Research Paper Literature

Exploring the Unexplored : The Love Poerty of Kamala Das

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ABSTRACT

Female sexuality and the subtle femine desires has inspired the modern poet all over the world.Kamala Das , basically a confessional poet and a hard core feminist tosses the various facts of female sexuality to the domain of Post- Colonial Indian English poetry.

KEYWORDS Female sexuality, Confessional, feminist, Post-colonial literature, sexuality

To move from the Poetry of Pre-Independence era to the Post-Independence is to move from the romantic, Socio-cultural and spiritual-transcendental type of poetry to a new type of poetry based on personal experience. In this sense Kamala Das is infact the first female poet to lay thread-bare her 'self', relating to her reactions in terms of love and Sex. Taking cue from her own marital and extramarital love affairs She unravels the female sexuality and the way it is being handled in the male dominated society. Kamala Das heralds the most significant stage of development of Indian feminine poetic sensibility not yet reached by her contemporaries. Her poetry embodies a "fiercely feminine sensibility that dares without inhibition to articulate the hurts it has received in a largely man-made world." (Iyengar, p-680). The present paper intends to reflect the unexplored areas of man-woman relationship from the point of view of a woman.

Kamala Das rightly hailed as the queen of erotica takes on a new subject like the female sexuality and the endless feminine desires. In his full-length study on Kamala Das, Bruce king remarks, "Das opened areas in which previously forbidden or ignored emotions could be expressed in ways which reflect the true voice of feeling". (152-153).

A Woman is almost like a musical instrument. Her Whole body has Innumerable sensitivity that needs to be aroused. This prepares her for the act of sex. It is a matter of shock that when a man gets a woman he pounces on her, as eagle on her prey. This is evident in a number of poems as in "Introduction" depicting the agony of the poet in her first sexual encounter with her husband. The poet says at that time she was tender and unaware of sex but the mature husband in order to satisfy his carnal hunger drags her to the bed and does the act in such a manner that the poet feels tortured instead of being loved. The whole tragic drama is brought out by the poet in the following lines:

"I asked for love, not knowing what else to ask

For, he drew a youth of sixteen into the

Bedroom and closed the door. He did not beat me

But my sad woman-body felt so beaten".

(OSKS, P-96)

The expression 'felt so beaten' clearly indicates the woman's plight and agony on being denied the soft touch by the husband. This type of suffering is faced by a newly married wife time and again. It is mainly due to man's impatience or lack of Knowledge of feminine sexuality.

Similar situation is also portrayed in "freaks". Here both the poet and the male-counterpart (probably poet's husband) are ready for the game of sex as suggested by "while our minds/ Are willed to race towards love". The husband and wife indulge in the act and the wife feels the husband with 'Nimble finger-tips' can only activate the skins lazy hunger". Although they are married for a long time yet they have failed in love. The wife clearly feels this business with the skin is not love because it is unable to illuminate the inner recesses of the woman's heart. Therefore towards the last part of the poem the wife declares:

……The heart

"An empty cistern, waiting

Through long hours, fills itself

With coiling snakes of silence…

I am a freak. It's only

To save my face, I flaunt, at

Times, a grand, flamboyant lust'.

(OSkS, p-48)

In the sexual union between a man and woman, a woman has to surrender her whole personality to satisfy the male ego. The ludicrous demands of the typical man is brought out ironically in "The Looking Glass".

Gift him all,

Gift him what makes you woman, the scent of

Long hair, the musk of sweat between the breasts,

The warm shock of menstrual blood, and all your

Endless female hungers.

(OSKS, p-55)

Man during marriage takes oath to provide every kind of support to the wife. Actually he does nothing except giving love in "lethal doses" and captivates her brutally like a domestic servant. The poet unearths such domestic subjugation at the

cost of feminine freedom that shatters all her wishes and desires in 'The old playhouse'.

…….you called me wife

I was taught to break saccharine into your tea and

To offer at the right moment the vitamins. Cowering

Beneath your monstrous ego I ate the magic loaf and

Became a dwarf".

(OSKS, p-30)

Man seeks all kinds of joy from the wife on the bed but as soon as his lust is satiated he turns his back and leaves her alone. Modern feminists disclose that a woman needs foreplay as well as after-play:

"His ageing body in its pride meeting the need for mine

And each time his lust was quietened

And he turned his back on me

panic I ask don't you want me any longer".

(OSKS, p-94)

Looking at this new approach of Kamala Das I am inclined to agree with K. D. Singh's observation that "for women consummation of love is not merely in the physical union, but in the wholesome unification of mental, emotional and spiritual dimension of a relationship with the corporeal"(p-29). For Kamala Das both body and soul is of equal importance in love. Neither body nor soul can be ignored because:

"Bereft of soul

My body shall be bare

Bereft of body

My soul shall be bare."

("The suicide" OSKS p-86)

Many poets before Kamala Das wrote on love. but no one dared to touch these afore-said areas. The way she treated the tabooed yet vital issues of love and sex has created a craze for her poetry in the post colonial literature. Her poetry is full of new possibilities and it will go on providing substance and material for new research.

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