

## Voice of the Rejected: Representation of the Life of Transgender in the Poems of Kalki

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Kalki

Courtesy: <https://yourstory.com/2015/05/kalki-subramaniam/>

### Codes and Laws and Oppression

The world is fragmented by the dominant cultured people and by the establishment of the of oppression and exploitation. Subalternity is the term which tends to signify the oppressed and suppressed in every society. Every society is guarded by its codes and laws, which are considered more ethical, and the rejection of which is considered as a curse fell upon the particular society. These codes also form the crux of social ethos. Maintaining the order enunciated in the codes and maintaining some groups of people as subalterns and exploiting them deliberately especially for some ignoble purposes and fulfilling their needs become social

ethos in Indian society. The subaltern identities are imposed upon such people in terms of race, religion, caste, gender and so on. Transgenders are one among them.

Everybody is marked with a gender on birth itself, Transgender is a term used to denote the person whose gender identity differs from the one marked. Gender identity of a person is internal, personal sense of being a man or woman. For transgender the gender marked at birth may not match with their internal gender identity. Transgenders are variously defined themselves in the modern era as transgender, transsexual, or genderqueer. Transgenders are born with male or female anatomy but have the feeling that they have been born into a wrong body. Trying to change the gender identity may not be successful than trying to change the sexual orientation and consequently transgenders align their bodies with relation to their gender identity.

### **Thirunangai Kalki**



This volume of powerful poems written Thirunangai Kalki is available in book stores and in amazon.in [http://www.amazon.in/dp/8184766300/ref=cm\\_sw\\_r\\_fa\\_awdo\\_c\\_D9tZxb1N5YFE2](http://www.amazon.in/dp/8184766300/ref=cm_sw_r_fa_awdo_c_D9tZxb1N5YFE2)

**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 17:3 March 2017

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Thirunangai Kalki is an activist who fights against the dogmatic society and dead and decayed society that rejects transgenders. In 2006 she started a magazine named *Sahothari*(sister) and also she started a trust in the same name in 2008 exclusively for the cause of emancipation of transgenders. The present collection of poetry has been published by Vikatan publishers in 2014. The poems are aggressive and also a plea to society for treating transgenders with humane attitude.

### **Different Views on Gender**

Scientists consider gender as a biological phenomenon, feminist as a sociological phenomenon and eunuchs as a psychological phenomenon. Eunuchs are the God's parallax error and they have the right to choose their gender, their psyche almost always prefers to be a woman.

Kalki explains how she has become a woman in a short poem thus:

No Great Penance  
Undertaken I  
Lacerating the Cock  
dipped in blood  
averting death  
became a woman. (Original was in Tamil. The translation mine.)

Kalki alludes to the great Tamil poet Desiyavinayagam Pillai in the first two lines. He says, "To be born as a woman, one has to observe penance," whereas Kalki says that she has not undergone a penance to be become a woman but cut his penis and abiding death, she has become a woman. But society does not accept the transgenders as women, due to various reasons like they do not have womb to reproduce or they cannot indulge in sex with other sex since the transgenders have cut their penis Kalki speculates these optimistically in the same poem.

(KuriAruthaen 11-23)

Lacerated the Cock  
Progeny come to end  
Withered tree

You are  
No tentacles  
You make you alive  
as long as you have roots  
Said you  
Good. (Translation mine)

## **Heir**

In Indian societal context having a heirship seems to be mandatory to sustain the clan. Transgenders may not reproduce, since they are neither female nor male. Their clan comes to end with them and they opt to be women though they do not possess a womb. Kalki sees womb as a part which carries the residues of human imbalances in terms of religion, caste, race, economy gender and colour of skin and also she views the womb as lavatory since it carries only the residues which becomes a child.

(KuriAruthaen 24-41)  
The womb that carries  
Your excretions  
Your residues  
that contain  
Caste mania and  
religious fanaticism  
becomes a lavatory. (Translation mine)

## **Forced Objects of Sexual Pleasure**

People not only reject them for considering the transgenders as woman but also they consider them as the objects of sexual pleasures. They raise their concerns over the transgenders' physique. They grow suspicious over the breast and vagina of the transgenders; they blasphemies the transgender's physique, they are not even reluctant to touch the breast, they call it a curiosity, but it is the transgender who inevitably meets out the psychological torture.

Kalki not only answers all these social taboos that inevitably ostracize the transgenders from the mainstream society but also peels off the social shames through her poetry.

### **Forced by Tradition to Form Their Own Social Group**

Any people who are rejected used to live in groups. They form their own group and make relationship among them, though they are not related through their blood or placenta. The conscience of being rejected and oppressed in by the mainstream society becomes the root cause for their unity. Transgenders live in groups and they make relationships among them as mother, sister, cousin and so. They even marry each other and live together as husband and wife.

The transgenders live together in groups in Indian society, they have relationships like mother, daughter, sisters among them. Though they do not have wombs the older eunuchs are called as mothers by the younger ones. They do not have any disparity on the basis of caste, religion, creed, economy or race. They love each other reciprocally and unconditionally. One can strongly visualize the bond of humanism among them. These characteristic traits are not found among other sexes.

Kalki asks others whether they can lead a life like this giving up their caste and forgetting their religion.

(KuriAruthaen 58-64)

That Life

Renouncing

religion and caste

Union of the rejected

Can you live? (Translation mine.)

### **No Crisis of Identity Crisis**

Kalki's poem's never caught up themselves in identity crisis, since she candidly renounces the status assigned to the eunuchs in society and also many eunuchs know themselves; identifying oneself renounce him from the identity crisis. Kalki views that the society rejects them considering the eunuchs as women and that itself is the very first stepping stone of

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liberation from the clutches of society. She questions the society whether one can become a mother without fertilising.

(KuriAnuthaen 65-71)

Can you become  
a mother  
without bearing a child?  
Can you become  
a child  
without getting fed  
from breast. (Translation mine.)

Kalki's questions shake the conscience of humanity. The Eunuch leads a life saying or realizing "I became her mother, she became my daughter" (Revathin.p), though they do not bear any child and even having no womb.

### **Liberation through Protest**

Any subaltern literature is characterized by protest, it also embodies protest as one of the means of achieving liberation from the traditional clutches that perennially subjugate and subvert a particular section of people. No doubt that literature is the result of artist's contradiction with the social structures. Subalterns understand that pen is like an axe which is capable of cutting down the weeds thickly grown over centuries, through literature they fight against such weeds, the power structures. In this regard Foucault opines:

Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or organized up against it, any more than silences are. We must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby discourses can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point of opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines it and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it. (100-101)

## Exposing the Hypocrisy of Societal Assumptions

Transgenders are considered as the objects which are traditionally used for quenching the lust of people. Some may argue that transgenders willingly accept prostitution; those people must have in mind that nobody in the society accepts the eunuchs as the workers in factories or in homes. They are pushed to be the sex workers in order to earn to fill their bellies and keep themselves alive in society. People consider them as disgusting objects while they are working in their workplaces but the same people consider them as sexual objects and also indulge in sex with them.

Kalki expresses the hypocrisy of such people in a poem.

(ElunthiradiEnThangame 6-32)

By which Perverts'

Word

Wounded you

By which mobs'

Laugh of shame

Your mind

being affected

You become a prey

for that man

from the same mob

You become a prey

for you need have prey. (Translation mine.)

Kalki expresses anger against such odds and instructs the transgenders to crush those people. Kalki uses the image of "Kali" the Hindu goddess. Kali is a Hindu Pantheon Goddess who is believed to be the incarnation of "Parvati", otherwise known as "Sakti" in Hindu mythology. Parvati incarnated as Kali to destroy "Nimban" and "Sumban", Demons and incourse of the war there was another demon, Rakthabijan by name who was very powerful and none could destroy him. Kali took a savage form and drank the entire blood of Rakthabijan to kill him. Thus Kali is more ferocious.

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Kalki writes:

(ElunthiradiEnThangame 72-84)

Keep your leg

in his neck

show the face of kali

.....

kick

rightly at his

penis. (Translation mine)

As all the subaltern literatures Kalki's poem also ends in search of humanity and humanness. She instructs to search the persons who never humiliate the mind and a person who lives terminating physical sex.

(ElunthiradiEnThangame 98-101)

Search a man

who does not

peck your mind

find a magnificence

which averts

body. (Translation mine.)

### **Revolt against Tradition**

Kalki's poems are the forms of revolt against deadening traditional practices. In Tamilnadu one can witness the *Kuvaham* festival on the day of *ChitraPournami* (Full moon day at the month of Chithirai). Kalki speaks of the important event that takes place there when the transgenders tie the tali (the MangalSutra) in the night and cut that Mangal Sutra on the next day. According to Hindu tradition, when the husband dies, a woman is deemed to cut the tali as a mark of her widowhood. Transgenders accept God, Aravan, as their husband and ties the tali and cut it at the next day, thinking that their husband has died.

Kalki refers to this saying:

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(VidhiaiEzhuthinaen 24-28)

I need no

melancholic rituals

Bundling the rituals and

throwing it into ditch

I learnt to smile. (Translation mine)

## To Conclude

Indian society unleashes oppression and subalternity based on various norms or criteria like caste, race, religion and gender. Being a transgender is considered as the worst of all creatures, created. Transgenders are the subalterns on the basis of gender. Gender identity is one of the significant criteria that holds dignity among human beings. Transgenders are not treated as human beings but are commodified. They are ignobly used for quenching men's sexual pleasures. Transgenders are one of the subalterns in the Indian society who are exploited, humiliated and ill-treated by the power politics.

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