

What is known as "Imagery" may be defined as the creation of <sup>colourful</sup> ornamental pictures that may help the poet to achieve <sup>his</sup> purpose with <sup>impression</sup> telling effect and <sup>415 910 51 11 54131</sup> economy. Though in the hands of an ordinary man <sup>writer</sup> of letters it is at best a way of <sup>11 807 21</sup> colourful ornamentation, in the hands of a skilful artist it becomes a remarkable technical device — a device that over-packs a literary composition with countless concentric circles of meaning and makes it, at all levels, a thing of beauty and, as such, a joy for ever.

The imagery used by a skilful artist bears in a thousand ways — the stamp of the writer's personality — of his interests, and aptitudes of his mental make-up and artistic inclination. It is furthermore, rural or urban, simple or complex, intellectual or emotional, all depending upon the "mental furniture" of the writer. Since professor Caroline Spurgeon's (Lady) well-known work on "Shakespeare's Imagery and what it tells us," <sup>it</sup> has come to have a typical significance of its own. Little wonder

a careful study of imagery in a work of art can give us a major clue to its poetic meaning, structure and effect. When, for instance, Kamala Das uses the word "puddles" in "The Freaks" to denote the shallowness of desire, she is trying to convey "abstract ideas".



their sources lie closer to the poet's daily life

In poem after poem, the emancipated woman in Kamala Das tries to convey her complex experiences of love through the use of images drawn from everyday life. In "The Freaks" for instance, she speaks of the

"sunstained cheek" of the lover to denote the common-place. In "A Hot Noon in Malabar", the hot "white" sun, seems to debar the "strangers" from looking at the native pageants of life as if the "strangers" are not supposed to get into the secrets of her beloved Malabar. In "The Invitation" the imagery of the "sun" is used to convey the heat of passion.

All through that summer's afternoon we lay on beds, our limbs inert, cells expanding into the throbbing sun.

In "The Sunshine Cat" the sun imagery acquires a feline character. A streak of sunshine sneaks through the closed door and slyly watches the tortured woman's decline into "a cold and half dead" creature. Here it symbolizes a heartless social set-up that inflicts a heartless punishment upon woman who ask for freedom.

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coldness of feeling. In "My Grandmother's House" the poet on seeing the snakes moving in the library among books feels her blood cold like the moon. Here the coldness of moon is obviously not soothing. (comforting)

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In the absence of the sun and the moon, human life is engulfed in darkness. But their darkness is not life-negating. The lover's mouth in "The Freaks" is a "dark cavern" that brings out the unknown depth of love-experience. Similarly, in "My Grandmother's House" the poet wishes to pick up an armful of darkness to carry home as "a watch dog."

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watch dog  
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The imagery of "water" is frequently used by Kamala Das to convey the various shades of her reactions. The "sea" in "The Invitation" is transformed into a meaningful symbol. It is personified as death. The personification is suggested by the word "garrulous" for its mood - and of course its give-and-take conversation. The sea responding to the poet's death-wish invites her to a cool soothing death in its secret bosom.

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