love: just the explosive lust of a teenager for an older woman..." (Singh 49). Explicit depiction of sexual encounter with a prostitute, Lilian Booth, Marie, Barbara, Mae West, Marcia Graziano recur throughout his autobiography.

Singh is found overwhelmingly overpowered with his phallus, thus symbolizing the lack and desire of the Other that constructed his subjectivity. Many a times in the autobiography he brings in the reference to penis or phallus in some context or the other—instances of the nurse and the prostitute taking his penis in their hands, his friend M having a small penis, Shah's uncircumcised penis. His identity is therefore fixated on his phallus, signifying a constant lack in Lacanian interpretation.

The Lacanian idea of lack features in a metaphorical manner in Jawaharlal Nehru's autobiography where the lack is prevalent in Nehru's perception of his own self and identity. He always assumed a lack in his understanding of India and in his connection with the masses. He felt somewhat alienated from his countrymen due to some incomprehensible reasons. This is witnessed when he asks himself in *The Discovery of India* (1946), "Did I know India?" (Nehru 41) He thus acknowledges that he was lacking in his comprehension of India. He felt alienated as an outsider, despite his Indian origin. Although seemingly unified, he experienced a fragmented self from within. Nehru however tried his best to overcome his lack through Mahatma Gandhi. Knowing India and imagining his Indian self was something impossible without Gandhi. Nehru's identity in particular and the identity of the masses in general could not even be imagined without Gandhi and his overwhelming philosophies:

Always we had the feeling that while we might be more logical, Gandhiji knew India far better than we did, and a man who could command such tremendous devotion and loyalty must have something in him that corresponded to the needs

and aspirations of the masses. If we could convince him, we felt we could also convert these masses. (Nehru 268)

He therefore inevitably required the contribution of Gandhi in completing or fulfilling his identity as an Indian. Gandhi stood as the voice of the masses, as the peasant man who could only bring together that class of people. Nehru saw in Gandhi a spiritual and mythical counterpart which was lacking in his own self. The former, however, also critiques many of the primitive, metaphysical ideas of the latter to the extent that Nehru even mentions of discouraging Gandhian models once independence was attained. (Nehru 79) So, interpreted symbolically, through Lacanian lens, Gandhi served as the lacking object of desire for Nehru—as the signifier which was both sought after and deferred.

Nehru's *Autobiography* that ends in 1936 with a postscript five years later talks about his bonding with only one woman, his wife, Kamala Nehru. In the postscript of the book he expresses how the sudden death of his wife and his mother dawned in him “a sense of frustration and suppression” (621) and how he became “a solitary figure in public life” (621). A sense of lack dawned upon him and he felt alienated. It was only after almost a decade that he developed strong friendships with some leading women political figures like Lady Mountbatten and Padmaja Naidu. *i (sic) was Nehru's shadow: From the Diaries of KF Rustamji* (2006) edited by PV Rajgopal narrates the existence of an intimate friendship between Nehru and Lady Mountbatten that developed as a result of their common interests and like-mindedness. *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol. 27 (2000) recounts how Nehru used to send orchids from Shillong to Lady Mountbatten in London. KF Rustamji also throws light on Nehru's close friendship with Padmaja Naidu. Apart from that he mentions of Mridula Sarabhai who was a mad lover of Nehru and a disturbing element for the security staff surrounding him.

Lady Pamela Hicks devotes pages in *Daughter of the Empire: My life as a Mountbatten* (1987) to an exploration of the relationship between her mother and Nehru. “...she found in Nehru the companionship and equality of spirit and intellect that she craved. Each helped overcome loneliness in the other” (132), discovered Pamela. According to her, the love they shared was very much platonic in nature. Again, she

also pens down some instances of Nehru's close proximity with Edwina during occasions like public lectures when both of them were overseen by many as lovers. Thus, Nehru's lack and desire centring varied women figures began much later following the autobiography and the untimely death of his wife. Hence, analyzing the same in the context of his autobiography does not stand much relevant. Even Sarvepalli Gopal in his biography of Nehru mentions very little about the latter's personal life and relationships.

Mirror stage and Trauma as tropes of fragmented subjectivity

As Kay Stockholder aptly notes about Lacan's mirror stage concept, "Discussions of the mirror stage tend often to merge with these fairly commonplace observations about the deeply social nature of human reality" (Stockholder 367). The mirror stage asserts that the whole image that the world perceives of us is just a mere illusion, we are actually fragmented. The presence of mirror stage is witnessed in various aspects in Kamala Das' mind and personality as in *My Story*. There was always a disparity between the ideal whole world she imagined and wanted to be in, and, the fragmented reality she then found herself in. It was never a happy marriage or satisfying relationship between her and her husband. She felt broken, unwanted, incomplete at every stage. Ideal love and relationship were for her always an imagined gestalt.

The image of the self Das had to encounter always disappointed her in reality. She was married off at a very tender age when she was not even prepared both mentally and physically. The society and her family in particular tried to impose a unified, whole image to her persona through this act, although they failed miserably. Even before her marriage she felt bruised, as she writes, "Wherever he found me alone in a room, he began to plead with me to bare my breasts and if I did not, he turned brutal and crude. His hands bruised my body and left blue and red marks on the skin" (Das 67). Further, she expresses her own fragmented experience and feelings as against her father's who supposed her marriage to be an ideal, whole arrangement:

When he went back to Bombay, my father told me that he was happy to see that I had found my mate. The word mate with its earthy connotations made me uneasy. I felt lost and unhappy. I could not tell my father that I had hoped for a more tranquil relationship with a hand on my hair and a voice in my ear, telling

me that everything was going to be all right for me. I had no need at all for rough hands riding up my skirts or tearing up my brassiere. (Das 68)

The chapter “An Arranged Marriage” is relevant in this context. She had to succumb to the image of an ideal wife. The discourse that marriage was the ideal aim for a woman, notwithstanding her age, education and consent dominated Das’ course of life as well. The discourse of a glamorous, fanciful bride, for instance, was internalized in the symbolic structure. As Kamala relates in the same chapter, “The young relatives cried out in disappointment; you don’t look a bride, you are too plain to be a bride, they exclaimed” (Das 70). As a result, Das always felt her personality to be split and divided on account of being misrecognized. Sean Homer defines a Lacanian alienated subject as the subject of the signifier; it is the subject that is determined by the symbolic order and language and is constitutively split or divided (Homer 71). The chapters “Mental Depression”, “A Desire to Die” explicate the mental strife she developed as a consequence of unsatisfied married life, lovelessness, domestic unrest and her sick son, herself being only a twenty years old woman. The mental depression she went through also shows how fragmented she found her identity as opposed to the ideal, unified “I”. The fragmented self then leads to self alienation of which Lacan mentions. She falls ill, she expresses her desire to die—a kind of constant rivalry within her own self. Many of her poems like “An Introduction” and “Composition” clearly illustrate her struggle between the real and the ideal. The chapter “The Psycho-Analyst” holds Das’ bitter phase of depression, nightmares, split personality disorder and how she had to be taken to a psychiatrist at last for her treatment.

In the very “Foreword” of his memoir *My Son’s Father* Moraes reveals his alienation from the writer of this text, that is, from himself. “To all intents and purposes, it was written by another person”, he writes (Moraes Foreword). He visualizes his own flaws as a writer in a detached way in far future. Lacanian mirror stage appears when he acknowledges a split in his personality over the passage of years. As he argues, “But the person I was then would have disliked the person I have become, and not understood him: and perhaps the person I have become cannot understand the person I was” (Moraes 168). Split personality and self alienation during the mirror stage is best visible in Salman Rushdie’s memoir *Joseph Anton* where the author is seen constantly torn between his identities as Rushdie and Salman. Rushdie

writes:

He was 'Joe' to his protectors, an entity to be kept alive; and in his friends' eyes, when he was able to see them, he read their alarm, their fear that 'Salman' might be crushed under the weight of what happened. 'Rushdie' was another matter entirely... Rushdie was much hated and little loved. He was an effigy, an absence, something less than human. (Rushdie 251-52)

Rushdie could always only visualize a whole image of his self through the reflection in the world, whereas inwardly he experienced multiple fragmented personalities of himself. In his own words, "He was glad his friends were huggers and kissers. But he himself reflected in their eyes and understood that he was in bad shape" (252). Following his fatwa, the world perceived a single version of the author as against his internal fissures as a persona. His image was mirrored only as an author who did something wrong. *Joseph Anton* is thus an attempt to identify the rather fragmented versions of Rushdie himself. "Satan Rushdy" was the image mirrored by the extremists about Rushdie. "He was the person in the eye of the storm, no longer the Salman his friends knew but the Rushdie who was the author of *Satanic Verses*... (5). Moreover, being a migrant also made him feel fragmented, split from within in numerous ways. Uprooting from Bombay resulted in a negative effect on his personality:

The migrated self became, inevitably, heterogeneous instead of homogeneous, belonging to more than one place, multiple rather than singular, responding to more than one way of being, more than averagely mixed up. Was it possible to be—to become good at being—not rootless, but multiply rooted? (54)

The image of Rushdie perceived by the world after his fatwa was an image which was totally alienated to his own self. *Joseph Anton* is in fact a treatise on the alienated nature of his persona. It is clearly evident how he began to live two lives—the public and the private, the former in the guise of Joseph Anton following the fatwa and the latter with his wives and son amidst all security. The public life of Salman was totally alienated from his private life. As Rushdie himself says, the private "Salman" hardly recognized the public "Rushdie" (131), thus reinforcing the alienation of the psychoanalytic subject. The pseudonym Joseph Anton that he took up signifies only an alienated personality or a fictional entity to demarcate what he actually was not. The

fictional name hardly resembles the real Rushdie.

The utter claustrophobic protection which Rushdie was subjected to often became considered to be something very glamorous by the outside public. The reflection of such an image of him in the eyes of the world in the symbolic structure troubled Rushdie a lot and made him all the more alienated, split as a subject. “He slowly came to understand that the protection looked glamorous... It was hard to convince people that from where he was standing the protection did not feel like movie stardom. It felt like jail”, (Rushdie 178) Rushdie writes. His self as glorified by the fatwa stood as an alienated reflection of his true personality. His private persona began to be completely misinterpreted as a different public persona as created by the masses. “Now the bright light of the fatwa had blazed through the curtains of that little habitation and his secret self stood naked in the glare”, writes Rushdie (294).

The fact that *Joseph Anton* is written in third person narrative is imperative of the huge gap between Rushdie as a writer and Rushdie as a victim of fatwa rendered Joseph Anton. The many letters in the book on God, religion etc are, however, authored in first person addressed to the reader making his troubled mind and split personality all the more prominent. He even wrote a letter to his own younger and older Self from the viewpoint of Joseph Anton. The alienation he experienced between his real self and his constructed self as Joe is best evident in this letter. He felt completely alienated as Joseph Anton—the confinements associated with this pseudo identity as if separated him from his own self and subjectivity. He mentions at one place of how he hated the pseudonym Joe (Rushdie 466). He further mourns how he had to act like what he was not in front of the security men at his confined home.

The masked identity of which Dom Moraes reminds his readers quite a few times in his memoirs vividly expresses the alienated ego of Lacanian mirror stage. An interpretation of Moraes’s preoccupation with the masked identity to negotiate Paul de Man’s concept of de-facement was made in the first chapter. The same aspect of Moraes’ self narration can be analysed from the psychoanalytic angle too. The mask is nothing but the misrecognized ego which is alienated from within. To quote Moraes, “...my mask was that of a rather casual person, unperturbed by what was happening around me, known as a poet, experienced in the world, a veteran war correspondent”

(Moraes 310). So, Moraes regarded his entire image as perceived by the world to be rather a mask, or, in Lacanian nomenclature, the alienated ego. “Behind the mask, I thought, lay my identity, which was not to be exposed. It was by keeping the identity, not the mask, that I remained alive”, writes Moraes (310). That is, he felt fragmented from within: “The identity contained all the experiences the mask had, but experienced them differently” (Moraes 310). The constant clash between the ideal whole image outside and the fragmented reality inside therefore plays a vital role in the comprehension of the Lacanian construction of his personality as well as autobiographical self. Even in the “Foreword” of *My Son’s Father* Moraes, speaking at a point in future, he denies to identify himself with the author of his own memoir. “To all intents and purposes, it was written by another person. He was then thirty: I am now almost fifty-two,” expresses Moraes. His troubled ego and split personality are clearly witnessed here. He even went to the extent of calling his memoir’s writer his doppelganger. From a distanced viewpoint he tried to dig out his own flaws as a writer. Thus, between his fragmented self and his autobiographical self also he experienced some kind of gap or alienation, which stands very vital in gauging his psychoanalytic construction of subjectivity.

Along with Lacanian mirror stage and alienated subjectivity, an examination of trauma and death instinct also becomes very necessary to grasp the fragmented nature of the self. Traumatic experiences are often at the heart of life stories told by survivors of events like natural disasters, war or such other kinds of violence. Gadi BenEzer writes in the essay “Trauma Signals in Life Stories” (2000), “Life stories include an exposition of the relation between the private and the collective context. They can thus give a better understanding of both the personal trauma, as it is viewed within a social context, and of the social milieu, as reflected in the individual’s life” (BenEzer 30). Literature often plays the role of an outlet to traumatic experiences and vindications, autobiographies and memoirs being no exception.

Salman Rushdie’s autobiographical subjectivity remains incomplete without taking his death instinct and traumatic experience into consideration. As Cathy Caruth aptly writes, destructive traumatic repetition plays a major role in the creation of an individual who has survived trauma (63). A peculiar and puzzling experience of survival is what results from the fixation to trauma. A destructive repetition of trauma is

seen to ruin a person's life. The out of the blue declaration of death sentence by Khomeini was the event that marked origin of Rushdie's trauma. He was accused of being blasphemous and no less than a terrorist. The harassment and embarrassment of fatwa constantly haunted him thereafter making him ashamed even in front of his mother and son. The threatening was restricted not just to Rushdie. Even his wife Clarissa on her fortieth birthday received a threatening phone call on Rushdie's death. "Hang Satan Rushdy. How easy it was to erase a man's past and to construct a new version of him, an overwhelming version, against which it seemed impossible to fight" (Rushdie 5), writes the author. His traumatized self reflects Freud's notion of the incomprehensibility of survival at the heart of human experience (Caruth 64). A set of protestors outside the US Cultural Centre in Islamabad carried signs saying "RUSHDIE YOU ARE DEAD". A film was produced in Pakistan where terrorists vowed to kill the author Salman Rushdie. Such acts of forced psychological terrorism came up again and again, shattering his mental balance totally and making life totally incomprehensible for him. The burning of his book in Yorkshire also added to his deep scar. The fear was restricted not just to him but to the entire publishing industry. He writes, "Publishers and translators were threatened by fatwa, too" (Rushdie 150). He now had to confront the threat again and again in different forms of violence.

A complete crisis dawned in the path of his survival. "...the author of *The Satanic Verses* was crouching in shame behind a kitchen worktop to avoid being seen by a sheep farmer" (Rushdie 151). Severe crisis dawned in his private life as he had to shift to secret locations one after another. Time and again in the memoir Rushdie mentions how he had been living with threat of death in his mind. Going by Caruth's dictum, the endless repetition started leading Rushdie towards destruction. He could not imagine anything beyond this terrible reality. The traumatic neurosis in his subjectivity is greatly instrumental in the construction of his self throughout his memoir. It even led to the hallucination of distorted imaginations in his mind as he recounts: "He saw bodies sprawling on the stairs in the front hall. He saw the brightly lit rag-doll corpses of his son and his first wife drenched in blood. Life was over. He had run away and hidden like a terrified rabbit and his loved ones had paid the price" (Rushdie 159).

In a traumatic, isolated, secret chamber with all the securities, Rushdie felt like a prisoner which he reinforces all throughout the memoir. He kept on receiving threats

against himself and also his young daughter, including letters written in blood. Such acts repetitively reinforced his trauma. Meeting with his son was also not allowed unless police permitted it. Even after many years of fatwa, he was home quarantined, for coming out might lead to his death.

The constant repetition of his trauma triggered his death wish as evident from his own account: “At night he heard *I love you* but the days were shouting *Die*” (Rushdie 264). The claustrophobic and choking existence made him wish to die. To quote him further, “He was prepared to die, if dying became necessary for what Carmen Callil had called ‘a bloody book’” (Rushdie 285). Rushdie depicts in detail about each and every anniversary of the fatwa and the unexpected turn each one had taken. A most vivid form of death wish appears when he relates:

His biggest problem, he thought in his most bitter moments, was that he wasn’t dead. If he were dead nobody in England would have to fuss about the cost of his security...There would no longer be any need to worry about the safety of his mother, his sisters, his child...His exile from India wouldn’t hurt. And the stress level would definitely be lower. (Rushdie 415)

The recurring trauma of fatwa affected his relationship too in the worst possible way, with a lack of stability and security. He was scared for both of his sons terrified that their futures could be in utter danger in the absence of freedom and safety. The repetition thus claimed his very survival. Dom Moraes’ trauma arose from relationship with his sick mother. He never shared a healthy and happy bond with his mother who was unwell and mentally challenged for a significant part of her life. The book *My Son’s Father*, he writes, was cathartic in letting go his traumatic childhood. “The other reason for this book was that my childhood and adolescence had been very traumatic for me,” he writes in the “Forward”. His separation from his mother was not only physical but also mental, owing to her hysterical nature. This affected his childhood as well as adulthood deeply leading to trauma and a permanent lack. The strained relationship with his mother even affected his relationships with women. His mother became an utter stranger to him from an early age owing to her mentally retarded nature. With time, he got more and more detached from his mother which greatly affected his psychological standpoint. The furious and destructive nature of his

mother left imprints of terror in his mind. “Visitors no longer came to the house, the servants lived in terror and I myself became so nervous that any noise made me jump,” he expresses (Moraes 27). The worst instance is when his mother once reverted towards him with a kitchen knife and he had to run for his life. Such horrible encounters with his unstable mother recur time and again in his memoir to the extent that he is made to hit his mother back in the most unwilling state of mind: “Yet vivid in my mind was the moment I had slapped her that afternoon, when above the smeared blood on her face the eyes of a hurt person stared back at me and filled with tears” (Moraes 95). A sense of trauma mixed with guilt keeps haunting his mind as found in his memoir. His subjectivity is thus the consequence of “the belatedness and incomprehensibility that remain at the heart of this repetitive seeing” (Caruth 92).

Moraes writes in his second memoir *Never At Home* that his mother was one of the main reasons why he was scared of and he preferred staying away from India. His trauma led to terrible nightmares of his hysteric mother. To quote Moraes, “The grotesque, insane figure that had ridden my nightmares for years. To come back to India and to have, at least occasionally, to confront the reality was a terrifying prospect” (Moraes 1). The mental suffering even affected his physical condition as is manifested through his constant accounts of nausea on meeting his mother. He relates his visit to his mother after returning from a long stay in England: “My physical nausea at the sight of her, my inability to speak to her, increased my own hatred of myself... I usually left because I wanted to vomit” (Moraes 2).

The kind of trauma experienced by Moraes was very much physical besides being mental. As mentioned earlier, Moraes narrates in *My Son's Father* how his insane mother even threatened him with knife. Such instances are again reinstated in an elaborate manner in the second memoir *Never At Home* where the physical aspect of such violence is more vividly comprehensible. “I carried scars from those years which were not only mental but physical. The back of my right hand still bears cigarette burns inflicted by my mother”, (7) expresses Moraes. Moraes’ account of trauma is therefore psychosomatic in nature. Repetition and incomprehensibility of trauma occur both in his mind and body. The prospect of going back to India with his wife Judith and son Francis even became something terrifying for him, owing to a recurrence of his traumatic experience and scars, as he relates in the middle of his second memoir:

She had attacked me several times with knives; I had a scar at the back of my hand, where she had stubbed out a cigarette. I remember wild and violent scenes: my mother, disheveled, with bulging eyes and maenad hair; the sound of her screams. The only thing which had made me doubtful about a trip back to India was the knowledge that I would have to meet her and that it would be hard to keep Judy and Francis out of it. (Moraes 108)

However, he brought his wife and son to visit his mother with all apprehensions, just to find his physical discomforts recurring on his way to Juhu. Moraes' self and identity often got moulded and controlled by the physical manifestations of his trauma like nausea and vomiting as perceived from his second memoir *Never At Home*. "What she had done to my childhood was something I tried to forget; but it expressed itself physically" (Moraes 303). He accuses his mother for messing up his childhood as well as adulthood. The impossibility to comprehend life and subjectivity in the normal way gets reflected through Moraes' undesired physical troubles like that of nausea and a feeling of revulsion. The recurrence of the distorted image of rats that he associates with his mother's illness is basically a doorway to his distorted memory and experience that inevitably dominated his self construction. Besides the horrific depiction of filthy rats, Moraes portrays a terrible image of his mother, comparing her to a vixen—"she almost snarled, a toothless old vixen..." (Moraes 113). His childhood trauma was therefore instrumental in creating such violent imaginations.

The way he oriented his love relationships also got intertwined with the constant traumatic recollections of his mother. His survival was at stake and an unrealized death drive dominated his thoughts and actions. During his relationship with K, the troubled experiences with his mother figured in between and strained their bond. K's reactions only reminded of the shock he had encountered from his furious mother: "Her anger made her voice shrill, and mine uncertain. All these brought terrible images to my mind: this naked, hostile emotion to me was associated only with my mother" (Moraes 189). His unhappy and traumatic childhood thus took a toll upon his future relationships. A few pages later he again reinforces, "I felt trapped in my childhood, and in my dreams K and my mother often turned into each other" (Moraes 200).

The two memoirs thus function as an outlet to let go off their traumatic

experience. Caruth's formulation that, what follows trauma is not simply an effect of destruction but also an enigma of survival can be best viewed in both Rushdie and Moraes where a helpless incomprehensibility of life becomes prominent as a result of trauma. Their selves stand in a paradoxical standpoint between destructiveness and survival as death instinct and trauma cause a distortion of subjectivity.

Notably, "death wish" is also used as a trope by some Indian English self-narrators to draw a creative end to their autobiographies. Worth mentioning in this regard are the autobiographies of Kamala Das and Khushwant Singh. The last two chapters in *My Story* entitled "A Freedom to Discompose" and "Death—a Reality" manifest Das' wish to die in a very artistic manner. In the former chapter she mentions her wish to drown herself to get rid of her loneliness. "I have wanted to find rest in the sea and an escape from involvements", she further writes (210). Death, according to her, would be the only freedom from all pains. She also confesses that she has been obsessed with the idea of death—"I have come to believe that life is a mere dream and that death is the only reality" (Kamala 213).

Her metaphoric death wish is best framed in a very poetic manner at the end of the book. She asserts that while her jewellery and her bronze idols shall thrive forever, she would die at the earliest. However, while the text was written in 1973, she died thirty-six years later in 2009. This very fact makes her death wish appear even more imaginative at a later date. The lines in the last paragraph of the book render her narration the most dramatic touch: "Out of my pyre my grieving sons shall pick up little souvenirs of bones and some ash. And yet the world shall go on" (Kamala 214).

In a similar vein, Khushwant Singh contemplates his death in various ways in the last chapter entitled "The Last but One Chapter". However, unlike Das, Singh had an unknown fear of death. At the very beginning of the autobiography he anticipates his probable death at the hands of terrorists as he was in the hit list of Khalistani terrorists. He confesses of having an ambiguous fear of death for a very long time. Once he even approached Acharya Rajneesh to help him handle the fear of death, following which he followed a closer intimacy with the dying and the dead people in his proximity. "It acted like a catharsis: it cleansed me of petty vanities, helped me to take setbacks in life in my stride. I returned home at peace with myself. But it did not help me overcome

the fear of dying”, (408) writes Singh expressing his immense phobia of death and after life. He tries to philosophize and theorize the concept of death through reference to a series of ideas given over time, thereby trying to reconcile with his fear: “The process of dying begins from the time we are born. It takes us bit by bit before it finally swallows up what remains” (Singh 409). His curiosity and contemplation of the afterlife make him refer to the Hindu religious texts like *The Bhagwat Gita*, *Bhrigu Samhita* though he again asserts his disbelief in God. At the fag end he reveals his wish to die amidst merry making in the manner of his father “who died a few minutes after he had his evening scotch” (412). The rhetoric of death thus plays a vital role in sketching an epilogue to his autobiography.

The rhetoric of psychoanalysis and the tropes of desire therefore play a crucial role in constructing the autobiographical narratives thereby reinforcing a constant chain of signification that often leaves meaning undecided and deferred. Trauma, lack, “objet petit a” and mirror stage reveal the incomplete, incomprehensible and split selves which attempt to find coherence through self narration in the Indian English autobiographies and memoirs. But the fissures and fragments, however, become very much visible through a psychoanalytic interpretation of the same. After an examination of the relational, colonial, metahistorical and psychoanalytic dimensions, the final important aspect for analysis will be the role of space, place and time in the autobiographical imagination of Indian English self-narrators considering their diverse spatial and temporal orientations. The next chapter shall therefore address the metaphors of home, nature, geography, exile and fictional time in the select primary narratives.