

Vol 5 Issue 6 March 2016

ISSN No : 2249-894X

*Monthly Multidisciplinary
Research Journal*

*Review Of
Research Journal*

Chief Editors

Ashok Yakkaldevi
A R Burla College, India

Ecaterina Patrascu
Spiru Haret University, Bucharest

Kamani Perera
Regional Centre For Strategic Studies,
Sri Lanka

Review Of Research Journal is a multidisciplinary research journal, published monthly in English, Hindi & Marathi Language. All research papers submitted to the journal will be double - blind peer reviewed referred by members of the editorial Board readers will include investigator in universities, research institutes government and industry with research interest in the general subjects.

Regional Editor

Manichander Thammishetty
Ph.d Research Scholar, Faculty of Education IASE, Osmania University, Hyderabad.

Advisory Board

Kamani Perera Regional Centre For Strategic Studies, Sri Lanka	Delia Serbescu Spiru Haret University, Bucharest, Romania	Mabel Miao Center for China and Globalization, China
Ecaterina Patrascu Spiru Haret University, Bucharest	Xiaohua Yang University of San Francisco, San Francisco	Ruth Wolf University Walla, Israel
Fabricio Moraes de Almeida Federal University of Rondonia, Brazil	Karina Xavier Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), USA	Jie Hao University of Sydney, Australia
Anna Maria Constantinovici AL. I. Cuza University, Romania	May Hongmei Gao Kennesaw State University, USA	Pei-Shan Kao Andrea University of Essex, United Kingdom
Romona Mihaila Spiru Haret University, Romania	Marc Fetscherin Rollins College, USA	Loredana Bosca Spiru Haret University, Romania
	Liu Chen Beijing Foreign Studies University, China	Ilie Pinteau Spiru Haret University, Romania
Mahdi Moharrampour Islamic Azad University buinzahra Branch, Qazvin, Iran	Nimita Khanna Director, Isara Institute of Management, New Delhi	Govind P. Shinde Bharati Vidyapeeth School of Distance Education Center, Navi Mumbai
Titus Pop PhD, Partium Christian University, Oradea, Romania	Salve R. N. Department of Sociology, Shivaji University, Kolhapur	Sonal Singh Vikram University, Ujjain
J. K. VIJAYAKUMAR King Abdullah University of Science & Technology, Saudi Arabia.	P. Malyadri Government Degree College, Tandur, A.P.	Jayashree Patil-Dake MBA Department of Badruka College Commerce and Arts Post Graduate Centre (BCCAPGC), Kachiguda, Hyderabad
George - Calin SERITAN Postdoctoral Researcher Faculty of Philosophy and Socio-Political Sciences Al. I. Cuza University, Iasi	S. D. Sindkhedkar PSGVP Mandal's Arts, Science and Commerce College, Shahada [M.S.]	Maj. Dr. S. Bakhtiar Choudhary Director, Hyderabad AP India.
REZA KAFIPOUR Shiraz University of Medical Sciences Shiraz, Iran	Anurag Misra DBS College, Kanpur	AR. SARAVANAKUMARALAGAPPA UNIVERSITY, KARAIKUDI, TN
Rajendra Shendge Director, B.C.U.D. Solapur University, Solapur	C. D. Balaji Panimalar Engineering College, Chennai	V.MAHALAKSHMI Dean, Panimalar Engineering College
	Bhavana vivek patole PhD, Elphinstone college mumbai-32	S.KANNAN Ph.D , Annamalai University
	Awadhesh Kumar Shirotriya Secretary, Play India Play (Trust), Meerut (U.P.)	Kanwar Dinesh Singh Dept.English, Government Postgraduate College , solan

More.....

Review of Research

International Online Multidisciplinary Journal

ISSN: 2249-894X

Impact Factor : 3.1402(UIF)

Volume - 5 | Issue - 6 | March - 2016



A QUEST OF IDENTITY IN KAMALA DAS'S POETRY: AN IDEOLOGICAL OUTLOOK



R. M. Shaikh

Head, Dept. of English,
Annasaheb Awate College, Manchar, Pune.

ABSTRACT:

Kamala Das is well-known for her confessional writings; the comprehensive investigation of her poetic works reveals how she has achieved her goal in presenting the genuine portrait of women in a male-dominated society. When other writers challenged to provide an attractive outline of women in the society, Kamala Das emphasized on the consciousness of women, her imaginations as well as objectives which would be not pleasant for patriarchal culture. Her poetry seeks a presentation of the “true women” and the empowered women, able to challenge the societal standards to set-up her self-identity as a human being. In a male dominated world, Das had tried to assert her individuality, to maintain her feminine identity, and from this rebel arose all her troubles, psychological traumas and frustrations. The present research paper intends an investigation in the selected poems of Kamala Das, respectively An Introduction and Punishment in Kindergarten.

KEY WORDS: Confessional Poetry, Identity, Self, Love, Feminist, Image, Psychological outlets, Male – Oriented Society.

OBJECTIVES:

The present paper aims at the following objectives.

- 1) To study the concept of 'identity' in Kamala Das's selected poetry
- 2) To analyse critically the psychological and social elements in the selected poems
- 3) To understand the way in which language has been integrated by the poetess in order to present the status of Indian woman in her selected poems

INTRODUCTION:

Kamala Das is one of the most influential and distinguished poetess in Indian English poetry. In her work which consists of three volumes of renowned poems; *Summer in Calcutta* (1965), *The Descendant* (1967) and *The Old Playhouse and Other Poems* (1973); she mainly deals with the existential anxieties produced during the modern Indian woman's expedition from ritual to modernity, but also the Indian woman's intelligence of promise to authenticity. The chief and worldwide themes of her poetry are to guide women for self-empowerment along with authentic requests for setting-up of their entity, individuality as well as self-respect.

In a well-known poem, *An Introduction*, she formulates community conventionally confidential understandings, signifying that female's individual outlook of yearning as well as beating are elements of the cooperative practice of adulthood. "An Introduction" is perhaps the most famous of the poems written by Kamala Das in a self-reflective and confessional tone from her maiden publication *Summer in Calcutta* (1965). The poem is a strong remark on Patriarchal Society prevalent today and brings to light the miseries, bondage, pain suffered by the fairer sex in such times.

The theme of Kamala Das' poetry is the inner feelings of a female as well as how the exposure of their understandings encompass of suffering and miserable antipathy at the male dominance. 'Quest for identity' is positively the recurrent theme of her poetry. Kamala Das, in her poetry, articulates the despair and longing of fellow women through her writings. She protests against the oppression of the female class and wants to emancipate woman from the stereotypes of her colonized status. The poetic work of Kamala Das has engaged considerable critical attention and sustained rigorous explication. The subject of Kamala's work comprises of "woman" and the revelation of female experiences, it would be trauma of an unhappy marriage or humiliation of a desire, disgust at the male domination. Quest for love is certainly the perennial theme of Kamala's poetry.

Kamala Das is a popular poetess in India. Her popularity stems from how she presents herself in her poems or, as Vrinda Nabar expresses it: "whatever her deficiencies, they cease to matter when we hear her real voice and respond to her autobiographical authenticity. How Das expresses her self in her poems seems to have an intuitively appealing quality for most readers or hearers of her poems. Her poetry is an expression of self-consciousness and especially analysing "An Introduction" seems to be promising in order to find out how such an expression of self-consciousness could look like in detail. *An Introduction* is her masterpiece in the sense; here she celebrates the needs of woman: biological and psychological in a style that is disarmingly frank and candid.

An Introduction voices the longing and complaint of a woman who represents all women and she complains against man who represents every man. She says:

.... I met a man, loved him. Call
Him not by any name, he is every man
Who wants a woman, just as I am every
Woman who seeks love.

(An Introduction, lines 43-46)

Thus here is a poem which explores relationship between Man and Woman on the vital issue like love. Such a poem provides intellectual food to a feminist.

The feminists focus on the subordination of women on two fronts: biological and cultural. Sex is the biological construct but gender is the cultural one; two cannot be separated. In the poem 'An Introduction' the poetess reflects the biological and psychological need of women which need to be studied in the cultural framework of the society. The poetess prefers to write in English despite the objections of her friends, cousins and critics. She categorically writes that languages should be honest and human, as natural as the sounds of the animals like crow or lion. She has acquired literary competence to express her longings in English; hence she chooses even if it looks funny to her or her readers. The poetess distinguishes human speech from the other modes of communication of natural phenomena or sad human event like funeral. The primary function of human speech is to create awareness; it is neither blind nor deaf. She echoes the views of the linguists that language conditions consciousness. Perhaps this function of language impels the poetess to rebel against male domination and subordination of woman in a patriarchal society.

Dress in sarees, be girl
Be wife, they said. Be embroiderer, be cook,
Be quarreller with servants. Fit in. Oh, Belong, cried the categorisers. Don't sit
On walls or peep through our lace-draped windows.
Be Amy, or be Kamala.

(An Introduction, lines 33-38)

In Indian traditional society women are instructed to put on sarees; as wives they are to play different roles; the roles of an embroiderer, a cook, a quarreller with servants and so on. The basic principle is that they should adjust themselves to the surroundings. Even their gestures, postures and movements are controlled and directed by male members. The picture of the conservative society in which women are passive and submissive is brought out in the above passage. There are many don'ts that Indian married women are to follow.

Thus a feminist reading of An Introduction would bring to light three kinds of women in three types of society; the dependent women in a conservative society where 'woman' feels 'beaten'; the independent women in a permissive society where women are 'beloved and betrayed' and the interdependent woman in the progressive society where 'joys and aches' are equally shared by men and women. The poem presents in a frank and bold manner glimpses of the poet's life, her feelings and thoughts. The Introduction also triggers off a process of introspection and self-discovery in the mind of the writer. At the end of the poem, Das realizes her essential identity with womankind. Finally the poem is an expression of the poet's craving for love and of the sense of frustration and deprivation that arise on being denied it. These themes recur in Das's verse.

The poem Punishment in kindergarten begins by making a distinction between 'today' (i.e., the present) and the past. As an adult, she still doesn't feel as though the world is her own, but it is a little

more her own than it was when she was a child. Although she says that there is no need to remember the pain caused by a careless adult who mocked her for her tendency to keep to herself, the poem itself is an act of recollecting that event—another paradox to add to the ones we have come across. The poem reflects the tendency of children to be cruel to others. The cruelty of the other children here mirrors that of the woman who referred to the speaker as 'peculiar'. The poet curiously joins together the words "the flowers and the pain," two things that are not usually associated with each other. There is the implication that perhaps she associates flowers with pain because of the painful memory she has of being laughed at as a child.

The muffled words and blurred images remain in the speaker's mind as an adult. Unlike Wordsworth, Das does not indicate that there was anything about her childhood that she cherishes or sees as sacred. However, she does indicate that even though she probably shouldn't remember this particular memory, she cannot help recalling it. The repetition of "no need to remember" reinforces the paradox that the poem itself is an act of remembrance. The final image of the poem, the steel-white sun standing lonely in the sky, connects the speaker with the sun: it is lonely, just as she is, and perhaps its presence reminds her every day of the day from her childhood that she does not want to remember. The poet seems to be nostalgic about her childhood days. There are certain expressions in the poem that are worth remembering. The poet says that the child buried its face in the hedge and "smelt the flowers and the pain". "Smelt the flowers can be taken as an ordinary expression, but "smelt the pain" is something very evocative and expressive. In the first stanza of the poem, the poet describes the pain caused to the child, "throwing words like pots and pans". This again is beautiful. The phrase used by the poet to describe the child's teacher, namely, "blue-frocked woman" can be justified from the child's point of view. But to the poet who is an adult the use of the phrase looks a little too awkward. On the whole, the poem can be taken as the poet's interest in remembering her childhood days.

The poem is very simple in its construction and even colloquial in diction. Yet in its delivery is very much like the narrative of a film which goes back and forth in time to bring out a small incident in the life of the poetess which sets off her introvert nature that gets all the more pronounced as she grows up. In fact the incident is a reminder of the fact that the talented usually spend a lonely life right from their beginning. Thus from the psychological perspective too the poem is simple only on the surface level. The tone of the poem is pensive if not sad. It is a tone of compromise in the face of inevitability. Kamala believes in letting go and she does exorcise the minor ghost of her past only to bring out the one she is still haunted with – isolation. Kamala seems to be saying that though sometimes in times of crisis or loneliness we tend to remember some long forgotten incident of humiliation and pain it is better to forget and forgive and move on. The poem is also a testimony to the fact that with time people tend to forget their pain and moves on in life for better things. Thus the poem is a true modernist poem which at the same time nostalgically remembering an incident of childhood remembers it not in a moment of glorification but as an insight into an event of pain due to inborn desire for isolation and of difference. Kindergarten thus transforms from a site of celebration of innocence to the mourning of the loss of innocence yet with a positive note of the desire or capability of letting go.

CONCLUSION:

Poetry of Kamala Das' presents Indian woman in such a way that has challenged the usual sense of decency and decorum of male. She has commenced a new era for women poets, in which she constitutes a total rejection of the conventional styles of poetic expression of the dominant culture or the male-oriented universe. Her poetry is the acknowledgement and celebration of the beauty and

courage of being a woman, projecting the stereotype of a wronged woman and at once asserting the need to establish her voice and identity. Finally, she is successful in her venture of searching the ultimate self and the identity through the art of confession.

REFERENCES:

1. Das, Kamala. An Introduction
2. Das, Kamala. Punishment in kindergarten
3. Dwivedi A.N., Kamala Das and Her Poetry, Atlantic Publishers, New Delhi, 2000.
4. Das, Kamala., My Story, Sterling, New Delhi, 1988.
5. Iyengar, K. R. Srinivasa. Indian Writing in English. Sterling Publishers Private Limited, New Delhi, 2000.

Publish Research Article

International Level Multidisciplinary Research Journal

For All Subjects

Dear Sir/Mam,

We invite unpublished Research Paper, Summary of Research Project, Theses, Books and Books Review for publication, you will be pleased to know that our journals are

Associated and Indexed, India

- ★ Directory Of Research Journal Indexing
- ★ International Scientific Journal Consortium Scientific
- ★ OPEN J-GATE

Associated and Indexed, USA

- DOAJ
- EBSCO
- Crossref DOI
- Index Copernicus
- Publication Index
- Academic Journal Database
- Contemporary Research Index
- Academic Paper Database
- Digital Journals Database
- Current Index to Scholarly Journals
- Elite Scientific Journal Archive
- Directory Of Academic Resources
- Scholar Journal Index
- Recent Science Index
- Scientific Resources Database

Review Of Research Journal
258/34 Raviwar Peth Solapur-413005, Maharashtra
Contact-9595359435
E-Mail-ayisrj@yahoo.in/ayisrj2011@gmail.com
Website : www.ror.isrj.org