

Unreal human in real world portrayed in the poems of Kamala Das

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Abstract

Humanism is a joyful lively alternative to the religion that believes in the supernatural element called God. Humanists believe that this is the only life in which we have knowledge that we owe to ourselves and to the people in this fragile planet to survive. They take responsibility for their own life and these are new adventures, new knowledge, new discoveries and exploring new options of life. Instead of running after the answers for the questions of life inside the so called societal way, humanist search it in his own open-ended way with his unique ideas and he discovers the essence of life. But in today's scenario, humanism failed in the fakeness called technology and a new world of sophisticated life. Men started to run after false things leaving their humanism behind. Kamala das was always portrayed as a feminist and the writer who openly condemns male and their behavior with women especially on sexual note and was critically condemned by many writers and media. But rather than feminism her poems portrays humanistic perspective too which was never noticed or identified yet. This study tries its hand on spotlighting the humanistic perspective and concepts hidden in the poems of this realistic writer. The poems taken for this study were an introduction, the *Old Play House*, *My Grandmother's House*, *The Looking Glass* and *In Love*. Her poems were always seen in feministic perspective, in which other concepts get hidden. So, this study focuses the humanistic view in these poems.

Keywords: humanity, humanism, humanistic concept, technological change

Introduction

Humanism is a cogent viewpoint informed by science, inspired by art, and motivated by empathy. Respecting the importance and dignity of each human being, it supports the enlargement of individual liberty and opportunity consonant with social and planetary responsibility. It argues the expansion of participatory democracy and the extension of liberal, open society, standing for other human being whole heartedly and standing for their social justice. Humanism frees men's thoughts from supernaturalism; it makes the men to rephrase their priority from Unseen God to well-seen Nature. It helps and holds that values: let it be religious, ethical, social and political all have their sources from the experience of Human and their heredity. Humanism always derives its source and goals for life from the priority and needs of human and their interest, it doesn't take its life theology and its ideas. Humanity should take its responsibility for its own destiny. There is a strong belief on the humanistic perspective that when reasoning and knowledge were used as a best tool to solve the world's problem. Humanism is totally a philosophy of those who have love for their life. But today's scenario is totally different. Human forgets humanism taking other things as his priority which makes him to lead a life full of fakeness and makes him inhuman. So the major focus on the study is about the lost humanity in men.

The philosophy of Humanism is based on naturalism it's a worldwide view. Kamala Das, one of the outstanding poets of India, writing in English and Malayalam. She was predominantly influenced by her uncle Nalapatta Narayan Menon, a prominent writer. She began writing poetry at an early age. Born into a conservative Hindu family, Kamala Das converted to Islam at the age of 65. She is now working as a syndicated columnist.

Writing under the pen name, 'Madhavikutty', she is one of the foremost short story writers in Malayalam. She was nominated for the Nobel Prize in literature, along literary personalities such as Nadine Gordimer and Doris Lessing. Her widely acclaimed stories include *Pakshiyude Maranam*, *Neypayasam*, *Thanuppu*, and *Chandana Marangal*. Her first English poetry was *The Sirens*, published in 1964, followed by *summer in Calcutta*. She received many awards and accolades.

"Kamala Das enjoys a unique position among the living Indo-English poets because of her unique inspiration and unique expression" (Indian English poetry, P.76)

Kamala Das apart from her poems about feminist prospects, has a unique place among the Indian - English poets because of her own only one of its kind style of writing and exceptional style of expressing things. Her works are the portrayal of reality, phases and faces of life in different walks of life. In the works of kamala das there is a strong autobiographical elements of human realities portrayed. She was also a widely read columnist and wrote on diverse topics even though she was famous for her feministic perspective and for her controversial and sensational poetries, the most important perspective unnoticed is the humanistic perspective. This study tries its hand on spotlighting the humanistic perspective and concepts hidden in the poems of this realistic writer. The poems taken for this study were An introduction, The old play house, My grandmother's house, The looking glass and In love. Her poems were always seen in feministic perspective, in which other concepts get hidden. So, this study focuses the humanistic view in these poems.

An Introduction

"I don't know politics but I know the names
Of those in power, and can repeat them like
Days of week, or names of months, beginning with Nehru."
(An introduction, L 1-3)

In the above lines Kamala das says that she doesn't know politics but she can name all the politicians from Nehru till date. In today's scenario all human runs like zombies leading a machine driven life. Instead of searching for the true meaning of life, they run after money, pride and self-respect. They live their life without knowing anything beyond their need. For example, from the above lines, each and every person in this world can say the names of all politicians' without thinking and they feel that as a pride in showing off their knowledge on that. But no one has any idea on politics or politicians or the present politics in their day today life. All love speaking about politicians, but no one wants to speak about the internal happenings or interfere in that, because all are busy in their own schedules.

"Why not leave
Me alone, critics, friends, visiting cousins,
Every one of you? Why not let me speak in
Any language I like? The language i speak,
Becomes mine, its distortions, its queerness's
All mine, mine alone.
It is half Indian, half Indian, funny perhaps, but it is
honest"(an introduction, L 8 - 14)

In the above lines Kamala Das tells about how each and every human is forced by their relative and people around them even on the language we use to express about us and in each and every deed of ours. This society sets us certain rules and we are not allowed to live our life on our own. The above lines clearly say that today's human doesn't even have the rights to use their own language in the work they do. Whether they like it or not they are forced to use the language which is universal. If they use their own language, it's not taken into account, the worst part is it's not considered as his asset instead men loses even the freedom of speaking his own language in a common place as it's considered as an insult. To portray and show off himself in his own society men seeks the help of the language which is not his own. Likewise, even in language there is no freedom for the human of this day. Whether he likes it or not, he is forced to express his view in language which he can't express better. Men lacks, pause in expressing his views on everything because of flaw in using other language. Thus he was even denied to use his own language in expressing his views.

"It is human as I am human, don't
You see? It voices my joys, my longings, my
Hopes, and it is useful to me as cawing
Is to crows or roaring to the lions, it
Is human speech, the speech of the mind that is
Here and not there, a mind that sees and hears and
Is aware. Not the deaf, blind speech
.....
.....
Funeral pyre." (An introduction, L 15 - 24)

In the above lines, the author portrays that, our language is like the right of every living thing on earth and it's their own. The same way is the use of mother tongue for every human being as well. In today's scenario, man is forced to believe that their mother tongue is under privileged to use in public places. They don't feel that it's the part of their life. It is because of the commercial life the people leads these days. Mother tongue, as author says, for a person is like the fire, the wind, the feel of the deaf, and the speech of the blind which can be felt more than it is used. But people in the present day kill their feel for their passion for mother tongue for their living without even feeling bad for it.

"In this world, he's tightly packed like the
Sword in its sheath. It is I who drinks lonely
Drink at twelve, midnight, in hotels of strange towns,
It is I who laugh, it is I who make love
And then, feel shame, it is I who lie dying
With a rattle in my throat" (An introduction, L 52 - 58)

In the words of kamala das, today's man is fully packed with works but he is lonely. He does everything alone laughing, crying, eating and living. Even though he's surrounded by people, he's alone in his own world without mingling with people around him. He leads a life in which everyone around him becomes stranger. He doesn't even get time to know who's with him or around him and who runs behind him. In this materialistic world, men run with the invisible time forgetting the visible people around him.

"I am sinner,
I am saint. I am the beloved and the
Betrayed. I have no joys that are not yours, no
Aches which are not yours. I too call myself." (An
introduction, L 58 - 61)

As far as today's men are concerned, they themselves live a life of an object, which does its work without even knowing what mixed consequences it gives to other members. Men react and give importance to unreal games and unknown people rather than the reality that entangled in his life suffers in front of them. They have time to post their merry and melancholy for unknown people, but they don't have time to hear their own people's melodies or miseries. That's clearly stated in the above lines. He doesn't even love himself. He doesn't enjoy his merry or feel bad for his sorrows. He is no more human and not saints either. He's betrayed not by others, but by his own deeds, because of the work that feeds on his real happiness for his unreal materialistic gains.

The Old Play House

"Cowering
Beneath your monstrous ego I later the magic loaf and
Became a dwarf. I lost my will and reason, to all your
Questions I mumbled incoherent replies. The summer
Begin to pall. I remember the rudder breezes
Of the fall and the smoke from the burning leaves. Your
room is
Always lit by artificial lights, your windows always

Shut. Even the air - conditioner helps so little," (the old play house, L. 14 - 21)

"In "The old playhouse", she accuses patriarchy for its adeptness at turning women into cage-birds without identities. Her contempt against patriarchy becomes stronger on recognising the dwarfed status of women, a result of men's deep-rooted desire to instil the knowledge and power of themselves into women." (Charisma of kamala Das, 160).

The above quotation from 'Charisma of Kamala Das' focuses on dwarfed status of women alone, But in today's scenario women alone is not dwarfed instead the whole human being is dwarfed by the technological changes around him. Men being running at the back of technologies and the new changes of today's world, they even forget to notice the seasonal changes around him. He forgets to play and get out of his packed rooms. He never has time to face the real world, the nature, the real games, the real changes of nature. He leads his full life inside the rooms without even distracted by nature. He never knows the seasonal changes, nature and its nourishment, the cherished memories it holds, nothing. He lives with the breeze of air conditioner, inside the contented room, slowly dying, killing his own self for lifeless things. These are clearly portrayed in the above lines.

"No more singing, no more dance, my mind is an old Playhouse with all its lights put out. The strong man's technique is Always the same, he serves his love in lethal doses," (the old play house, L. 24 - 26)

Human forgets his humanity; he forgets his joy, the merry making habits in his routine. His formal work has made him to feel in such a way that even he couldn't love any other person or even his life partner whole heartedly. He lends his total love to the lifeless thing called job and the luxurious life it provides, but he forgets the people who shares it with him. Even he expresses his love for his beloved in lethal doses. Thus, he becomes a slave than a human being with life and soul.

My Grand Mother's House

"The house withdrew into silence, snakes moved
Among books, I was then too young
To read, and my blood turned cold like the moon
How often I think of going...
.....
.....
Behind my bedroom door" (my grandmother's house, L. 3 - 11)

Human forgets all the hobbies he had once. On his books snake crawls instead of his hands. Reading was once a wise hobby and books were men's best partner but because of technology men not only left his partner but he even turned down his best hobby called reading and he lost himself. Once man loved being what he was. Now he sleeps with loneliness. He hugs it, nourishes it with his lonely works, he fills it with his lonely dreams. He feeds the loneliness with dreams, liveliness, freedom, the love for his people around and the cause of living. At last sleeps with it as though he's only left with loneliness.

The Looking Glass

"A living without life when you move
Around, meeting strangers, with your eyes that
Gave up their search, with ears that hear only" (the looking glass, L. 19 - 21)

Today's life becomes a life in which he lives physically, but he's dead from inside, feels lifeless. He even meets his relatives as strangers. He almost becomes a robot which has eyes that does not see or the ears that does not hear in these days this is the present situation of the people. On the whole, he gave up the search for his life, instead turns that search on money and luxuries of life alone. He runs abroad tries to make strangers happy, neighbours as his friends, even their pets as his game partner for the lifeless life he have to settle in abroad, but forgets to feel affection for his people who have the genuine love and care for them. For his so called 'source of revenue' men started to lead a false life of loving strangers abroad and hating his own folks at his junction.

In Love

"I watch the sleek crows flying
Like poison on wings-and at
Night, from behind the Burdwan
Road the corpse - bearer cry 'Bol,
HariBol', a strange lacing
For moonless nights, while i walk
The verandah sleepless, a
Million questions awake in
Me, "(in love, L. 16 - 24)

At the end when he questions himself as to what sort of life he had lead. He has no memories to cherish, no decision to make, no people to get suggestions from, no person to love back whole heartedly. At last without actually dying he becomes a corpse. He sits on watching the moonlight becomes speechless. As there is no person to share those moments of his success or the achievement with him.

Conclusion

"When a woman realises the true nature of herself as well as the man besides herself, the gender disparities may be erased. Though Kamala Das sounds rebellious in most of her poems, there are echoes of her yearning for a shared humanity san all feminine differences as a true radical humanist" (Charisma of kamala Das 164).

In 'Charisma of Kamala Das' she asks women to feel what she is and asks her to come out of the so called gender differences but apart from gender bias she portrays the humanistic concepts in her poems in the most rebellious and most vigorous way. She want things to be shared equally between people so that they return back to their so called humanity, which they lost long back on the very day when the 'technological child' was handed over to him. The human of these days really forgot what real life is instead they run after unreality like money, luxurious life, gadgets, positions, time, job and loneliness; forgetting the reality of life love, affection, care for each other. They run like zombie neglecting the real happiness for the unreal, temporary

pleasure. Human is losing his humanity in the name of new technological improvement and the urge for living today without thinking about tomorrow. He kills his humanity inside to live today. But he should understand that the love for each other and the humanistic concern for him and for others only will lead him to a heavenly long lasting pleasure called peace - making and peaceable living. This was clearly proved and portrayed with the help of the unique and everlasting lines of Kamala Das.

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