

Confessions of Kamala Das in “MY STORY”

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Abstract This paper analyzes how Kamala Das's literary work, “My Story,” conveys her deepest emotions. In “Feline,” Das depicts the abstract as a well-considered perception of one's own inner self. Revolt may lead to ongoing inner conflict and struggles, but it also brings about the limitless satisfaction of feeling and being one's original, shattered inner depths, where the most innate desires are at work. Das understands this same truth and emphasizes the hollowness of self-identification with the approved roles in the symbolic world that are devoid of the spirit of self-inquiry. This shows the futility of existence and the hollowness of self-identification.

Key Words— confessional poetry, identification, Kamala Das, Literature, self- identification.

I. INTRODUCTION

Women's autobiographies are tools for self-representation of their personal histories. Women from the margins have used them to represent their realities and their feminist concerns. Their autobiographies have defied the set norms of language and aesthetics and instead molded them to speak of lives that have broken out of the ordinary. Almost all the autobiographies on this list have been translated to English from their original languages, thereby highlighting the importance of translations in bringing marginalized voices in literature to readers.

The confessional mode in literature:

The confessional mode in literature is the expression of the personal life experience of the authors. An American literary movement known as confessional poetry was started in the middle of the 20th century. Confessional poets, who emerged in the 1950s and 1960s, looked for a method to negotiate the cultural landscape of the mid-century, which was characterized by the end of World War II, the horrors of the Holocaust, and rising nuclearization. The emergence of conservatism and the nuclear family coincided with a change in society on the domestic front. Writing

candidly about their own lives and delving into previously taboo topics like mental illness, suicide, and sexuality, confessional poets discovered the flaws in the American dream.

The use of autobiography is a tool for more in-depth self-exploration and analysis. Sexton, who was encouraged to start writing by her therapist, was one of several confessional poets who utilised their poetry as therapy and psychoanalytic technique. Lowell, who spent time at Massachusetts' Maclean Hospital, also used poetry as a platform to discuss his struggles with addiction and mental illness.

Kamala Das: A Confessional Poet:

Writing with candor and honesty, as Kamala Das does, is unusual in Indian culture. The majority of Indian poets, who write in English, lack Kamala Das' openness while critically scrutinizing and evaluating their experiences. She uses the confessional mode, much like American confessional poets Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton, to find the images that capture the joy and frustration of accomplished womanhood.

It would be unfair to Kamala Das' poetic vision to refer to her as a merely confessional poet. Kamala Das has the ability to move beyond the strictly personal, embrace the non-personal, and ultimately merge with it, as we saw in the observation above.

Confessions in My Story:

Her autobiography, “My Story,” is crucial since it sheds a lot of light on her poems. It demonstrates how she struggled to maintain her femininity and assert her individuality in a world that was controlled by men. All of her psychological problems and disappointments stemmed from this uprising.

Memoirs are a mirror of a real life that was lived and had an interesting tale. Life for Kamala was rife with controversy. Her creation has caused controversy. People started to despise and dread her because of how

openly and honestly, she wrote about her failing marriage, her lusts, her loneliness, and her feminism.

Confession of Sex:

The desire for self-love and sex is the major theme of Kamala Das' semi-autobiography, "My Story." Her mismatched marriage did not allow her to experience the beauty of sex; instead, she felt it was a burden. She even called it rape. She was brave enough to open up to the rest of the world about her sexual life. In a chapter called "The Brutality of Sex," she says:

I was perhaps not equipped for sexual congress. Perhaps I am not normal; perhaps I am only a hermaphrodite (My Story p. 84).

Again and again, throughout that unhappy night, she hurt me and all the while the Kathakali drums throbbed dully against our window and the singers sang of Damayanti's plight in the jungle, (p. 85).

In Indian society, the term 'feminism' does not have a healthy place. Talking about one's intimacy and personal life brings criticism rather than appreciation. Kamala Das turned down the term "good woman." She had to face lots of challenges to reveal her life through her writing.

Her open statement, "My Body was immature and not ready for lovemaking," was brilliant in making the male-dominated world frown.

Confession of Racism:

"My Brother was plump and dark. His eyes were bright and circular. Although he was cleverest in his class the white boys made fun of him and tortured him by pushing a pointed pencil up his nostril."

V.M. Nair, the father of Kamala Das, was from a dominant Nair family in Indian society. But that did not stop the White boys from insulting her brother. When one criticizes someone or something, courage is required. Being a female writer and criticizing societal practices has always been difficult. Kamala Das breaks that oddity by confessing what she went through when she was under British rule. Though the Indians hated slavery and British rule, Kamala Das says how the Anglo-Indian boy Louis tried to please the English boy. Racism and casteism in India have their origins in this way.

Kamala Das was let down by the school management when her poem was read by her classmate Shirley Temple. The humiliation of being dark created an inferiority complex among the children. Hiding them in the lavatories was also purely a sign of racism.

Confession of Male Chauvinism:

Even in the twenty-first century, women have no freedom. A woman is respected when she is with her husband, has children, and sets up a family. They are merely considered domestic workers and childbearing machines. When a woman wants to become financially independent, many households in India object to that possibility. Those women who are single, separated, divorced, childless, and lesbians are branded as "characterless." Male chauvinism is a form of art that is revered even by women. The opposition to freedom comes from the mother, sister, mother-in-law, and daughter herself.

Men blame women for suppressing women themselves, but the so-called traditions of male chauvinism against women are also the work of men. Men blame women for everything.

When things go wrong, they do not want to accept it and make the women responsible.

My father was an autocrat and if he went wrong in his decisions, he did not want ever to hear about it. (p. 86)

The decision about Kamala Das was a failure, but she could not even tell her father about it. She expresses what she went through during her pregnancy days when she lived in Santa Cruz with her husband and his friends.

Confession of Depression:

Depression has become common among women, especially Postpartum depression. Many women are the victims of this depression, but they are not easily understood by others. It is often justified because it is usual for women to undergo this.

One day, being no longer able to bear it, I sent the cook to a chemist's shop for a dozen tablets of barbiturates (p. 93).

Her bravery in expressing her desire to die, as well as her understanding of depression, makes her stronger in

body, mind, and will. She was a woman who underwent modern slavery. Her status as an aristocrat by birth, education, and fame did not allow her to be free.

Confession of death:

Illness has become my mate (p. 212).

Her desire to die and accept death as reality proves her to be a fearless person. Though frustrated by her illness, she did not give up on life. This is what makes women stronger in all that they are and do. Her experience of sorrow makes her readers realize they should not give up on life and its challenges.

II. CONCLUSION

Women are powerful, and they have never remained mired in their sorrows and weaknesses. In the Confessions of St. Augustine of Hippo, Kamala Das uncovered her personal life, feelings, and emotions. This study explains how people's confessions help them become courageous and free from the clutches of slavery. Kamala Das, a woman of courage, is a sign of freedom and revolution.

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