



RAISING AWARENESS IN FIVE POEMS BY KAMALA DAS

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Abstract

This article is about the analysis of the five poems by Kamala Das entitled *An Introduction*, *The Looking Glass*, *The Sunshine Cat*, *The Old Playhouse* and *The Suicide*, these poems are analyzed by combining the elements of poetry; symbol, irony, and repetition which contribute to revealing the raising awareness. The analysis is based on the concept of Feminist Literary approach by Julia Kristeva and The concept of Self-awareness from Crisp & Turner.

Key words: raising, awareness, and feminist

A. INTRODUCTION

Women are considered as the goddess in Indian society from the ancient time. However, the fact shows that they are not treated like a goddess. They are being ill-treated for many years and used just like things to fulfill the wishes of the community. Since their birth until the end of their life, women only play the roles as a daughter, sister, wife, later mother. These fact place women in a difficult position. Indian society belief woman has no ability to contribute more to society. This becomes the main reason Indian woman are forbidden and get limitation for education and work outside the house. Even though in the present day Indian women have access to formal school, the education and lessons given to them are limited. For instance, they are led to think that man is the leader. They also feed with false knowledge such as women have lack intelligence. They have no capacity to compete with a man.

Some of the Indian women are aware of this unfair situation. They begin to fight and break the system. They start to gain awareness by accepting the fact that they are women who can contribute to others. Then they start to change their mindset by start thinking that they have a similar capacity as a man. Some of the poems try to encourage another woman to stand up for their right, to voice their thought out. Gaining awareness is not easy. This needs big effort and courage. Some of the Indian women find comfort in the patriarchy system. As the result, they tend to accept the restriction. Some of them are scared to speak up since they

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think they are too powerless. They believe if they fight back it will harm them. This is the reason some of the Indian women decide to do nothing.

There are two key words to form the terminology of this study. They are *raising* and *awareness*. According to Merriam Webster Dictionary (2018), the term *raising* means to to get together for a purpose. While, in the Collin Cobuild Dictionary (2018), *awareness* means if you are aware of something, you realize that it is present or is happening because you hear it, see it, or feel it. Raising awareness in this analysis refers to the condition where women are not only realizing the restriction and control of man in India tradition is presenting or happening. They are conscious because they see and they feel it by their ownself. They motivate others to awake and take advantage of that situation. These five poems show how women in India manipulated by man and get limitation from man. It can be seen through the treatment of man toward the women; utilize the chance and making choices.

Raising awareness in this analysis refers to the way Indian women to increase the awareness of the people about the rank and dignity of women in society.

B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The design of this research is qualitative, content analysis that is to analyze the five poems by Kamala Das. The data is collected from the quotation in the poems entitled *An Introduction*, *The Looking Glass*, *The Sunshine Cat*, *The Old Playhouse* and *The Suicide*. These poems are analyzed by combining the elements of poetry; symbol, irony, and repetition which contribute to revealing the raising awareness. Symbol is used to represent the freedom that Indian women have. Irony has a role to uncover the unexpected truth related to man treatments towards women. The analysis is based on the concept of Feminist Literary approach by Julia Kristeva and The concept of Self-awareness from Crisp & Turner.

C. DISCUSSION

This chapter analyzes five poems by Kamala Surayya; *The Looking Glass* (later will be mention as *TLG*), *The Sunshine Cat (TSC)*, *The Old Playhouse (TOP)*, *The Suicide (TS)* and *An Introduction (AI)*, reflecting the issue about raising awareness. The analysis uses poetic elements and figurative languages such as symbol, irony, repetition. Raising awareness in this analysis refers to the way Indian women increase the awareness of women about the rank and their dignity in society. Raising awareness reflected from the consciousness of Indian women that they have equal potential as a man. There are two ways done by women to raise their awareness; utilize the chance and making choices.

Utilize the Change

Patriarchal culture in India is very detrimental to women both physically and emotionally. Physically, women in India are often being bullied, harassed and intimidated. While emotionally, women in India are not respected for their rights. They often receive bad treatment which causes trauma or fear for them through hurtful words, dirty words, shouting, insults or threats they get. Ironically, some of the women accept these treatments even though they realize that it is very detrimental to themselves. They are afraid to make changes or fight the system.

Indian women are aware of their education. However, women in India are being controlled to do their will and achieve their dream. They have access to formal school, but the education and lessons given to them are limited. Meanwhile, they realize that education is important to increase their quality. They try to learn by themselves from around them. They utilize the opportunity within the limitations of the education given to them. It can be seen in the following quotation:

*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. (AI, line: 1-3)*

The quotation above shows that there is a contradiction from people opinions about women intelligence with the fact shown by the speaker. The speaker reveals that women have curiosity. It can be seen people said that women do not know anything about politics but she proves that she knows the man in power. She knows that their country is leading by a man. She aware about anything happens in her country such as the people and the leader. The speaker shows that women are smart. They realize that she can get knowledge, not from formal education but just her surround. She knows that the opportunity to get an education is by observing what is happening around.

Making Choice

Another way done by Indian women to raising awareness is by making choices. Making choices is seen from their struggle to get freedom and fight for themselves. They show that they have the right to determine what they want for their life. They refused to be a subject and obey the rules that limit their choice to decide their life. The act of making choices shows from the women rejection toward man control.

The resistance can be seen in quotes bellow:

*Then ... I wore a shirt and my
Brother's trousers, cut my hair short and
ignored
My womanliness. Dress in sarees, be girl*

*Be wife, they said. Be embroiderer, be cook,
Be a quarreller with servants. Fit in (AI,
line:33-37)*

The above quote shows evidence of women's resistance. The speaker reveals that women have the right to choose their lives. To fight the system formed by men, women change their appearance so that they can be separated from men's control. Strengthened in the word "my womanliness" is a form of women's resistance to escape from the patriarchal system. They want to be valued as people who are equal to men. They also want to get the opportunity to show their skills and be themselves public without 'label' woman or man. Then on line 35-37: */Dress in sarees, be cook, Be a quarreller with servants. Fit in/*. It is seen that women are restricted to the public area (women are only allowed to be in the domestic area). They are limited in education, mindset and public space.

Women who refuse to be a subject to men are reflected from their resistance

Furthermore in the poem *The Sunshine Cat*, line 7-10:

*Face into their smells and their young lusts
to forget
To forget, oh, to forget, and, they said, each
of
Them, I do not love, I cannot love, it is not
In my nature to love, but I can be kind to
you. (TSC, line:7-10)*

The speaker expressed his rejection of the treatment he received. He tried not to just fall and submit to the desires of men who treated him only as sex tools. Through the phrase */... it is not my love, but I can be kind to you./* From the sentence, it can be seen that the speaker still tries to struggle on his own to desire and respect himself as a woman. The suffering felt by women is also shown on line 11-14:

*They let her slide from pegs of sanity into
A bed made soft with tears, and she lay there weeping,
For sleep had lost its use. I shall build walls with tears,
She said, walls to shut me in(TSC, line:11-14)*

Through paradox, the speaker reveals that he has never been cared for by her husband from any aspect of his life. This can be seen in the phrase */A soft made bed with tears, and she lay there weeping/* which shows that women who have never been appreciated and are only used as a means of satisfying lust, have never felt comfortable. The word "bed" which can be interpreted as a comfort or resting place from a sense of paradox with the word "tears" which tends to express suffering and sadness. Women who live in a patriarchal system that is always regulated by their husbands can only surrender and accept the treatment of

suffering. Then on line 14: the "walls to shut me in" quote reveals that women are not entitled to do something because they (the woman) are the tools/belongings of men.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Five poems by Kamala Surayya entitled *Punishment in Kindergarten*, *The Looking Glass*, *The Sunshine Cat*, *The Old Playhouse* and *The Suicide*, and *An Introduction* show the issue of raising awareness. Raising awareness in this analysis refers to the way Indian women to increase the awareness of the people about the rank and dignity of women in society. Indian culture considers the woman as "the other" in society. Women are often regarded as the complement for men. The woman is used by man as sex tools. They are educated to be the servant for the man. They lead to think that woman is the man property. Not all women in India are aware of the wrong system in India, and those who are aware of this system try to open their mind and motivate other women to take advantage of that situation. They believe that they can compete with the man and have the same position as a man. In other word, they have similar intelligent, they have similar skills, and they can pursue their career. They start to gain awareness by accepting the fact that women can contribute to others. Raising awareness reflected from the consciousness of Indian women that they have similar potential as a man. There are two ways done by women to raising the awareness; knowing the restriction and aware of the control of man.

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