

Fair's Fair: A Feministic Analysis of Kamala Das' 'Summer in Calcutta'

Preeti*

PhD Scholar, NIILM University, Kaithal, Haryana, India

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 depict 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 an insight knowledge of man-woman relationships' psychology also.*

Key Words: Summer in Calcutta, Lust, Man-Woman Relationship.

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Kamala Das was born in 1934 at Punneyakutu 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 Sing. One of the writers like Pritish Nandy included almost 18 uncollected poems of Kamla Das in his anthology of Indian Poetry in English (1947-1972). 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 Tattoos 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". (Das,10)

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" (Das, 14)

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 was a critic, nature lover, fictionist, autobiographer and a 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 have 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 has 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.

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Corresponding Author

Preeti*

PhD Scholar, NIILM University, Kaithal, Haryana, India