

MYSTICISM IN THE POETRY OF KAMALA DAS

Archna Sahni

Assistant Professor, Department of English, GGSDS College, Chandigarh, India

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ABSTRACT

Much criticism has focused on the themes of love, sex, rebelliousness, as well as various aspects of feminism in the works of the legendary Indian English poet, Kamala Das. Undoubtedly, love is a prominent theme in the poetry of Das. However, not much attention has been paid to mystical elements in her work. In all mystical traditions of the world, love is deeply connected to mysticism, with the mystic attempting to achieve a direct communion with a deity or a higher power. This paper argues that Kamala Das's poems depict facets of mysticism and often reflect the sentiment of bhakti. The aim of this paper is to draw attention to this dialectic of love and mysticism in the poetry of Kamala Das, to understand how the poet negotiates the relationship between the two, and to explore facets of Das's unique kind of mysticism in her poetry. As part of my argument, I shall look into the role that the Hindu deity Krishna and his consort Radhaplay in contributing to mystical elements in Das's poems.

KEYWORDS: *Mysticism, Kamala Das, Indian English Poetry, Bhakti, Radha-Krishna*