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**Fragmented Faith and Cultural Memory: A Modernist Analysis of Kamal's "Prayer Beads", "Reproduction" and “The Rebel”**

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**ABSTRACT**

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This study explored the poetry of Daud Kamal within the setting of modernist literary theory, focusing on his symbolism in Prayer Beads, Reproduction and The Rebel. Through a qualitative analysis of Kamal's work, employing close reading as the primary strategy, the study examines his innovative use of symbolism, Fragmented Faith and Cultural Memory in his poetry. Kamal's poetry embodies the experimental ethos of modernism, as proven by his subjective interpretation of the world and neglecting formal traditions. By focusing on cultural memory, embracing ambiguity, and defying traditional forms, Kamal's poetry represents a significant commitment to the development of poetic expression within the modernist development.

**Introduction**

In the domain of Pakistani english poetry, the name Daud Kamal shines as a beacon of artistic innovation and scholarly prowess. Born in Abbottabad, Kamal's literary journey traverses the landscapes of spiritual displacement and cultural erasure, offering piercing reflections on the human condition amidst the tumultuous background of brutality and societal commotion. Hulme stated about the language of poetry as “visual concrete one….Images in verse are not mere decoration, but the very essence.” (Hulme, 1908). It endeavors to dig into the symbolism, Cultural Memory, unpredictable tapestry of Kamal's poetic oeuvre, unraveling the thematic complexities and stylistic nuances that characterize his work. Vital to Kamal's poetry is the theme of spiritual displacement, a profound sense of alienation and estrangement notwithstanding cultural commotion and societal discord. Pound, (1918). Through his verses, Kamal navigates the overly complex corridors of human experience, wrestling with the existential angst that accompanies the erosion of cultural character and the fragmentation of aggregate memory. His poems serve as strong meditations on the delicacy of human life, resonating with readers who track down solace in the artist's introspective musings amidst the chaos of contemporary life. Kamal's poetry is distinguished by its intense hug of imagism, a literary development that eschews conventional realism for striking and suggestive imagery. The influence of literary giants such as T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound is discernible in Kamal's work, as he masterfully employs imagist techniques to transcend the confines of traditional account and dig into the depths of the human psyche. Pound, (1918). By infusing his poetry with rich sensory imagery and symbolic motifs, cultural memory, Kamal invites readers into a universe of uplifted sensory perception and emotional resonance, where each word becomes a brushstroke on the canvas of the reader's imagination. To be sure, Kamal's status as the "modern T.S. Eliot of Pakistan" speaks to the profound effect of his poetry on the literary landscape of the nation. His inheritance as a visionary wordsmith and cultural icon endures, inspiring generations of poets to investigate the boundaries of language and expression. Aldington, (1915). Through this thesis, we set out on a journey of discovery and illumination, unraveling the puzzling excellence of Kamal's poetry and revealing the timeless truths that lie underneath the surface of his verses.

**Problem Statement**

Despite Daud Kamal's significance in Pakistani English writing, the literary works on his poetry only focuses on semantical and stylistic analyses, from the perspective of linguistics overall, dismissing a basic exploration according to the perspective of literary theory, especially modernism and focus on the Fragmented Faith and Cultural memories. This gap inhibits a comprehensive understanding of Kamal's artistic vision and thematic preoccupations, underscoring the requirement for a study that applies modernist principles to dissect his poetry. Such an examination would enlighten his conventional innovations, thematic concerns, and his contribution to the more extensive landscape of modernist writing, thereby enriching our understanding of Kamal's artistic heritage and the evolution of modernism inside Pakistani English writing.

**Research Objectives**

# To analyze the specific elements of fragmented faith by Daud Kamal in his poetry.

* To investigate and sort the motifs that arise in Kamal's poetry as a result of cultural memory.

**Research Questions**

* How does Kamal utilizes fragmented faith in his poetry?
* What motifs arise in Kamal's poetry as a result of cultural memory?

**Significance of the Study**

The study is valuable to discuss the ways in which fragmentation, spirituality, and cultural memory central to a modernist aesthetic speak for a contemporary South Asian experience. This way, the present study sheds light on how the poet, through Kamal’s embodied signs, meditates on the challenges of preserving cultural/religious subjectivity in a global context that promotes secularization and consumerism. This research not only deepens our insights into Kamal’s creative practice but also provides a reflection on the issue of faith and heritage safeguarding in the context of contemporary challenges thus discussing the problematics of cultural memory and its persistence.

**Literature Review**

Main academic debates on fragmentation and symbolism as the means of representing themes of post-Enlightenment disillusionment, identity, and culture memory in relation to the modernist poetry. T.S. Eliot’s and Ezra Pound’s work stands in the focus of this context, as both poetic WE (Weltanschauung) aim to reduce the structure to the broken society and overwhelming utilization of symbolical images that alert the fragmentation of the modem psyche. CEMOAE is celebrating 20 years from when Keats broke with the Romantics by presenting a world with a “disconnection between feeling and reason” in poetry. This has become characteristic of modernist poetry, due to the attempt to place into verse modern man’s feelings of solitude and the lack of faith (Literariness.org).

The same way, poems in modernism such as Eliot’s The Waste Land implies broken story line and accumulated symbols and iconographies of the contemporary culture which may reveal not only lost souls, but their efforts to regain the lost meanings from shards of history. A similar approach embodies the poet’s perspective of some sort of cultural amnesia, which can only be reconstructed in the face of a seculaising society. Sohail (2021). One of the techniques used in modernity poetry such as structural dissension of viewpoints and images is a reflection of the poet’s efforts to find order in the given cultural chaos (IJELR; Academia.edu).

Roona & Maqbool (2022) is concerned with the stylistic analysis of the poem "The street of nightingale" by Kamal. Stylistics and level of dialects like phonological and semantic, structural and syntactical, semantic and pragmatic, morphological and lexical analysis of the poetry is done in this study. The review means to depict the clarification and understanding of stylistics a part of linguistics and its concern while development of building the literery text. This research likewise gives a broad conversation to the degree of dialects utilized in delivering the design of poetry and making of thoughts in the poetry. This research manages the analysis in understanding the fundamental ideas and thoughts of the poem. The study investigates the tone and mind-set of the poem and portraying that poem contain the bit of heartfelt life and glumness of the cutting edge life is additionally portrayed by the poet. Pound (1918). In this poem, researcher break down the range of topics and handling of profound way of thinking of progress of time, period and customs in life. By the use of lexico-syntactic pattern of style poet conveyed his massage of delight and love of nature. He additionally put emphasis on the fast difference in climate. Daud kamal in this poem criticized the rush of modern day life and praise the natural life romantic time.

Aftab & Haroon (2024) was pointed toward finding the stylistics highlights utilized in the poem "An Ode to Death". The researcher has investigated the poem from five degrees of stylistics specifically phonological, graphological, semantic, morphological, and lexical. The poet has featured the subject of death in Kamal's "An Ode to Death". The poet has utilized different symbolic expressions and other metaphorical gadgets to make his statement of death's certainty and life's delicacy. The poet has likewise major areas of strength for utilized that makes clear visual scenery in the reader's mind. The discoveries likewise show that the poet has involved language in a best manner. Aldington (1915). The utilization of language in "Ode to Death" by Daud Kamal is so straightforward and customary that even an ordinary reader can grasp the poem in a better manner. The poet has not involved any difficult vocabulary for embellishment or style. The type of the poem is extremely straightforward and the topic of death is exceptionally obvious from words like "pine tree", "match-stick", and "ashtray". Readers can find out about decline and decay, and most importantly the possibility of death from the previously mentioned words.

**Methodology**

**Research Design**

# This qualitative research uses the close reading model as its essential research strategy to investigate Daud Kamal's Fragmented Faith and Cultural memories in Prayer Beads, Reproduction and the Rebel within a modernist framework. I.A Richards proposed Close Reading as a method of literary analysis that focused on examining a text in detail, with its focus to analyze language, structure and meaning (Richards, 1929). Through Analysis of Kamal's poems, focusing on images, symbolism, and themes, the research aimed to distinguish modernist characteristics and methods.

# Theoretical Framework

This research employs a qualitative approach to examine the poetry of Daud Kamal, emphasizing his rejection of traditional poetic conventions through a modernist focal point. "The language of verse must be always concrete and pictorial, because the poet is always dealing with objects" (Hulme, 1924).

Integral to this framework are the principles of modernist artistic theory, especially those enunciated by key figures, for example, Ezra Pound "An 'Image' is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time" (Pound, 1918), Innovation, portrayed by a break from ordinary forms and a journey for new articulations, underpins this analysis. Pound's promotion for Imagism, which stresses accuracy, economy of language, and the immediate show of images, serves as a crucial foundation.

"The Imagist poet does not describe an object but sets it down directly; thus, he gives the feeling of surprise, like the first impression which the object made upon him." (Aldington, 1915) and "Use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation" (Flint, 1913) showed the important of pictorial qualities of verses. By analyzing Kamal's innovative use of use of vivid images and themes, this study seeks to demonstrate how his poetry exemplifies modernist ideas, challenging and rejecting traditional poetic norms.

**Poems by Duad Kamal**

**"Prayer Beads"**

*Under*

*the shade*

*of a willow tree*

*where the river bends*

*in a rock-pool*

*prayer-beads rise*

*to the surface*

*from the mouth*

*of an invisible*

*fish.*

**"Reproduction"**

*Reproductions*

*Of Mogul miniatures*

*Cut out*

*From last year's calendar*

*And fragments of Ghandara*

*Sculpture*

*Bought for a song*

*Prince Sidhartta*

*Gone into the night*

*With channa*

*And old Tajiks*

*In their tents*

*Drinking china tea*

*Almond- blossoms*

*Fall*

*And a crow--*

*Carved out of ebony---*

*Pushes itself through the rain,*

*I sit scrapping*

*The rust off my ancient coins.----------*

**“The Rebel”**

*They*

*stood him up*

*against an orchard wall*

*and shot him*

*at dawn.*

*Pandemonium of crows*

*and then*

*the empty horizon.*

*Hundreds of miles away*

*his mother*

*kneels in prayer –*

*in ignorance –*

*the ignorance of prayer.*

*Wheat ear on the stubble –*

*the blind earth*

*must be fed.*

**Analysis**

In exploring Daud Kamal's poetry through a modernist lens, this thesis revealed his strong use of symbolism. Kamal's innovative use of imagery, symbolism, exemplifies the experimental spirit of modernist poetry. The three poems by Kamal named Prayer Beads, Reproductions and The Rebel explore relativistic concerns with displacement, spiritual instability, and temporality of culture. Both poems are obviously modernist in their general approach: "fragmented images and signs to express a feeling of alienation, emptiness, and desire for self-searching" (Bradbury and McFarlane 54). The poem "Prayer Beads" depicts a realistic environment where "religious items surface from the surrounding environment," reflecting the scarcity of spirituality in modern life (Kamal 12). In *Reproductions*, objects of culture and a cutting out of fragments of history which are available in this world are marketable or degraded through reproduction, reminding the viewers of what is left in a world where heritage is often provided only in reproduction and parts. By employing the closereading, this paper analyzes both the poems focusing on the concept of the mystical symbolism in Kamal’s work including the *prayer beads*, Moghul miniatures as well as almond blossoms, and ancient coins; the analysis unravels how the symbols somehow undertakes a contemplation on faith, cultural degeneration, and the modern idea of searching for the lost past (Kamal, 1986).

Starting with *Prayer Beads*, the poem situates the reader immediately “Under / The shade / Of a willow tree,” and thus enters a meditative mode in a picturesque but vague countryside. Most importantly, the willow tree which has been symbolized to represent sorrow and memory suggests a den of contemplation. This color is a somewhat intermediate between the lighter and darker, and captures the spirit of the modernist nihilism and interest in the beyond. Given this setting one can assume that Kamal was right – people look for faith or spirituality in those areas of their lives which do not provide concrete knowledge. In *Reproductions*, the same idea is voiced with “Reproductions / Of Moghul miniatures / Cut out / Last year’s calendar.” Here the distance from the authenticity cultural artifact to the reproduction speaks of the genetic and generic erosion typical of the modernist discourse. Whereas the willow in *Prayer Beads* represents a quest for solace within oneself, the Moghul miniatures represented by the cut outs point to a sense of cultural disconnection, and the complete or partial loss of both spirituality and history, in this new world. The theme of fragmentation is also carried on by the piece titled “fragments of Ghandhara / Sculpture” in *Reproductions* which is similar to the concept of the “prayer beads” in *Prayer Beads* (Kamal, 1986). Some of the most valuable segments of the respective cultures, Gandhara sculptures as far as the poem is concerned, are depicted as ‘fragments,’ thus presenting a shallow concept of historical landmarks or isolation of symbols and turning them into mere commodities that can be bought for a song.” This image lies in stark contrast with the prayer beads that emerge ‘to the surface’ from beneath water, indicating that despite the economic circulation of fragments of cultures and histories of indigenous peoples, spirituality occasionally manifests itself in a brief and transient manner. In the context of modernism, these symbols are imbued with a sense of loss; the Gandhara fragments stand for a palpable severing from a past, the prayer beads signify a tenuous link to the divine. Allowing these images to be free, Kamal uses them to express the modernist anxiety that it is hardly possible to experience the spirituality or culture in their purity, only fleeting distorted glimpses and fragments (Richards, 1929).

The metaphor in "*Reproductions*", "Prince Siddhartha/ Gone into the night / With channa" epitomizes the idea of searching as shown in *Prayer Beads*". This means that Siddhartha as one who is in a process of spiritual realization represents the process of enlightenment through the renunciation to materialism. His passage ‘into the night’ represents a transition to a realm of uncertainty, like thesearch for enlightenment in *prayer Beads*. In Siddhartha’s search for enlightenment as well as with the growing prayer beads, there is a notion of discovering something in one’s self. However, Kamal places Siddhartha’s journey side by side with ‘old tajiks / In their tents / Drinking China tea,’ which brings an element of orientalization to this otherwise purely spiritual quest (Kamal, 1986). This juxtaposition of Siddhartha’s existential journey with the life of the Tajiks is reminiscent of the debates in modernist literature: the luminescence of the quotidian against the essence. Kamal himself appears to propose here that cultural affiliation has been similarly shattered, or rather caused to shatter, as faith has been, and like the remnants of faith, what is left of cultural affiliation are minute shards of unconnected or contradictory realities whose reassembly could only be a gargantuan task.

In Reproductions, April snow builds up the idea of life being but imitation of the sunlight, in Prayer Beads, Kamal appropriates the symbol of invisible fish reaffirming that life is but fleeting shadow of the real fishes. (Barthes, 1970) The gorgeous in the titles “Fall” denote the frailty of legacy and reminder that like the almond blossoms, therefore, culture can eventually be preserved but cannot last forever. Likewise, the ‘invisible fish’ in Prayer Beads which frees the prayer beads symbolizes the subterranean or concealed face of faith that is unavailable to people in their everyday existence. This fish, lurking in the gloom, is like the blossoms of almonds symbolizing the fact that, like traditions, spirituality is sought with great care and caution and is not easily obtained (Pound, 1918). These icons and tropes are used by kamal to depict the modernist struggle of attempting to understand facets such as ethnicity and religion that which progressively appears to be increasingly elusive. The poems culminate in actions that reflect personal attempts to connect with the past: In Reproductions, the poem, the speaker remains to sit “scraping / The rust off my ancient coins” whereas in the Prayer Beads, the speaker watches the prayer beads emerging on the surface. The mechanical work of scraping rust from coins coins lends meaning in attempting to regain or reclaim one’s ethnic origin but is hindered by the oxidized layer (Sohail, 2021). Both history and monetary value are associated with ancient coins here; and a cultural heritage which the speaker attempts to foster or restore, is marked with the signs of aging or corrosion. However, in Prayer Beads the rising of the beads signifies that spirituality is not an action one consciously puts into to but rises of its own accord. (Kamal, Duad 1986). Collectively these works represent a modernist concern with expressing the difficulties of attaining a firm grounding, whether it be an individual identity, or a belief in God. The efforts to retrieve these fragments of cultural and spiritual identity suggest an ambivalence, some possibility of obtaining them, but they are decayed, fragmented or illusive (Sohail, 2021).

The poem *The Rebel* highlights a sense of disillusionment through the image of the mother kneeling in prayer. Her prayer represents a form of faith, but it is depicted as "ignorance" – suggesting that her faith is incomplete or misguided in the face of her son's death. This could indicate a broader commentary on how faith can sometimes feel inadequate in the face of violence and loss, leading to a sense of fragmentation in belief systems. It also reflects the cultural values surrounding life, death, and the rituals of mourning. The act of the mother praying signifies the cultural importance placed on spirituality and hope in dire situations. However, the juxtaposition of her prayer with the violent act of shooting suggests a critique of cultural practices that may not address the harsh realities of life, such as loss and suffering.(Kamal, 1986). The reference to "the blind earth must be fed" implies a cycle of life and death that continues regardless of individual suffering, pointing to a cultural acceptance of mortality. However, various symbols are present in the poem. The "orchard wall" can symbolize the boundary between life and death, as it is where the protagonist is executed. The "pandemonium of crows" often symbolizes death and the inevitability of fate, emphasizing the grim outcome of the rebellion. The "wheat ear on the stubble" symbolizes sustenance and the earth's resilience, suggesting that life continues despite individual tragedies. This symbolizes a duality of existence: the ongoing cycle of life contrasted with the finality of death.

**Conclusion**

Kamal’s *Prayer Beads* and *Reproductions* provide a timely postcolonial and formalist intervention into the discourse on modernist spirituality and identity. Symbolically, the issues of unity and division are expressed through *prayer beads*, Moghul miniatures, almond blossoms, and ancient coins to illustrate Kamal’s search for a unified identity while acknowledging the inability to gain complete ownership of a fragmented history. In both poems, there is a notion of longing for something genuine in the society where religion and tradition have been marginalized or exist in fragmented form. Thus, spirituality and cultural memory as significant values are equally worthy of the effort to find in Kamal’s poetic vision even if they are lost, temporary or exist in part only. While this struggle to relate to an eroded past is an embodiment of a modernist worldview and a quest for meaning embraced by the heroes of lost-generation narratives, the existence of such meaning is also confirmed, evidenced, albeit in the final moments of contemplation.

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