

ANALYSIS OF SUMMER IN CALCUTTA BY KAMALA DAS

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ABSTRACT: This paper is an attempt to uncover the hidden meanings of the poetry of Kamala Das from the perspective of women and from the angle of self reflections of herself in her works. This paper is a kind of exploration of her poetry. The various themes that include feminine approach, man-woman relationships, Love, lust and different threads of human life which bind two opposite sexes in one relationship. This journey in her works depicts all sensory experiences which have a definite bridge between man and woman. Her writing is not only a reflection of the real society but her work gives insight knowledge of man-woman relationships' psychology also.

KEY WORDS: Summer in Calcutta, Man-Woman Relationship, Self, Other, Desire, Imaginary.

I.INTRODUCTION

From time immemorial, Indian society and its men have confined the women to kitchen and treated them as a sexual entity, a play toy, a material, a source of wealth, a status symbol, an unpaid servant, a machine to produce children, a burdensome creature etc. The renowned poet Kamala Das too experienced these ill-treatments personally and her life was entangled around these labels. Kamala Das has been considered one of the most illustrious contemporary Indian woman poets who expressed a typical middle class Indian woman's dual conflict of ideas through the portrayal of her own persona in the backdrop of Indian life and culture in her versatile poetry, especially elevating or discussing the psycho-sexual aspects of her middle-class womanhood and her conjugal life very candidly and boldly. Usually Indian women dared not speak on these issues.

In the recent times, there has been steady hike in the production of imaginative literature in English by the Indian writers. The consistent efforts by the bright Indians in putting their bright ideas and heightened sensibility in English language have drawn worldwide

attention. During 20th century, there emerged a great feeling among the poets, writers and scholars of different countries writing in English to establish, the identity of their own writings as a distinctive force of their own cultural heritage and literary enterprises. With the receding of the romantic tradition, the second wave of Indian poetry in English emerged just around the beginning of post-Independence era. R. Parthasarathy's Ten Twentieth-century Indian Poets publicized the works of the "academic" poets, among whom the most audacious — particularly in her protests against patriarchy and embracing of matrilineal culture with a romantic fervor, the exploration of female desires of women, is Kamala Das [1].

Kamala Das, also known as Madhavikutty in her mother-tongue, Malayalam, is a trail blazer in the Indian English Poetry. Kamala Das has served the Indian English literature immensely. Her most remarkable achievement is writing an Indian English. Often her vocabulary, idioms, choice of words and some syntactical construction are part of what has been termed the Indianization of English. This is an accomplishment. It is important in the development of the national literature that writers free themselves from the linguistics standard of their colonizers and create a literature based on local speech [2]. According to Eunice de Souza women writers owe a special debt to Kamala Das as- She mapped out the terrain for post-colonial women in social and linguistic terms [3].

Kamala Das' poems epitomize the dilemma of the modern Indian women who attempt to free her sexually and domestically from the role bondage sanctioned to her by the patriarchal society. "Kamala's poetry embodies agonies of women emerging from

that state of subjugation and bondage, and seeking to establish their identity and the self [4]. In fact Kamala Das has come on the Indo-English poetic scene at a time when there has been a heightening of interest in the works of women all over the world. This is because there has been a rethinking and a re-interpretation of the traditional role of women and the consequent emancipation of women in a male-dominated universe. Arlene R.K. Zide opines: "Kamala Das' themes transcend the 'personal' because what she attempts to poetize, is the 'Universal experience' of a woman" [5].

II. DISCUSSION ON KAMALA DAS POETRY

The poetry of Kamala Das is characterized by a daring frankness, a total lack of inhibitions especially with reference to love and sex, this marked her as iconoclast. Her poems when focused upon love treats it within more panoptic ranges of themes, more realized settings and with soft feelings, bringing to it an intensity of emotion and speech. She is a revolutionary writer. Her voice is authentic, honest, frank, human to core, persuasive, and above all female. In her poems she expresses her inner pangs caused by marriage. She feels a sense of loss and suffocation for marriage commodities her, crushes her soul, her spirit, her liberty and her essence as a women.

Kamala Das has been regarded as a truly authentic feminine voice of power dealing with conflict between passivity and rebellion against the male oriented universe. Her poetry to Devendra Kohli is in the final analysis and acknowledgment and a celebration of the beauty and courage of being women. Kamala Das poems are pre-eminently poem of love which includes anguish and pain in a near-neurotic world.

Her world of love is especially a personal world, depicting the agonizing ambivalence of the search for security in love even while desiring independence consistent with a non-

domestic mode of living. The failure to discover this meaningful relationship between the sexes invests bordering on tragedy. She makes public, traditionally private experiences, suggesting that women's personal feelings of longing and loss are the part of the collective experience of womanhood.

In the collection, The Descendants, the poem —The Maggots names the pain of lost love with ancient Hindu myths, while the poem —The Looking-Glass suggests that the very thing society labels taboos are the things that women are supposed to follow. In the Old Playhouse and Other Poems, poems such as —Substitute, —Gino, and —The Suicidel examine physical love's failure to provide fulfillment, escape from the self, and exorcism of the past, whereas poems such as —The inheritance addresses the integrity of the artistic self in the face of religious fanaticism.

III. ANALYSIS ON SUMMER IN CALCUTTA

Kamala Das was born in 1934 at Punnayukutu which resides in South Malabar. V.M Nair, a journalist and Balamani Amma, a poetess were both delighted when a fantabulous author, Kamala Das was born under their roof. The sin of child marriage in early India paused the higher education of Kamala Das at the age of 15 but she was able to receive primary education from Convent School of Calcutta. Kamala Das was so precise in the work that she published only four volumes of poetry in English which were Summer in Calcutta, The Descendants, The Only Playhouse and Other Poems and Only the Soul Know How to Singh. One of the writers like Pritish Nandy included almost 18 uncollected poems of Kamla Das in his anthology of Indian Poetry in English.

If we ignore her writings in English, an autobiography of her, originally written in Malayalam was published in English as a title, My Story. She also won many awards for her achievements like the Poetry Award of the

Asian PEN Anthology (1964) and the Kerala Sahitya Akademi award. In addition to this, Kamala Das also wrote for magazines like Opinion, The Illustrated Weekly of India, and many others.

Even if Kamala Das's poetry remains controversial reactions to her work, her position among Indian poets writing English is comparatively secure even if includes comments on her frankness, her need to dominate, and her 'freedom to decompose'. These characteristics specify a rising tendency to take her work gravely. Her work and poetry are honored for giving a vent to a powerful range of self-indulgence. 'I' always gravitated between two worlds in her poetry, a blissful past and a grieving detached present. Now she takes rest, fleeing away from the baseless present in her unique manner of familial, personal history and the fabled past of India as a whole.

"It was hot, so hot, before the eunuchs came
To dance, wide, skirts going round, and round
, cymbals richly clashing, and anklets jingling,
jingling, jinglingthere were green Tattos on
their cheek, jasmines in their hair. Some were
dark and some were almost fair. Their voices
were harsh, their songs melancholy; they sang
lovers dying and of children left
unborn....Some beat their sorry breasts and
wailed, and writhed in vacant ecstasy".

The Freaks of Kamala Das paints a controversial situation where the desire of woman is helpless, and man is not responsive at all. Even sexual experience is bound around lust. Primarily the lust is pre-dominated element. Love and lust, both are different things what she wanted to paint in her poetry. "Summer in Calcutta" is comparable with Keats's Ode on Indolence. The April's mood of nature is connected with the sensuous intoxicated inspiration of a lover.

"we bubbles ring,
My glass, like bride's
Nervous smile, and meet,

My lips, Dear forgive,
This moment's full in
wanting you, the blur in memory"

As all writers do and as Kamala Das was a multilingual writer, she also had a false name which she used in his works. It was Madhavikutty, which was the feminine version of the name of her husband. She was interested in poetry from her school and used to write poems in school-age also but her real talent was seen only in the 1950s when Indian Poetry in English was stepping towards India with a bright future. Kamala Das is a successful poet famous to transform the faded poems of romantic love and themes related to this. Another major contribution to her themes was that she was open-minded and wrote beyond the traditionally accepted thoughts. The appearance of an Indian writer never come in her poetry because she wanted that her poetry should be explored by everybody. She never thought to be successful as an Indian in her poetry and this concern is appreciable in a country like India where male-dominated society exists.

Very few women poets enjoy immense popularity and eminence in the Commonwealth world and these women poets cover authors like Margaret Atwood, Judith Wright and Kamala Das.

These poets are recognized not only on their native lands but also on foreign grounds for their prominent accomplishments. Rarely any women at that time were a critic, nature lover, fictionist, autobiographer and true women with such a prominent writing proficiency. The most significant feature of her poems was the sense of urgency and her tone of feminine. This matured and experienced poet has also made proclamation on life, love and literature. Fame of Kamala Das rapidly rose in the mid-1960s when, even '*Times*' magazine declared Kamala Das as the 11th Indian women who openly wrote about love life beyond marriage. She became an interesting figure for her social

significance and for themes of her poetry. Because of her frank nature, Kamala Das became the first Indian poet to write without worrying about British English and what a poet is supposed to say. A poem is considered to give answers but in contrast her poems usually gave questions about love, life and expectations of life.

The dynamic and roving verses of Kamala Das have many directions. A primary vision is from a women's eyes, as lover, wife, mother and grand-daughter. Each character constitutes different perspective on people around them. Kamala Das has always defined the emotions, relationships, hopes and desire through imagination. Many women, especially in India are seen noncommittal because of her capabilities to manage domestic affairs instead of holding a career in their own world.

Das was successful in managing these two frames of life and she was also able to express her intimate knowledge of people and of herself against an extensive view of old and new India. Kamala Das was very famous among common women because her writing was strictly committed to the language of the simplicity. Hence , while she acknowledges her as a master of the craft of poetry writing. This is not an apprehension but it is a fact that the way she used her experiences in the text, that is a proof. Many critics admire her boldness, and at the other hand many declines her bold approaches. She is a true and real picture of self that connects between reality and facts.

IV. CONCLUSION

Kamala Das learnt many things out of her life's experiences and perhaps this made her vision wider. She did not want to conceal anything in her life. She wanted to be as clear as a crystal to the readers who may learn something good and useful from her life and experiences.

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