



THEMATIC STUDY OF THE POEMS OF KEKI DARUWALLA

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ABSTRACT

The present article deals with some of the poems of Keki Daruwala, a renowned poet and here we have tried to discuss some of the themes of his poems. His collection of poetry named The Keeper of the Dead in 1984 won him the most prestigious Sahitya Academy Award. Daruwala considers poem as a child because “you like it in its totality and not because a line here or a limb there.” ‘Ghaghra in Spate’ displays the problems of the villagers who are starving for several days because of the floods in Ghaghra. In his Tarai he gives a vivid and authentic picture of the bandits wreaking a walk in the region setting the small house is on fire, harass and loot the people of the gold ornaments like rings, necklace etc. In the poem The Mistress, the title is indeed used for English language. He says that “my mistress is half-cast.” Another of his poem, The Unrest of Desire shows the incapacity of men to suppress a desire for to keep it hidden under some false or fake expression and his eye. Thus, there are so many other poems and themes. So let’s discuss them.

Key words: Flood, Village, Tarai, English Language, Bird, Situation.

INTRODUCTION

Keki Daruwala is “one of the most substantial of modern Indian English poets” M. K. Naik and he is correct in this as Daruwala’s poems are considered as the treasure in Indian English literature. Vilas Sarang too shares his view on Daruwala as he calls his poetry an outcome of a wide range of experience outside the ambit of poets. He has joined the Indian police service in 1958 and eventually becomes special assistant to the prime minister on international affairs. His experience of being a policeman and the consequential encounters

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different situation, people and led him to explore different situations, people and locales. His collection of poetry named *The Keeper of the Dead* in 1984 won him the most prestigious Sahitya Academy Award. Daruwala considers poem as a child because “you like it in its totality and not because a line here or a limb there.”

Daruwala has always been a poet who wants to convey his concern regarding social and national issues. His concerns can be noticed by us in his early poems such as ‘Ghaghra in Spate’ where he displays the problems of the villagers who are starving for several days because of the floods in Ghaghra as the mud-and-straw huts are swept away by the rushing waters. However, like the every after moth of the flood, the village is full of the mud and the damage is huge. It also shows the plight of cattle and animals during the flood. The real damage is noticed once the flood has subsided and water recedes. The land begins to stink, the houses, still has water in its great quantity in every vessel. The entire village has almost collapsed both physically and mentally and that is the tragedy.

The flood has brought shoals of fish which has dried up now and therefore the fish started dying due to mud and the heat of sun. So, Daruwala has certainly change shown sympathy for this helpless people and other creature in these helpless people and other creatures.

In his *Tarai* he gives a vivid and authentic picture of the bandits wreaking a walk in the region setting the small house is on fire, harass and loot the people of the gold ornaments like rings, necklace etc. These bandits are without any emotions and feelings; they do not miss any kinds of mercy. However the women who are suffering from the gout or elephantiasis are really difficult to handle to them as well because it is really hard to remove the rings from their swollen fingers without cutting them off. Similarly, the removal of necklace is difficult from the neck of the woman who is suffering from the goitre. However, the district is not that bad. You can water many things while driving a car and you have to cross the river Ghaghra. There is also an ice factory to get the cold water. Thus, the poet has beautifully described the city and district of Tarai.

Another of his poem, *The Unrest of Desire* shows the incapacity of men to suppress a desire for to keep it hidden under some false or fake expression and his eye. However, the desire would appear on its own as it doesn’t fail to manifest itself as it comes out through the faces of man, especially by her eyes. It is possible that the person in front of that person would not understand the exact desire that lies in the heart of the man but he/she certainly comes to know that there is a desire in that man’s heart. Thus, this is an amazing idea put forth by Daruwala. The imagery has been used by beautifully. For example, eyes are described as *The unrest of Desire* putting a mask on one’s face is a symbol of a desire being pressed down or hidden.



The Mistress is truly an amazing poem from Daruwala. The English language has developed considerably in India. However, there are quite a few educated Indians believe that the poets of India should not write in English and should use native languages. So, *The Mistress* is a poem where Daruwala satirises one's controversy as he is one of the major poet in Indian English literature writing in English. The title *The Mistress* is indeed used for English language. He says that "my mistress is half-cast." The Mistress English language is descended from and ancestors of different races; she is the product of inter caste marriages;

Death of a Bird is another poem of Keki Daruwala where he has described a hunting expedition by the protagonist and also of his female partner in the forest. Both these characters encounter a male and female birds mating in a fierce and violent manner in the forest as they are making love. The female bird looks timid in front of the male bird that happened to be very aggressive. It is evident that the male bird proves to be the master of that situation. However finally the brown colour bird rises from the crags (cage). The bird flies violently and was forcefully over the heads of the man and the woman. The birds also shriek with fear and falls down to ground. The bird falls dead at their feet. The woman feels sad for the bird as it is same bird whose mate has been killed by them earlier with a shot of a gun. However, it seems that they separate and therefore a curse now would undertake them. The woman points to the accusing eyes of the dying bird to indicate that its eyes are still terror-stricken. Thus, this poem by Daruwala obviously expresses the fact that the sinner should feel guilty of their crimes otherwise nature will forcefully give them the curse. In a way this poem is a very good example of the morality that Daruwala wants to convey.

Railroad Reveries is a poem of Daruwala where he records random thought of his travelling in a train. The thoughts of the poet are mundane or we can say worldly. The philosophical mind, sensitive and the emotions of the poet, all these are clearly visible. While travelling, the poet has everything that one requires but there are so many travellers who do not have the basic things. The poor girl is struggling in the cold and the beggars are grumbling and wailing because of the lack of food.

There is also a person who has the tumblers of tea but he is not able to hold the tumblers easily as he is suffering from arthritis. Thus, these are some unfortunate people who are in the same compartment with the poet.

Moreover, the poet sees a blind boy begging of the platform. He wants to give him a coin but the beggar boy moves to the next compartment. As he says,

*It would lack dignity
chasing him now
to foist a coin on him. (Railroad Reveries)*

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However, with the night of all such emotional troubles, the journey ends on the next morning. Thus, the poem is written in free verse, like many other poems of Daruwala where he does not use any punctuation mark.

Thus, these are some of the poems of Keki Daruwala by which we can certainly get the idea of major themes of his poems. However, he is one of the most acclaimed poets in the modern Indian English literature.

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