



## STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF 'AN INTRODUCTION' WRITTEN BY KAMALA DAS

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### ABSTRACT

*Kamala Das was one of the most prominent feminist voices in the post-colonial era. 'An Introduction' is one of the most well-known poems written by her. The title of the poem suggests that it is a formal presentation of oneself. The poem is a detailed account of Kamala Das' life and suffering. The use of self-expression, suggests that the poem has an autobiographical touch. The emotional condition and her feelings are also expressed in detail. She starts her poem with the period when she was born with Political references in India. She expressed her childhood, her young age, male dominance, and sexual hunger with her emotional sufferings. The poem has sixty lines but there is no stanza form or no rhyme scheme used in the poem. The poem is an example of free verse. Kamala Das has her own style of writing poems. She expresses her feelings with the use of lexical items and the structure of the poem. Indian theme has been expressed with lexical, syntactic, and phonological structure.*

**Keywords** *Feminism, confessional poem, Indian theme, male domination, lexical deviation, syntactic deviation, free verse and woman psychology*

### INTRODUCTION

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Kamala Das was one of the most prominent feminist voices in the post-colonial era. Her poetry has a distinguished position in Indian English Literature. She wrote in her mother tongue Malayalam as well as in English. On account of her extensive contribution to poetry in our country, she earned the label *'The Mother of Modern Indian English Poetry'*. She has also been likened to great poets like Sylvia Plath because of the confessional style of her writing. Though she was known for her feminism; she handled a variety of social, and family affairs, love songs and many more. She handled the themes related to female sexuality, passion, extra-marital affairs as well as Indian views about the female lifestyle. Most of her poems are in free verse. She does not use any specially cultivated technique for writing poetry. She hasn't used particular rhyming patterns in her poems. With the help of repetition, half rhyming, climax, inversion, rhetorical questions, paradox, and inversion, her poems have a great height in literature. 'Summer in Calcutta' (1965), 'The Descendants' (1967) and 'The Old Playhouse' (1973), 'Collected Poems' (1984), The Anamalai Poems (1985), Yaa Allah (2001) are the major poem collections of her poems.

'An Introduction' is one of the well-known poems written by Kamala Das. The title of the poem suggests that it is a formal presentation of oneself. The poem is a detailed account of Kamala Das' life and suffering. The use of self-expression, suggests that the poem has an autobiographical touch. The emotional condition and her feelings are also expressed in detail. She starts her poem with the period when she was born with Political references in India. She expressed her childhood, her young age, male dominance, and sexual hunger with her emotional sufferings. The poem has sixty lines but there is no stanza form or no rhyme scheme used in the poem. The poem is an example of free verse. Kamala Das has her own style of writing poems. She expresses her feelings with the use of lexical items and the structure of the poem.

Lexis is the main device for expressing emotion in her poem. The variety of contextual references used in the poem as a political condition in India, languages, mother tongue, and male domination. These contextual words give the idea of actual conditions.

*"I don't know the 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. I am Indian, very brown, born in  
Malabar, I speak three languages, write in  
Two, dream in one."*

The contextual words express the period and mindset of the poet. In the repetition of words especially related to self-expression, the poet uses 'I', 'My', and 'Mine' words.

*" The language I speak*

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*Becomes mine, its distortions, its queernesses  
All mine, mine alone. It is half English, half  
Indian, funny perhaps, but it is honest,  
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 cowing"*

The words like language, and English repeatedly occur in the poem.

The repeated use of its, mine, half, my, and human forces the meaning in the context.

The use of odd Collocative words is also used to express the meaning, emotions, and condition of the poet.

*"Is human speech, the speech of the mind that sees and hears and  
Is aware. Not the deaf, blind speech  
Of trees in storm or of monsoon clouds or of rain or the  
Incoherent muttering of the blazing  
Funeral pyre. I was child, and later they"*

The collocations like 'human speech', 'deaf, blind speech', 'sees and hears', 'monsoon clouds', 'Incoherent muttering', and 'funeral pyre' are some of examples. Some other examples like 'sprouted hair', 'hungry haste', 'strange towns', 'lace draped windows', 'tireless waiting', and 'tightly packed'.

The use of words like 'language', 'speech', 'English', and 'Indian' are near synonyms used in the poem. Other examples like 'womanliness', 'girl, and 'wife' are also used for the same emphasis. The use of anaphora for the continuation of the meaning in the context also suggests the style of her writing " The language I speak

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Here the use of continuation of the topic as writing in English is her interest in the continuation without using the word 'English' repeatedly.



Kamala Das has her own style of writing poems. She wrote verse in the continuation of a sentence without a pause beyond the end of a line. She breaks the sentence in the midline if the meaning of the sentence is fulfilled. She hasn't restricted the stanza or lines in rhythmic balance. It can be said that it is an example of enjambment. Another syntactic feature she used in the poem is a climax. 'It voices my joys, my longings, my Hopes', is one of the examples of climax. 'Transferred Epithet' is also used to focus on the meaning. "In him... the hungry haste" is an example of a transferred epithet that he is hungry not the haste. She uses transitions to connect phrases, sentences, ideas as well as paragraphs.

*" I am saint. I am the beloved and the  
Betrayed. I have no joys which are not yours, no  
Aches which are not yours. I too call myself I."*

The lines are an example of a transition that connects the idea of saint, beloved, betrayed, and the aches in continuation. She also uses Rhetorical questions to emphasize the meaning. "It is as human as I am human, don't you see?" is an example of a rhetorical question.

The examples of phonological features can be found less than lexical and syntactic features. She doesn't want to restrict her ideas to rhyme, but she uses internal rhyme or half rhyme to convert her ideas into verse.

*"I am Indian, very brown, born in  
Malabar, I speak three languages, write in  
Two, dream in one."*

This is an example of internal rhyme.

*"Hopes, and it is useful to me as cowig  
Is to crows or roaring to the lions, It  
Is human speech, the speech of the mind"*

She uses onomatopoeia for comparing the human sound with crow and lion in the above line.

Her poems have the main focus on the theme. The lexicon and the sentence construction also focus on the theme. The figures of speech like oxymoron, and climax she uses to focus on the theme.

*"He did not beat me  
But my sad woman body felt so beaten"*

This is an example of oxymoron. The line has a contradictory idea that expresses the mindset of the woman. Climax is also a figure to express the theme. 'It voices my joys, my longings,

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my Hopes', is one of the examples of climax. The poem has covered various themes in a single poem that have connected with the woman's condition in India in twentieth-century. The barriers to the development of women are focused on with various examples. Language restriction, sexual force, and male domination are the themes covered in the poem.

The poem 'An Introduction' is a typical example of Kamala Das' poem. She has known as a confessional poet and she expresses feminism in her poems. In this poem also, she expresses woman's condition in the twentieth century with a revolutionary approach. To unfold the theme, she uses various styles in the structure of the poem.

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