

# Portrayal of the trauma of a woman through the poem An Introduction by Kamala Das

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## Abstract

Kamala Das was a well-known poet from India. She was a native of Kerala. The primary themes in her works were trauma and memory. Her writings are mostly autobiographical. An introduction is a poem that deals with the personal life experience of Kamala Das. The poem can be analysed through the lens of trauma literature, as it reflects the poet's struggle with societal norms, gender expectations, and the search for identity. The paper interpreting the poem as trauma literature that focus on the exploration of Das's emotional and psychological trauma arising from her confrontation with a conservative society that imposes restrictions on women. The paper delves into the ways the poem portrays the lasting impact of societal constraints on the poet's psyche, emphasizing the emotional wounds inflicted by societal norms and gender roles. Additionally, it can highlight how the poem becomes a medium through which Kamala Das articulates her struggles, attempting to transcend the trauma and find her own voice and identity. Through an examination of language, imagery, and symbolism in the poem, the abstract could explore how Das uses poetic expression as a form of catharsis and resistance against the trauma of societal expectations

## Keywords

Trauma, sexuality, gender inequality

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## 1. Introduction

Kamala das was born on March 31st, 1934. She was a Malayalam writer and poet from India, best known for her pen name Madhavikutty. Her autobiography and short tales are the main reasons for her fame in Kerala, but her English work, written under the pen name Kamala Das, is renowned for its poems and candid autobiography. In addition, she was a well-read columnist who covered a wide range of subjects, such as politics, child care, and women's issues. She was regarded as an iconoclast in her generation's popular culture due to her accepting view on female sexuality.

Her debut poetry collection, *Summer in Calcutta*, brought new life to Indian English poetry. She mostly wrote about love, betrayal, and the pain that followed. Das wrote three further poems. She controversially changed her name to Kamala Surayya and converted to Islam in 1999. Among the numerous literary honours, she was bestowed with was the 1985 Asian World Prize for Literature. At the age of 75, she passed away at Pune's Jehangir Hospital on May 31, 2009.

The poem *An Introduction* is a powerful and reflective piece of writing that makes a strong statement on identity, resistance, and self-discovery. In this incredibly intimate and moving work, celebrated Indian poet Kamala Das muses on her experiences, cultural expectations, and the complexity of identity. This is a potent declaration of uniqueness and a voyage of self-discovery. Through her poetry, Kamala Das allows readers to share in her challenges, victories, and personal problems. The poem is an important and poignant work

of feminist literature because it offers a timeless examination of identity, gender, and societal expectations.

The poem opens with the speaker adamantly rejecting social convention, saying, "I don't know politics but I know the names of those in power." (Das, line 1)

The woman's defiance suggests a battle against the oppressive forces that aim to define her, and it sets the tone for the investigation of her trauma.

Kamala Das illustrates the complex depth of the woman's trauma with rich and powerful images. Lines where she points that can be called as a mother or Kamala Das highlight how women are subjected to rigid roles that define their identities as mothers and wives. By speaking of herself in the third person, she emphasizes the external imposition of identity and establishes a feeling of separation.

The speaker's reflections on language and the limitations it imposes shed more light on her suffering. Her attempt to express her experiences within the constraints of linguistic standards is reflected in the poem. Speaking in three languages, writing in two, and dreaming in one, the speaker bemoans the constraints of language. This language barrier becomes a metaphor for the larger difficulty women encounter when trying to communicate their deepest feelings and ideas within a patriarchal system.

The woman's relationship with her own body is examined together with her traumatic experiences. Although Kamala Das paints a realistic picture of the physicality of the feminine body, the depiction is tinged with discomfort and a sense of imprisonment. Phrases where speaks about her virgin draw

attention to the way society views women's bodies and their supposed virtue, which adds to the female protagonist's misery. A recurrent topic in the poem is revolt against social expectations and standards. The speaker declares her agency and individuality while rejecting traditional roles. The narrative is laced with references to the agony of social rejection and judgment, so this rebellion is not without its consequences.

## 2. Conclusion

The act of declaring "I am" over and over again represents a reclamation of agency, a rejection to fit into the socially prescribed positions. Kamala Das captures the spirit of the woman's journey, which is characterized by hardship, rebellion, and an unyielding devotion to self-discovery, in these concluding lines.

The preceding verses, which explore the linguistic, cultural, and physical limitations placed on the lady, highlight the relevance of the coda. The anguish of having to deal with many languages and expressional constraints becomes a metaphor for the larger battle of finding one's authentic voice amid social constraints. The title "Mrs. Das" is imposed, highlighting the external imposition that adds to the woman's trauma and sense of alienation by underlining the reduction of identity to marital status.

In addition, the examination of the female body as a target for criticism and scrutiny draws attention to the social demands around female chastity and the suffering that results from negotiating these expectations. The poem's defiance of these conventions is shown in the final statement, which stands for the rejection of society standards and the recovery of one's own bodily autonomy.

An Introduction closes on a positive note, highlighting the woman's autonomy and fortitude in the face of suffering from society. Beyond the poem's boundaries, Kamala Das creates a compelling story that inspires readers to consider the enduring strength that comes from women who reject social rules and stand up for who they are. The poem is a classic example of the unbreakable spirit that can come out of the furnace of social expectations.

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