



PORTRAYING LIBERATION AND FEMINISM IN THE WORKS OF KAMLA DAS

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ABSTRACT

Since the early Western world was male-dominated, and its poets well conscious of their subordinated status, their poetry often mirrored patriarchal and subaltern themes. Women lagged behind males in many spheres of society. Poems written by women in India date back to the time of the country's tribal singers. Poetry couldn't be written until the English language was properly Indianite and the Indians were properly Anglicized. Indian authors writing in English after independence fought to establish their own voice. Indian poets were met with numerous challenges from intellectuals calling for a renaissance in poetry; the only response they could provide was to compose real poetry about Indian life that rivaled the delectability of that written by poets in the United States and Britain. As part of her journey toward self-awareness, a woman may question whether or not she is really a product of the sociocultural milieu in which she was raised. The pervasive, all-encompassing, too-dominant, and repressive patriarchal culture forces her to the margins of society, stifling her actual individuality in the process. In order to gain control over her own life, to learn who she is and what she has given up in order to free herself from servitude, it is crucial that she express her feelings of shame, anguish, doubt, and anxiety about her femininity and her place in the world. This insight sets her on a quest into the depths of her being, and like the phoenix, she seeks to rise from the ashes and begin again.

Keywords: - Singers, English, Poets, Language, Poetry.

INTRODUCTION

In the 20th century, there was a widespread desire among poets, authors, and academics from other nations who wrote in English to cement the uniqueness of their work as an integral part of their nation's history, tradition, and literary endeavors. As the romantic period faded, a new generation of English-language Indian poets developed with the dawn of the post-independence era¹. In the decades after India's independence, Kamala Das has been one of the most influential voices in contemporary Indian English poetry. Madhavikutty in her native Malayalam, Kamala Das is a pioneer of Indian English poetry. Her poems serve to call attention to and protest the unfairness and inequality women face because of their gender. Any work of poetry, no matter where it was produced, would have an immediate context that grew out of the culture in which it was created. There should be no surprise that poets would make references to the world around them, including its social and cultural ramifications and the overall attitude and inclinations of the society in which they live. Thus, poets express the collective yearnings, anxieties, and dreams of the people². Though they would not all write about the same things, their poetry would be an organic reaction to their lives. In the 20th century, there was a widespread desire among poets, authors, and academics from other nations who wrote in English to cement the uniqueness of their work as an integral part of their nation's history, tradition, and literary endeavors. The second swell of post-independence period Indian poetry written in English followed the decline of the romantic tradition. In the decades after India's independence, Kamala Das has been one of the most influential voices in contemporary Indian English poetry. Madhavikutty in her native Malayalam, Kamala Das is a pioneer of Indian English poetry. The challenges women face because of their gender are the focus of her poetry, and she uses it to both emphasize and denounce these disparities and injustices.

LIBERATION

The word "liberation" denotes "the state of being free to pursue one's own goals" in standard dictionary use. For almost two thousand years, philosophers have argued about what exactly freedom entails, with nearly every significant thinker contributing to the discussion at some point. For example, according to philosopher René Descartes, "liberation" is the power to do or not do anything at will. The word "liberation" itself is something he says "can never be constrained." He argues that this freedom exists every time we make a deliberate decision, even "when a very evident reason moves us in one direction." A state of being free to "act or not act, according to the determination of the will," as David Hume puts it. Also, Jonathan Edwards provides a similar explanation of free will as actions motivated by one's own interests.

- (a) Individuals must interact with and navigate the community in ways that respect the rights of others. When we say that someone is not free to do anything, we imply that they are prevented from acting in accordance with their own free will. Laws and regulations limit an individual's freedom of choice by the imposition of directives and the imposition of a

plethora of external influences. People do not really live unrestrained lives if there are no leveling restraints such as law and tradition. Those who are weaker, whether in body or mind, are limited by those who are stronger. Therefore, freedom can only exist if there is a broad system of governance that protects certain sectors from the meddling of others.

- (b) Man as chooser: people aren't always free to do what they want, but they're still choosers, regardless of the level of power they're operating under. When playing football, for instance, a player's actions are constrained by the rules and the referee's calls. But he is free to forego football if he so chooses. It would constitute disobedience, but one still has the freedom to make their own decisions.
- (c) Autonomy: Autonomy implies that a person either follows his own rules or creates his own. The norms by which one abides are not limited to those established by tradition or law. A individual develops his own set of ethics through time. A truly autonomous creature is one who has developed an own set of values and is able to remain true to them regardless of external pressures. Thus, independence is associated with leadership qualities like bravery, honesty, and fortitude.

It's possible that the feminism represented by the four authors selected for this analysis is not militant feminism. Only on their degree of conscious awareness. By having their female characters exhibit feminist consciousness, these authors are showing us how they feel about freedom. Therefore, a feminist perspective, not necessarily based on western feminisms, may be found in their works. An effort has been made to define the relative degree of liberty demonstrated by the fictitious ladies by comparing and contrasting their situational reactions. We discovered that the characters may not be as free in one author as they are in another. The authors' varied levels of freedom may be traced back to their unique social and cultural contexts. The authors of this comparative study also made an effort to clarify the importance of this Indian flavor of feminism in the context of modern India, with the hope that doing so might prompt a reevaluation of our value systems and pave the way toward a more peaceful and sane existence in interpersonal relationships across the convention-bound Indian subcontinent. It is anticipated that this fresh perspective on issues facing Indian women would be a positive addition to Women's Studies in India.

FEMINISM

To be a feminist is to have a keen awareness of one's own female identity within a patriarchal society. It's a bold idea that supports women's rights on the basis of their equal status in society and the economy. It alludes to a set of ideas, goals, and ambitions that have evolved into feminist movements and philosophies. It's an idea for changing society so that women are at its center, where they may get the utmost respect and attention and, of course, benefit from full equality with men. Initiated in the early 1960s, feminist literary criticism seeks to study works of

literature from a female perspective. Men's views on women, their descriptions of women, and their literary representations are all explored in this subject.

The origin of the word "feminism" is a source of ongoing debate despite the fact that it is a relatively new concept. Feminism comes from the French term *feminisme*, which is composed of the two parts *femme* (meaning "woman") and *isme* (meaning "a social movement or political theory"). Many people mistakenly credit Charles Fourier with coining the term "feminisme" in the 1830s, but in reality the term's origins are unknown. In 1871, a French medical literature seems to have been the first to use the word "feminist" to describe a slowing or halting of sexual development in male patients, who were then thought to be suffering from "feminization" of their bodies. The French writer Alexander Dumas used the word in one of his pamphlets titled *l'homme-femme*, published in 1872, to characterize the actions of women seen as counter to traditional gender roles. The 1890s saw the first widespread usage of the phrase in France, mostly as a synonym for women's independence. But it wasn't until the 1880s, 1890 in Britain, 1910 in America, and 1910 in India when the term was first used. Feminism, in a nutshell, is a catchall phrase for many theoretical and critical approaches to literature and culture that focus on women in some way.

Feminism is the practice of giving equal value to men and women. It's an earnest endeavor to define the difficulties facing women and provide viable solutions. Feminism is an ideology that aims to both comprehend and alter the world in favor of women. It is a political and intellectual movement for gender equality and the elimination of all types of sexism. Summing up, we can say that feminism is a proposal for social transformation that arises through movements and places women at the center of society, where they receive the respect, attention, and obviously the facilitation of all kinds of rights that have traditionally been reserved for men by challenging the long-standing male dominance or prevalent patriarchy. Feminism, in its broadest sense, therefore encompasses women who advocate for and promote women's rights by their actions, words, and literature.

The feminist movement produced feminism, and the 15th century France is generally considered the movement's cradle. Christine de Pisan, a French lady, seems to have been the first to write on the privileges and responsibilities that come with being a woman of her sex. The history of feminism is sometimes described as a sequence of "waves," or periods when significant feminist groups emerged. There are three distinct 'waves' in the history of feminism that can be identified and tracked. Feminism's germinal seed was sown during the French Revolution in 1789, but its systematic and structured origin is often dated to 1792, with the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*. However, the period between the 1880s and the 1920s is often seen as the beginning of first-wave feminism on both sides of the Atlantic. The suffrage movement and the women's rights movement are at the heart of the first wave of feminism. This era is distinguished by its central focus on enacting societal, political, and economic changes that would improve the lives of women.

First-wave feminism

First-wave feminism emerged in the late 19th and early 20th century in the United States and Europe and was tied to the liberal women's right movement as well as early socialist feminism. The Seneca Falls Declaration, which asserted women's natural and political equality, served as the historical backdrop of first-wave feminism. Elizabeth Cady Stanton is credited with writing the proclamation's first draft. Women's voices were muted since they were denied political representation. The question of whether or not women should be allowed to vote is crucial and divisive. First-wave feminism primarily aims to achieve political equality, including the right women vote, own property, inherit, get an education, and hold public office. So, in 1920, women finally get the right to vote thanks to their tireless activism. Women are encouraged to contribute their 'innately feminine concerns' to politics despite being told they have a biological vulnerability (despite being nonsensical). To deny women the vote was to deny them full citizenship, Campbell argues, and her words are apt here.

Second-Wave Feminism

As part of the post-war socialist movements in western cultures, radical second-wave feminism has criticized 'capitalism' and 'imperialism' and has brought attention to the concerns of 'oppressed' groups such as the proletariat, black people, women, and homosexuals. This once again brings attention to the sexism problem. Feminist organizations have formed women-only consciousness raising groups as a form of protest against this social and political evil, with the goal of empowering women both collectively and individually via the methods of sharing personal experiences. Robin Morgan's *Sisterhood is Powerful* (1970) provides ample documentation of exactly this kind of action. One of the second-wave feminist activist organizations, the Redstockings, had a profound impact on improving women's economic, political, and social standing. They are responsible for the popular feminist expressions such as "sisterhood is powerful," "consciousness raising," "personal is political," etc., which are cited in support of feminism.

CONCLUSION

It starts off with the notion of Indian English writing as presented by the various reviewers. Due to the name "Kamala Das and her study" having undergone several connotations over time, the researcher carefully examines the expression's historical context. Her poetry focuses on the issue of Indian society's desire for identity during the time of male supremacy and tyranny. Additionally, a wide range of topics are covered, including language, the search for one's identity, the pursuit of love, sex, gender, confessionals, and a variety of themes. It also emphasizes the different feminine elements as well as feminist ideologies developed by numerous Indian authors, including Kamala Das. Additionally, it covers the literature review, significance of the study, goals and objectives, problem statement, and its hypothesis.

Many academics have described, monitored, and dealt with it. The entirety of Kamala Das' personal experience provides a list of items for achieving the goals and objectives of research. Chapter-by-chapter summaries and the approach for assessing the works have both been skillfully ornamented. The calm center of the storm can be seen in Kamala Das' poetry, as well as the positive protuberance's effective advance and seeming observation of desolation by a powerfully imaginative strength of mind. The main concern in the majority of her poetry works is the "quest for identity." Outstanding and brave, Kamala Das is a writer. She fearlessly tackles the wrath of the culture while also bringing to light the injustices that women and men experience in society and serving as an example for younger women. *Summer in Calcutta*, the first collection of poetry by Kamala Das, includes a piece called *An Introduction*. It begins with a declaration that demonstrates her outspoken distaste for politics, particularly in politically liberated India filled with predetermined privileged. The poet claims it is her right to be trilingual. It also supports her decision to write in both English and Malayalam, the language of her native Kerala. She might not want to receive advice about this matter from any relatives or guardians. Her choices are sincere and the result of passion. The poet sees it as both acceptable and kind for her to write in English.

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