

Preface

Early English poetry by Indian women poets is a strange hybrid. Composed by the women saturated in Western literary culture and yet shackled by the ideals of Indian womanhood, it deals with themes more conventional than personal. Legends, peasants, morals and such like stereotypes dominate it. The pioneers' lack of strong personal conviction and of the urge to self expression is, however, more than counterbalanced by their social consciousness and their sensitivity to natural beauty. If Taru Dutta and Sarojini Naidu have not yet totally dated, it is because they possess these two qualities in abundance.

Kamala Das is something of an innovator in the history of Indo-Anglian-poetry. She is one of the first women poets to have the courage of her convictions and to lay bare her heart to the world at large. The sincerity of her feelings is perfectly matched by the authenticity of her expression. Though a trailblazer, she does not altogether abjure the established tradition in Indo-Anglian poetry handed down by her predecessors. Hence it would be too simplistic to call her either confessional or traditional precisely because she is both at once. She is in fact that rare entity that T.S. Eliot conceives an ideal poet to be : a fine blend of tradition and the individual talent. I undertake a reappraisal of her poetry from this perspective.

I am immensely grateful to Professor Kamal K Roy for so patiently, so painstakingly supervising my research for the present thesis. For a working woman to be a wife, a mother, and a researcher at the same time is more than a handful. I appreciate the understanding my husband and son have shown and the sacrifices they have gladly made during the years I was busy researching and writing the thesis out. I will remain ever obliged to the educationist Mr. Mani Bhushan Ray, Headmaster, Principal Sunil Bhowmick, Prof. Sakti Pada Ghosh, Prof. Dilip Kumar Chakraborty. and Advocate Narendra Ghosh for constantly inspiring me in my research. The only thing, however, that has sustained me all through is the sheer joy of exploring the inviting and intriguing, entrancing and enigmatic poetic world of Kamala Das. I am profoundly indebted to her for granting me a personal interview.

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