

## **Ph. D Evaluation Report**

**Name of the Researcher: M. Natarajan**

**Title: The Pastness of the Past and Its Presence in the Poetry of Nissim Ezekiel,**

**A. K. Ramanujan and Kamala Das**

Indian English Poets write with an awareness of their milieu and environment rather than British and American rhetoric or intellectual attitudes like alienation or exile. They share the central core of contemporary realities of Indian life. Indian English poetry has its own richness, sensibility and cultural complexity. Kamala Das is well known for her open and honest treatment of female sexuality free from any sense of guilt. Nissim Ezekiel was a foundational figure in Postcolonial India's literary history specifically for Indian writing in English. A. K. Ramanujan, as an Indo-American writer, had the experience of the native milieu as well as of the foreign one. In this context, I appreciate the researcher for selecting an innovative and suitable topic for his research work. The title of the thesis, though it takes its origin from T. S. Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent", is a complete deviation from what T. S. Eliot meant. It is not about the impact of the past writers upon the present writings of the three poets taken up for study. The title of the thesis means how the past with all its charms, pains and pleasures are still remembered in the artistic creations of these three poets. The experiences, to which the three poets have been exposed and those they encountered in their career graph are not things of the dead past but living past in the poems of the three writers taken up for study.

In the introductory chapter, the researcher explains how the study of the lives of the three poets helps the readers in understanding their poetical works. He has also delineated vividly how the family members had made an impact and influence on the inner development



of the poets. In the second chapter, the researcher has undertaken an in depth study of the works of Nissim Ezekiel. He has rightly pointed out the major themes of Ezekiel such as love and sex, the problem of marriage, the Indian contemporary scene, modern urban life and the need to overcome alienation. Moreover, the researcher has to be appreciated for identifying various aspects such as the poet's childhood memories, his affection towards his parents, his attitude towards his children, his sex life and his romantic escapades which are vastly reflected in his poetry.

In the third chapter, the researcher has aptly concluded that A. K. Ramanujan is a poet of memory. The members of his family flash before his mind's eye and the Indian customs and conventions get branded on his memory and leave their marks in the poems. The family is usually the central metaphor that explores the hinterland of memory and knocks his experience into disturbingly vivid forms. Ramanujan's poetry shows how an Indian poet in English derives his strength from going back to his roots -- his childhood memories. Moreover, the researcher has convincingly portrayed the personality of A. K. Ramanujan in this chapter. According to the researcher, A. K. Ramanujan feels drawn to his Hindu roots inwardly, even though outwardly he poses to be a sophisticated western educated man as Ramanujan entertains the hope to die in his own native soil and to be cremated in the sandalwood to the chanting of Sanskrit mantras.

In the fourth chapter, the researcher has undertaken a careful consideration of the past in the career of Kamala Das as seen differently such as the familial past, the ancestral past, the personal past and the religious past. In the concluding chapter, the researcher has strikingly stated that the past is the pivot around which the lifestyle of these three poets – Nissim Ezekiel, A. K. Ramanujan and Kamala Das – revolves giving rise to evocative pictures of their careers leading to the recordation of the bitter-sweet memories.



The thesis is well organized from the beginning to the end as per the prescribed international standard and format. The researcher has used lucid style. There are neither ambiguous nor tautological expressions all through. He has also to be appreciated for using logical arguments. The bibliography at the end is a comprehensive one. Both the researcher and the research supervisor have done a great job to bring out this valuable document, which will serve as a notable secondary source for further research in the field of Indian English Literature.

Based on the impressive strengths of the thesis, I have no hesitation to state that the thesis of Mr. M. Natarajan is **highly commended** for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English.



Andreas L. Katonis

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