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KAMALA DAS: THE AUTHENTIC FEMINIST IN INDIAN ENGLISH LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT:-

The first generation of modern English poets, who established a new poetics for themselves and made a fresh start in both theme and style around the 1960s, includes Kamala Das (1934–2009), who belonged to this generation. One of the post-colonial era's most influential voices is Kamala Das. The best depiction of the suppression of feminine sensitivity in a society ruled by men can be found in Kamala Das' poetry. As a result, much of her work is autobiographical and confessional, while occasionally she makes the personal universal. In this study article, Kamala Das describes how she protests against social norms that are designed to oppress women in this artificial environment. In her poems "An Introduction" and "Stone Age," Kamala Das expresses a strong sense of self-awareness as a woman, challenging conventional ideas of what it means to be a woman and reshaping public perception of the mystery around femininity. Her poetry captures the fervour of a bold rebel who refuses to back down or give up. Her life's passion and eloquence, as well as her lyrical accomplishments, have demolished male chauvinists and inspired her female counterparts both inside and outside of the social, cultural, and religious framework. Because of this, her life and poems provide an engrossing case study in the devastating condemnation of the restrictive laws that specifically target the freedom, respect, and dignity of women.

Keywords: Feminist, Rebel, Post-Colonial Study, Suppression.

Introduction

An important figure in Indian English writing is Kamala Das. She expanded Indian literature by publishing three poetry anthologies and thirty Malayalam-language novels. Her birthplace, Malabar in Kerala, is where she was born in 1934. She received her basic education at home and, as a result of her long history of poetry writing, has earned an important place in Malayalam literature. She won a number of prestigious accolades for her contributions to English and Malayalam literature. In 1964, she received the Chaman Lal Award for fearless journalism, the Kerala Sahitya Academy Award for the best collection of Malayalam short tales, and the Poetry Award for the Asian PEN Anthology. She was accepted as the sole representative from Asia in Susan Gubar and Sandra Gilbert's Norton Anthology of Literature by Women. The short story collection Padmavati the Harlot and Other Stories from 1992, the novel Alphabet of Lust from 1977, the

poetry collections *Summer in Calcutta* (1965), *The Descendants* (1967), *The Old Playhouse and Poems* (1973), *The Anamalai Poems* (1985), and *Only the Soul Knows How to Sing* (1996) are a few of her works in English. In 1999, After converting to Islam, Kamala Das changes her name to Kamala Surayya. The poem in her collection *Old Playhouse and Other Poems* that serves as the collection's introduction is titled "An Introduction."

The Real Feminist

From the original tribal songs of its original inhabitants, women's poetry in India has a distinct history and tradition all of its own. It includes the Pali songs of Buddhist nuns from the sixth century B.C., the Sangam poets of Tamil, such as Andal and Auvaiyar, the devotional poets of the middle ages, such as Mirabai, Ratna Bai, Jana Bai, Aatukri Mollw and Akkamahadevi, Mudupalani, The poetry of Kamala Das contains her autobiography. If there is such a thing as "essential womanhood," she is not just any woman or its embodiment. She is an Indian poet who writes in English at a time when the rhetorical and romantic traditions of Indian poetry in English are being abandoned.

The much-discussed poem "An Introduction" by Kamala Das, published in 1965, is a thorough formulation of the various personal and social factors that contribute to the identification of this subgenre. The *Old Playhouse and other Poems* followed after it first appeared in "Summer in Calcutta" (1965). The poem "An Introduction" by Kamala Das is among her best works. She is the heir to many traditions, including the pan-Indian tradition and the regional cultural traditions of Kerala. Within the regional tradition, her caste has provided her with a specific matrilineal background, and the Malabar Coast, where she was born and spent her early years, has provided her with a specific provincial background. She is a product of two poetic traditions: Indian English poetry, which dates back to Henri Derozio and Toru Dutt, and Malayalam poetry, which has origins in mediaeval folklore and ancient Tamil Sangam poetry. Balamoni Amma, her mother, and Nalapat Narayan Menon, her maternal uncle, are also poets, as is she. She experienced her professors' and housekeepers' "subtle sadism" as a young student as torture. In 1984, Kamala Das, Marguerite Yourcenar, Doris Lessing, and Nadine were all shortlisted for the Nobel Prize in Literature. Kamala Das is the first Hindu woman to speak openly about her sexual experiences and physical desires. She holds a distinctive position among Indian English poets. She created a brand-new idiom, her own genre, a fresh strategy, and an entirely new sensibility. Gordimer, who was born on November 20, 1923, gave her courage. Her poetry became an expression of rebellion against the pervasive melancholy present in a patriarchal culture because of her singular wistfulness to declare herself and produce poetry. In the poetry of Kamala Das, feminist awareness and language discovered a representative of sensuality and spirituality who, unafraid of criticism and praise, continued tirelessly to produce poems of enduring charm, enduring empathy, and unfathomable audacity. She wasn't being showy; instead, she embodies the fundamental nature of every woman, their aspirations and suffering, giving voice to the unavoidably silent ladies. Up till the moment of her death, Kamala Das continued her purpose in this endeavour unfazed by the occasional controversy. This essay will attempt to concentrate on Kamala Das' feminism, which demonstrates that atrocities and sufferings are the same regardless of the faith a woman adheres to. She depicts the woman's mind from childhood onward as a wife, lover, and advocate against exploitation; each of these roles comes with its own demands and viewpoints on others around them. Among these poets, Kamala Das (born 31 March 1934–31 March 1998) may be mentioned.

Sujata Bhatt (born on May 6, 1956), Melanie Silgado (born in 1956), and May 2009. Mamta Kalia, Tara Patel, and Eunice de Souza (1940), among others. They have not only expanded the themes of femininity in Indian English poetry, but they have also demonstrated how simple, suggestive, and highly evocative words and images can sing their pain and suffering, annoyance and humour, observations and reflections without displaying any pretence. This thoughtful and sober response to the witnessed and experienced events is, in some places, a poeticized drama of everyday life. Their creative instinct has provided a justifiable outlet for not only the technical superiority but also the sorrow and poignancy experienced in suffocation and suppression. The poem "An Introduction" by Kamala Das is a polyphonic text in and of itself, combining multiple of the poet's voices into a single word construction. The introductory line, "I do not know politics,"

illustrates the marginalized status of women in society in an uncertain manner. The irony that society does not expect a woman to work in politics is concealed by what appears to be an admission of ignorance. Her familiarity with the names of those in authority has no bearing on her personal life because she has never been the master of politics; rather, she has only been its victim. Then, ironically filling out an ambiguous form, she put out more particular information, including nationality, complexion, place of birth, and the language spoken.

The phrase "she dreams in love" is cryptic enough to elicit numerous pictures. It may be one of creativity, a woman's language, English, Malayalam, or any number of other things. She also defends her decision to utilize English as her chosen language of communication, arguing that it is appropriate for her to use it to express the angularities, idiosyncrasies, and human joys and longings that are uniquely her own. Like the lion's roar and the crow's cawing, it is the sound of her inclination. She remembers the recurring nightmares she had as a child about trees, monsoon clouds, and rain. She remembers her first experience with masculine aggression, which is a part of the same horrific universe as trees in a storm and the mumbling of the funeral pyre, as she speaks of her adolescent years in the text. References to the swollen limbs, sprouting hairs, pitiful weight of the womb and breasts, as well as the dejected woman's body, "emphasize the corporal ground of woman's experience, female physicality often identified with female sexuality. Women authors are like the mythical lady warrior who entered battle scarred by the then-blades that her parents' literary works used to etch thin lines of script onto her body, it has been said that women suffer cultural scripts in their bodies. The poet changes her attire and tries to initiate men because the woman can't change her physical appearance. However, the voices of tradition would drive her to wear sarees once more; in this context, the saree becomes a symbol of tradition. She is relegated to her predetermined gender roles as a wife, chef, embroiderer, and person who fights with servants. Her gender role also becomes one of class. The older people ask her to be their parents, Amy, friends Kamala, or their readers' Madhabikutty (her pen name in Malayalam), which fills her world with taboos. Every deviation from this unchanging pattern is seen as a perverted disease. The environmental metaphors of the impulsive river and the patient ocean highlight the element of instinct that drives the woman in her as she cries out for true love. The end of the poem, where the poet's ego dissolves in others as soon as it is asserted, ties together her various ontological facets: lover's sweetheart, drinker of city nights, one who makes love, feels shame, sinner, saint, adored, and betrayed.

If the poet recognizes the violent, haughty, and exclusive male ego as being "tightly packed like the sword in its sheath" (An Introduction), she discovers that her identity is only a temporary moment before a final dissolution in others because she discovers that her joys and pains are the same as those of her readers and ordinary women. This poem is characterized as confessional by Professor K. R. S. Iyenger. Furthermore, Devindra Kohli describes it as "a candid and witty piece of self-revelation." The

The poem captures Das' entire poetic development, including his clear post-colonial aim. It brings up the crucial post-colonial feminist issue of the identity of a strong, accomplished poet. She sees it as a crucial and integral part of the Indian Identity and asserts her steadfast unwillingness to discard English as a foreign tongue on behalf of Indians who choose to use it as a poetic medium.

The poem "Stone Age" is from Kamala Das' third collection of poetry, "The Old Playhouse and Other Poems" (1973). The entire poem is written in the form of a monologue from the perspective of a lady who does not find love or happiness in her marriage. This poem, like other poems by Das, addresses the issue of failed marriage relationships. It also demonstrates how the wife gradually enters into illicit relationships in an effort to find true love but ends up in a lifeless wasteland. The poem is simply separated into two separate halves. The treatment that the woman character suffers from her husband is depicted in the first section. He views her as nothing more than a decorative item to be placed in a room, not as a living individual. She then transforms into a stone object, such as a bird, stone, or granite dove. Her husband had a cold disregard for her.

She began to ask for kindness from him instead of love. The wife's mental image of a large spider emphasizes the sinister character of man. In turn, it demonstrates how similar his love is to a spider's web, which serves as a trap for its prey and enables the spider to suffocate and kill it. She will become wholly dependent on the man's wish as a result of this procedure. His animalistic behavior makes her feel uncomfortable and even affects her peace of mind: "Fond husband, ancient settler in the mind old fat spider, meandering webs of bewilder." Be considerate. You transform me into a stone bird, a granite dove.

As a result of being unhappy in her marriage, the woman finds herself unwittingly dragged into an illicit relationship in search of true and pure love. These trends are to be kept out of the public eye like drains under neat cities because this impulse is so powerful that it renders the pull of tradition in her useless. She learns how to find love on her own, behind her husband's back. She visits her favourite spot in an effort to find unmarried love. As she drives around in her blue automobile, curious neighbours watch her actions. The blue tint is frequently used to indicate the childlike character of her exploits. The woman's own attempts to discover real love virtually always result in sleazy physical encounters. Because of his fierce temperament during sexual intercourse, the man she goes to for solace from the painful experience of her marriage appears to her to be a lion. She remembers the flavour of his mouth as well as the crude manner in which he made love. Compared to her husband's lack of interest, this sensation of love is distinct. She kind of loses sight of the moments in these kinds of love connections. But this romantic encounter turns out to be very fleeting, and she is aware that she will have to pay a price for them.

In her autobiography "My Story (1977)", Das says "In the orbit of illicit sex, there seemed to be only crudeness and violence." All her quests for true love end in disasters of sexual intercourse which brings only sorrow and fatigue.

Ask me, everybody ask me

What he sees in me, ask me why he is called a lion, a libertine, and ask me the flavor of his

Mouth ask me why his land sways like a hooded snake Before it, claps my pubis. Ask me why like

A great tree, felled, he slumps against my breast, And sleeps. Ask me why life is short and love is Shorten, still, ask me what is bliss and what its price "(An Introduction).

Conclusion

One of the most honest Indian poets currently working in English is Kamala Das. Her poetry is entirely about her, about her intensely felt need for love and emotional connection as well as her failure to find such a connection. Therefore, understanding her poems requires familiarity with her life and personality. One person described Kamala Das as a confessional poet. The confessional poet writes about private emotional experiences that are typically taboo. There is a tone of complete candour and ruthless self-analysis. Even though the facts aren't always accurate, emotional truth never deviates from it. Confessional poetry is an effort to connect the private experience with the outside world as it is; what a confessional poet gives us is the "psychological equivalent" that we always get in Kamala Das' poetry. From a very young age, Kamala Das' poems bear witness to this struggle. She struggles in "An Introduction" to maintain her identity in the face of "The Categorizers," who demand that she "fit in." She feels the need to define her identity because she was rejected from choosing a name and a role.

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