Chapter: 5

“Unfinished Woman”:

Mythographies of the self in Kamala Das’ life writings

(This chapter focuses on the way Kamala Das manipulates language in order to create a sense of self and deals with the polemics of truth and fiction in life writings.)

People are different, and differences multiply the more people we meet, placing an ethical responsibility on us to be open to difference. But even more interesting is the extent to which people appropriate and maintain difference within themselves, by negotiating different subject positions.

- Bill Ashcroft

Myth could be many things, including nostalgia for a lost unity, a fascistic regression, or a literary structure, but its most important meaning was as an emblem of the human world as self-created.

- Micheal Bell

5.1 Introduction

The engagement with Kamala Das’ poetry so far has inadvertently pointed to a preoccupation with self on multiple levels. The confessional mode that she utilises gives her this vantage position. Having encountered the multifariousness embedded on the surface, it cannot but be helped to qualify her as a palimpsest, particularly when her negotiations with the myriad subject positions are considered. I posit the use of the word mythography as I intend to say that through her poetry what we find is a collection of myths that is in the process of becoming Kamala Das.

How does she use her writings as a site for negotiating her subjectivities? Is it a result of the possibilities inherent in the language which releases the writing subject
from the myth of a fixed identity as Bill Ashcroft opines? Mythography thus becomes an appropriate term to engage with the multifariousness that is projected through her writing. This aspect is taken forward in this chapter by utilising the polemics surrounding the notion of a postmodern subjectivity. Towards that end, the notion of schizophrenia is evoked. The creative shifting of terrains as far as her experimentation with various genres like poetry and prose, the shifting boundaries of imagination and reality in her autobiography and biography, and the kind of emanating presence of poetry in prose and prose in poetry are engaged with in this chapter. It also touches upon her preoccupation with name and its link to the idea of self as Das sees it. Also the poems that deal with her conversion are also engaged with to understand its contribution to her subjectivity.

5.2 Multifariousness or a mythopoeic world?

Ultimately

I will feed only the hunger
to feed other hungers,
that basic one.
To crumble,
to dissolve
and to retain in other things
the potent fragments
of oneself

Kamala Das

From Kamala Das’ writing in a confessional mode it is subtly communicated that her inherent sense of plurality and open endedness is the ultimate result of the confusion arising out of a dialectics between her past and the present, between
tradition and modernity - her change from the rural aristocratic settings to a busy yet lonely middle class metropolitan setup and a much nuanced dialectics where her regional identity is replaced by a pertinent national identity. In addition to this is her experiment with religion and faith. There is also an inevitable tinge - an anxiety of loss in the midst of all these and an evident consequence of all these. All these issues reverberate within her metamorphosing into incoherence, a pent up madness which floods her verse.

Her writing becomes a talking cure and creativity an escape route, a catharsis for her. She becomes the object of her poetry wherein she becomes an objective viewer, escaping from the subject, as she asks poignantly in the poem “The Siesta”:

Has she the courage, the sense
To pick herself an average
Identity, to age
Through years of earthly din
Gently, like a cut flower until
It’s time to be removed; or, will she Wander,
Fog-eyed, seeking another
To be hers, her own love
Or destroy; to share with her
The dim-lit gloom where
She moves like a fawn? (1965: 56)

Poetry for her becomes a reflection of her inner selves and imaginary selves, as is evident from the references to a fawn or a cut flower. Thus what is evident in her verse is a collage of the many selves, as is highlighted in the lines below,
This has always been
someone else’s world not mine
My man, my sons, forming the axis’
while I, wife and mother,
insignificant as a fly
climbed the glasspanes of their eyes, (157)

The self in the many roles – a writer, an Indian writing in English and in Malayalam, a woman writer in India, a mother, a daughter, a granddaughter, a wife, a widow, a lover, a lonely woman searching for love. She is aware of this as she says:
“A woman writer takes herself apart and recreates a new identity. For this transformation we have first to locate alternatives, search for the roots of a self-hood to create a transformed self.” (Weisbord 2011: 247)She withdraws and curls up into herself - her many selves and comes out as a new person through her writing, as she says in “Someone Else’s Song”:

I am a million, million people
Talking all at once, with voices
Raised in clamour
I am a million, million deaths
Pox- clustered, each a drying seed
Someday to be shed, to grow for
Someone else, a memory.
I am a million, million silences
Strung like crystal beads
Onto someone else’s
Song (1965: 31)
Along the same lines are poems such as “Words”, “Words are Birds”, “The Puddle”. However, the lines from her poem “Loudspeakers” is worth quoting here, “Write without / A pause, don’t search for pretty words which/ Dilute the truth, but write in haste, of / Everything perceived, and known, and loved…” (1965: 52)

This could be a viable alternative for her as in this process she succeeds in creating many meta-narratives. Her attempt seems to be to travel in space and time, especially explorations of the individual spaces and landscapes of the mind by analyzing trauma and psychological wounds inflicted by the difficult relations she had throughout her life as she alludes to in the poem “Contacts”:

When I
Sleep, the outside
World crumbles, all contacts
Broken. So, in that longer sleep
Only
The world
Shall die, and I
Remain, just being
Also being a remaining… (25)

What is striking is her declaration that what remains are fragments and not essence. She becomes some kind of remains rather than a holistic entity. This can be linked to one of her Radha Krishna poems, “Radha” where the last lines also evoke a similar sense as in: “Nothing remains but/ You…” The utilisation of myths, folklores, and memories have already been discussed at length, which also add to this sense of multifarious ambivalence.
In her encounter with the many changes, some of them psychologically traumatic, it is inevitable that a plurality of self/identity should be the result. It is not just the confusion created by the ambivalence that she articulates, but also the trauma of dealing with all these. Her poetry, in effect, could be a result of the trauma of the self(ves). This is captured quite poignantly in “Captive”: “For years I have run from one / gossamer lane to another, I am/ now my own captive. (1967: 23) In these lines there is a conscious reference to the notion of a confusion within the self where the self becomes entrapped by another self. As discussed in chapter one, the sense of an ambivalence or liminality inherent within her has led to her creativity as it seems to be an attempt to move beyond this interstitial space.

The inability to come to terms with the selves or to identify a self to be comfortable with, results in multifariousness, which inevitably colors her poetry. An example for this is her poem, “The Freaks” where she says: “I am a freak. It’s only/ To save my face, I flaunt, at / Times, a grand, flamboyant lust.” (1965: 8) This poem essentially highlights the conflict between body and soul, love and lust which figures in her early poetry. However, what Das does is to communicate a sense of queering the normal. Being normal for her is being a freak. She hides her heteronormativity behind her flamboyant lust.

This multifariousness or a dilemma of existence evident in her early poetry, to a large extent has to be connected to her deep relationship with her grandmother and its subsequent loss, the literary legacy that she imbibed from her mother and her uncle, and the problematic of trying to link her search for her lost love to her vocation and it is through her vocation as a writer that she creates myths of herself, as an attempt to come to terms with the sense of self. So, it can be posited that the multifariousness that characterises her poetry is her own attempt at creating myths of
her self. Furthermore, there is the role played by language in all these. The way she projects herself through her writing in Malayalam is strikingly different from the way she navigates through in English. A clear instance for this is how there is a marked difference in the way she wrote her autobiography in English and Malayalam as explicated by Meena T. Pillai in her article “Translating Her Story: A Woman in Quest of a Language”.

5.2 Multifariousness or a schizophrenic intervention?

Coming to her poetry in English, however, the element of multifariousness makes its presence felt on another plane. There are no visible centers holding her poems together. Almost all the poems start somewhere, meander through many thoughts and reach somewhere else. Her writing seems to be caught in a web created by the schizophrenic state, as she states,

Who did I belong to?
Whose assest was I?

.................................

I am a series of
emptiness
assembled
without care,
a monarch’s feast
gone waste…

It is not a coincidence then that Nayantara Sahgal in the essay “The Schizophrenic Imagination” says:
. . . Schizophrenia as a state of mind and feeling that is firmly rooted in a particular subsoil, but above ground has a more fluid identity that doesn't fit comfortably into any single mould. A schizophrenic of this description is a migrant who may never have left his people or his soil. We are all somewhat divided selves, but I’m referring to the divisions that history and circumstances impose on the complex creatures we already are. (104)

In this essay, Sahgal is talking about the process of creativity and the impulses behind it. Interestingly, she is placing herself in the post-independent scenario and she is using the term migrant which are of much relevance to the creative process of Kamala Das.

Sahgal’s description fits Das as she has been determined to a large extend by migrations or dislocations. For her, however, these dislocations are on many planes. There is physical dislocation when she was uprooted from her village, from Nalappat house to major cities like Bombay and Calcutta, psychological dislocation when she could not gel with her husband and yearned for love particularly from her grandmother, social dislocation when she had to juggle many roles such as a wife, a mother, a writer, and an activist, linguistic dislocation as a bilingual writer, as an Indian writing in English and finally religious dislocation through her conversion to Islam. This metaphor of migration plays a vital role in understanding her poetry. The notion of dislocation as engaged with in postcolonialism gets linked to the thoughts of postmodernism through the evocation of the notion of schizophrenia.

Usually Schizophrenia is taken as a serious mental disorder. People who suffer from it are unable to relate their thoughts and feelings to what is happening around them and often withdraw from society. Their approach to reality is from another plane or mind-set as opposed to the normal approach of a person. However, here the word is
used more prominently as a metaphor and it has to be stated here that this is not a way of stating that Kamala Das was a schizophrenic. Thus, schizophrenia here is evoked in order to understand the multifariousness seen in the depiction of the self in Das’ poetry. Thus here it takes the informal meaning wherein it refers to a person who frequently changes his/ her mind about something or somebody or prominently holding opinions about something that seem to oppose each other.

An element of schizophrenic symptom can be reckoned in Kamala Das when she withdraws and curls up into herself and comes out of her writing as a new person. In other words, she withdraws from a reality creating an image, a fictional character as a writer who proclaims to be a confessional poet. In her poem “Suicide”, she says:

But,
I must pose,
I must pretend,
I must act the role
of happy woman,

happy wife.

I must keep the right distance
Between me and the high.

I must keep the right distance
Between me and the low. (1967: 8)

These lines in a way allude to Jungian thesis that schizophrenics are people who had difficulty in finding a self within which to be ill.

To dwell on this point again would also throw the limelight on the notion that someone’s attitude or behaviour can be described as schizophrenic when they seem to have very different opinions or purposes at different times, which is reflected in
Das’ poetry. As already stated, schizophrenia is also characterized by a process of becoming. Her poetry characterized by a spontaneity and vagueness seems to be in this process of becoming. The process of signification is never complete. Her poetry is in effect aspiring to be poetry, aspiring to be something that she is trying to articulate. In other words’, her poetry throws open many ideas and thoughts. Her poetry is never there. It is constantly moving – irrespective of the direction. There is a constant sliding of the signifier over the signified without the meeting of the two.

For Das, her self is itself multifarious and the many aspects that make her seem to be in a constant flux. Her past and her present often dovetail in her verse blurring the boundaries. The past for Das are the myths, the legends and the folklores of her land and her ancestral home. Her present is the mileu in which she wrote- the post independent India which opened up the possibilities of an ambivalent yet unified identity. These lines by Emily Weisboard, her biographer is also relevant here:

I’ve heard Kamala compare the world she creates through writing to ‘shadow’ and the external world to ‘substance’, describing how both world can coexist within her. But these poignant identity shifts blur the distinction between ‘real’ and ‘masquerade’ She seems to be saying that her ‘naked mask,’ her vulnerable openness, is just another mask. Yet when she defines ‘naked mask,’ she says “this person with tears in my eyes.” It seems for her the real and the masked are indivisible. (Weisbord 2011: 181)

It is not wrong to say that creativity, especially poetry, can be a reflection of the inner selves with reference to Kamala Das. Incidentally for her, the self is a collage of the many selves resulting from the many conflicts - a plurality of selves. Her poetry being confessional and self reflexive makes it an articulation of these pluralities thereby creating the effect of a schizophrenic outpouring. She says in ‘Death is so Mediocre’
Like an elephant not bidding goodbye while
Taking off for that secret edge of forests
Where they slope into a sure but invisible
Sea, I shall go too in silence leaving not
Even a fingerprint on this crowded earth,
Carrying away my bird-in-flight voice and
The hundred misunderstandings that destroyed
My alliances with you and you and you… (64)

The you in this poem could be Das herself if one is to go by the words of V.C. Harris who saw the presence of ‘you’ is Kamala Das quite poignant. Clearly she highlights the fact that the relationship between ‘I’ and ‘you’ —no matter who these entities are— is based on misunderstandings.

It can be reckoned that, for Kamala Das, poetry is an articulation and celebration of fragments. Semantic instability arising out of a post colonial identity crisis could be a point of departure when it comes to her poetry. This is observed in her poems which are mélanges of different thoughts, feelings and images sometimes with no apparent connection whatsoever between them. There is also a sense of fragmentation that shines through in “I” as “the other”, “the monster”, “the freak” and I as the stranger inside her. An innate sense of alienation that creeps into her is articulated poignantly. This “I” / “You” dichotomy is her notion of a gap or a lack within her. A picture of fragments of herself, picking up different identities is put across through poems like “The Freaks”, “The Stranger and I”, “Forest Fire”, “The Siesta” and many more.

Similar to the postmodern views of a multiplicity of selves, Carl Gustav Jung saw the individual as being made up of many selves, which however are autonomous
and therefore we cannot assume the unity of consciousness or the primacy of will. He was talking about the four aspects or reverberations of the self or four entities that when evoked finally would help man realise the ultimate self. There is a need to break the autonomy of these entities for the self to break through.

Kamala Das places her identity/subjectivity in dualities. For instance, in the duality that she evokes in her relationship with her grandmother, Amy is created and in relation with her husband she is Kamala, to her elusive lover in the early stages of her life she was Radha, and later in life after conversion she becomes Surraiyya. But in the case of Das these so called dualities had a way of emanating into the other dualities. So in Das, the whole notion of subjectivity extends into a wider circle- a harmonious circle where each of the entities within the dualisms stretch out into the other and each set of dualities stretch out into the circumference of the other sets of dualities. Thus, in Kamala Das there is a complex interaction between all these different entities within her, evoking the aspect of cosmopolitanism, where a free movement between these entities is possible.

Is she the writing subject, or is she the object of the writing? At times it seems as if it not a merging but a transcending that is taking place – a kind of metamorphosis to her self and to her writing as in the images she creates through her poem “The Old Playhouse”. This is similar to the kind of elusiveness that she gives to the “yakshis” from the folklore, in the poem “The Family Home” and “The Palmyra Tree” or the sea, which according to her cannot be held as stated in “Suicide”. The sense of “I” as something constructed, not just the notion of female and woman as construct, but some kind of an artificiality at the core becomes the foci of her creativity. Apparently it does not stop with that. She becomes at times Radha, at other times the Cinderella,
and many a time the Sea, all in an effort to grab at a coherent self. This process is
projected into her writing as in “At Chiangi Airport”:

. . . And, yet poetry sought
me out one day, a pursuer, hot and panting
and that odd glass shoe, so dainty . . .
wonder of wonders
did fit my callused foot! (The Best of Kamala Das 114)

and “The Roosting Time”:

I was the one
always in a hurry,
in a hurricane’s haste,
a Cinderella
of the present
twenty – first century (Das et al.2009: 8)

5.4 Naming the I

… but I do
Not seem to recollect names
Or the real nature of their
Relationship with me?

..............................
They know me by another
Name—a well-loved name I am
Powerless to recollect?

-Kamala Das
Linked to this dialectics within her and her work is the idea of the Name. Shahnaz Habib has a very interesting take on this. He believes that straddling with many names was one way in which Das straddled her multiple identities. Kamala Das is the name she uses when she writes in English, when she pens down in Malayalam she becomes Madhavikutty, she calls herself fondly as Amy in her memoirs and Suraiyya is the name she chose when she converted to Islam. It can be perceived that for her name is a nuanced veil – something that conceals, separates or screens. It could be the disguise that she chooses to come to terms with her self(ves). It is a paradox where she wants to be named or identified in a certain way thereby distancing from certain others. In other words, she exists in a mélange of differences and similarities which is the paradox of post modernity. This preoccupation comes to the forefront through many poems like “Spoiling the Name”, where she says:

I have a name, had it for thirty
Years, chosen by someone else
For convenience, but when you say
Don’t spoil your name, I feel I
Must laugh, for I know I have a life
To be lived, and each nameless
Corpuscle in me, has its life to
Be lived… why should this name, so
Sweet- sounding, enter at all the room (1965: 27)

In “An Introduction”, she puts it simply but effectively: “Be Amy, or be Kamala. Or, better/ Still, be Madhavikutty./ It is time to/ Choose a name, a role. (Das 1965: 63). She considers the process behind the name as a blind convention, something taking away the essence; something that you put on to play and be a part of some discourse.
Her name is a burden, as in the lines, “A man who let me take his name/ to make me feel belonged” (Das 1965: 60). She insightfully deals with the name and its relationships to the self. There is no sense of belonging to her even in a name. This one mark of identification brings to her deprivation, a loss. She takes off the notion of artificiality or the alienation provided by a proper noun to another level. In “Ghanashyam”, she says:

Who is loving who
Who is the husk who is the kernel
Where is the body where is the soul?
You come in strange forms
And your names are many.
Is it then a fact that I love the disguise
And the name more than I love you? (Das and Nandy 1979: 19)

There is an ambiguity in these lines and it can be read from two different perspectives. The title refers to one of the many names of Krishna, who in the myth stands among many things for love that is eternal and transcendental at the same time. The hint of a disguise present in a name could also be read here. She is playing with the idea of a name and the idea of love. Both of them defy definition. This has to be contrasted with her poems post conversion alluding to a Godly presence. She says in “The Munafique”:

I shall no longer heed
the way religion- game is played out.
Let God be my only playmate,
I shall bear him
in my bloodstreams,
conceal him within from all
who come visiting to discuss
the need to demarcate
each religion and the need
to hate the unbeliever,
the kafir, the munafique.

I discover the emptiness
of a life ill spent,
and the absence of a God
I can truly count on.” (26, 28)

Her transformation from Radha to Munafique is also the juncture where her an ‘other’ name Surraiyya has to be engaged with. Unlike the other entities, this name has the tag of a religion attached to it, even when she says: “The only religion I know is the religion of love. I fell in love with a Muslim after my husband’s death. He was kind and generous in the beginning. But I now feel one shouldn’t one’s religion. It is not worth it.” (73) and this elusive love also add to her sense of elusiveness. However, she says in “Timepiece”

I thought I would
learn from Islam
a clean way to compromise-
I did not.

I am some kind of a worm
now laid under
These poems arising from her encounter with a new religion, highlights a sense of displacement, adding to the multiplicity of selves, through the name Surraiyya.

In other words, her self-reflexive poems are nothing short of meta-narratives on which postmodernism hinges. This is in effect an articulation of the dilemma that came out of the conflicts of gender, caste, and class – an outcome of post colonialism. Her poetry is in effect a writing back – consciously shifting the paradigms of patriarchal discourses. Such a condition is inevitable for a person pregnant with a post colonial angst. In grappling with the newly imposed identity (ies) and in trying to articulate in an adopted tongue it is highly probable that a schizophrenic condition is the outcome. She admits that she feels a dual existence in her biography *The Love Queen of Malabar* thus: “The two of me did not become agitated. One suffered, and one watched and wrote.” (Weisbord 2011: 131). And also in the poem Feline she says, “Another lives in me, I feel, a twin left unborn,/ unnamed, unacknowledged, bitter with defeat,/ and, she with her new – mood eyes stares at my face/ and turns me so often, half human, half feline (1997: )However, what gets communicated is not a duality of selves but a plurality of selves, as Amy, Kamala, Madhavikutty and Surraiyya are understood as different manifestations of a persona.

5.5 Immanence of reality or imagination?

She wrote of what it was being a woman, a poet, a person torn between two tongues, two cultures, faithful to neither. In fact, faithlessness was the key to understanding her poetry and her persona.

- Pritish Nandy

A thought provoking aspect of her literary career is the publication of her autobiography *My Story* in 1988 which catapulted her into fame and controversies as
it explicitly described her personal life and eccentricities, shocking the complacencies of the Indian society. She was keen on breaking the taboos defining Indian women especially women on the domestic realm. However she later admitted that there are many fictional elements in her autobiography and that she wrote it in order to make money. One of her conversations with Suresh Kohli clarifies this:

My prose writings in English were only to make some money. I made these writings sensational because I realized sensation sells. It (My Story) has a fair amount of fiction. You will not believe it but I actually started writing it to forget pain. My husband asked me to write my autobiography. I was thirty-seven and very ill and in Bombay Hospital, room number 565. That’s when a publisher came visiting and he told my husband that he will pay the hospital bills. So a typewriter was brought into the room. Because of the pain I couldn’t sleep, so I would type the whole night. That’s how it began.

(Das and Kohli 2009: 75)

Her biographer Emily Weisboard observes that Kamala Das has often said that she was her own greatest creation. (Weisbord 2011: 201). Interestingly Das also lends her opinion about her biographer in her poem “Biography”

Being my biographer
she is no hurry
to write the final chapter
or my epilogue
that deals with my end,
the ignominy of being
undressed by strangers
Strange hands
prodding
probing
for evaluation
of personal essence. (2009: 6-7)

Ironically, there is a hint that this probing for a personal essence is a futile attempt and also contrast this poem with “Composition” where she talked about her need to “extrude autobiography”. In the early phase she was the one who was extruding biography but now she is critiquing it. Das herself has told P.P.Raveendran a renowned critic of hers: “Reality is very drab, as drab as white khaddar, I try to perfect my life by adding things which may not really have happened.” (Weisbord 2011: 201). It is to be noted that she named her autobiography My Story, an indication that it is a fictional account, opening up many debates on the genre itself. Shahnaz Habib (2009) opines that —biomythography" would have been a fairer description of the book. I would say there is no need for bio just mythography would suffice, in the sense that every writing about a subject or a self involves a kind of myth making as she states, “I threw in some fiction to thicken it because by itself my life was not strong enough for a book.” (76)

5.6 Conclusion

If you wish to kill me
do not attempt the killing
with a knife or gun,
burn my books
one by one,
build of my poems
a bonfire in your backyard,
let the fire rise and bloom,
let the flames rage

- Kamala Das

Having encountered the many nuances inherent in the creation of the self – be it real or imaginary as done by Kamala Das, points to the need to look at the genre of life writing and to look into the idea of a mythography instead of autobiography or biography. This act is validated by the above lines where Das herself claims that the only way of ensuring her death is to burn her books and poems, which in effect, had her self(ves). This also points to the essential argument of this chapter.

However, as a means of summing up, a look at the etymology of each entity such as life writing, biography, autobiography and the idea of confessional is taken up. It is possible to equate life writing with life story or one’s life’s work. The former implies the idea that it is a story that somebody tells you about their whole life and life’s work highlights the main purpose or activity in a person’s life or their greatest achievement. While biography refers to the story of a person’s life written by somebody else and autobiography is the story of a person’s life written by that person or more prominently one that contains many of the writers’ own experience. Interestingly, the entries for confession include admitting something that you are ashamed of or embarrassed about, a private statement to a priest about the bad things you have done, and also a statement of your religious beliefs.

By looking into the semantic implications of the terms the one thing that stands out is that all of them are stories that are narrated to somebody or narrated by someone and add to it the idea of a confessional there are the notions of privacy and a sense of negativity that is highlighted. This leads to the engagement with the idea of a story. At the outset, it is a description of events and people that the writer or the
speaker has invented in order to entertain people and also an account, often spoken of what happened to someone or how something happened and when taking into account its synonym – report it implies an account of past events or of how something has developed and also something that somebody says which is not true. Thus, inherent in all of these entities is an element of narration and the possibility of a strategy employed.

Taking this to another level then it is possible to call all of these categories myths as it too refers to a story – a story from ancient times, especially one that was told to explain natural events or to describe the early history of a people also emanating onto legend which states thereby refers to something that many people believe but that does not exist or is false. Adjective mythical refers to something that has become very famous and mythology refers to ideas that many people think are true but do not exist or are false. All these nuances can be inducted into the narratives of Kamala Das that have been analysed. Thus it can be concluded that it is possible to understand her work as imbibing the nuances of myth making and hence her biography and autobiography and her poetry could all be termed as mythographies as she creates myths that ultimately came to be identified by other names and that is the case with her self too.

The irony of “I” in “An Introduction” with which the discussion of the self in Das had begun finds an ideal culmination in the term mythography, whereby it is possible to say that this “I” even when projected onto myriad “I”s will never attain the true meaning posited on to it. “I” thus is an entity which never gains closure and is therefore a bricolage- creation from a diverse range of available things.
Notes

i See Ashcroft, Bill. “Transnation”
ii See Bell, Micheal, “The Metaphysics of Modernism”, *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*
iii See Das, Kamala. “Composition” *The Descendants*
iv See Das, Kamala. “The Corridors” *Summer in Calcutta*
v See Nandy, Pritish “Remembering Kamala” *Tonight, this Savage Rite*
vi See Das, Kamala. “Light a bonfire” *Closure*