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DEPICTION OF INDIAN LANDSCAPE IN SHIV K. KUMAR'S POETRY: REFLECTING POST - COLONIAL FEATURES

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Abstract:

Postcolonial writings as we have observed emphasize the process of strong resistance in the colonized societies and also put emphasis on contemporary reality of life. It deals with the literature written by the people of colonized countries that take the suffering and survival and resistance of their people as their subject matter. If creating new themes and techniques is a part of postcolonial writing , Shiv K. Kumar can be truly called postcolonial poet. Shiv K. Kumar gave an identity and a sense of direction to Indian English poetry in the post colonial period. East – West encounter, Indian landscape, national identity, contemporary reality are the themes of his poetry. His major collections of poems are Articulate Silences (1970), Cobwebs in the Sun (1974), Subterfuges (1976), Woodpeckers (1979), Trapfalls in the Sky (1987).

The present paper tries to analyze, interpret and discuss in detail the portrayal of Indian landscape in Shiv. K. Kumar's poetry with post – colonial features. Post – colonial authors take a responsibility of representing themselves using literature and poetry in a criticism form or by celebrating the emerging national identity .Shiv K. Kumar's writings, especially poetry remain rooted to the soil, depicting the true India. His poetry engages with the Indian nation in different socio-geographical contexts with the theme of post colonialism. So this article will help one to one to understand the nature and impact of inherited power, relations and their continuing effects on literary writing that get reflected in the poetry of post – colonial writers like Shiv Kkumar.

KEY WORDS:

Post - Colonial Features , Postcolonial , colonized countries , techniques.

INTRODUCTION

Shiv K. Kumar was born in Lahore, British India, in 16th August 1921. Kumar is considered one of most outstanding poets of modern Indian English literature. He is versatile genius who combined in himself various aspects of a writer. He is true poet whose poetry is a wonderful work of powerful feelings of pains, agonies and hopes. He is very simple in his subject matter and treatment. A number of literary works appeared in English by Indian writers on princely India depicting different aspects of princely India. It is not just reflected in the language as imagery of literary texts or just like a backdrop but the oppression about the colonized people related with their identity relationships and culture. They are expressed with their identity, relationships and culture. They are expressed with liveliness. The desire of the post - colonial writes is to recover their lost pre – colonial identities as they no longer want to be confined to the colonizers.

In post colonial writings mentioning of Indian landscape is one of the most prominent theme Shiv K. Kumar presents his native land in the form of nostalgic memory to glorify his nation. Sometimes he wants to have some identification with his nation. The vigorous search for identity gives a feel so protective when some nation's monuments or some important places are portrayed. In place of presenting the darker side, poets like Shiv K. Kumar concentrate on exposing the enrichment of their native lands and positive

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things too. The poets feel it is better that they share some valuable information of their native country with other countries. World Literature Today comments on his poetry thus : "Today we seem to be poised for a break through and Something that may be truly Indian is being written" (Dwivedi Page 183)

Kumar is a poet who is known for his portrayal of India and its different aspects in very a beautiful way. He is essentially concerned with the 'Indianness' of his experiences in order to recreates new themes, techniques and idioms, distinct from writers all over the World who write in English. His poems on Indian subjects depict the natural scene and environment, Indian life and Indian myth and philosophy. As a great lover of Indian landscape the poet has paid a glorious tribute to India with simplicity in his anthology Trapfalls in the Sky. In the first section On Native Grounds is a living testimony to a sensitive soul. The description of Indian landscape through images affords certain joy of recognition to the native readers.

Shiv. K. Kumar poetry presents the Indian experience more vividly and makes it exotic. The poem Dal Lake : Srinagar gives a graphic description of the Dal Lake which is in Srinagar. The description of the lake gives the real enviable picture The poet is struck by the wonderful morning and it is brought out vivaciously in following lines :

It's daybreak – the moment of embrace
between rose and briar, dream and reality,
faith and negation(8-10)

asthough this morning has just been midwifed
out of the womb of time" (14-15)
The impressive song of the birds are so lovely enough that it
"--- breaks into this hushed moment
The symphony of birds, still drunk
on some dreams of luscious orchards" (21-23)
(Dal Lake :Srinagar)

The poet by giving beautiful description makes the reader travel lively over Dal Lake and if the reader of the poem had been there already he relives in the experience of being there.

Indian landscape has inspired Shiv. K. Kumar by which he creates newer and more fascinating images . The landscape Delhi is Presented by the poet in the poem O Delhi !mainly highlighting the present and the past Delhi with patriotic sentiments. He regrets for the present Delhi when he compares it with that of the Delhi of yesteryears "Though he is regretful he records with satisfaction in this poetry exposing the hospitality of Indian in the lines :

---Still I felt redeemed
asyou threw open your gates Kashmiri and Ajmeri
to welcome indoors a fugitive from another land.
I Savoured your hospitality (6-9)

The purity that lies in the past in Delhi does not exist in the present. "In Shiv. K. Kumar's poetry historical monuments, a landscape and environment are often viewed with a savage irony as part of his own sexual desires, anger at incongruities" (King 120)

Shiv.K. Kumar uses feminine imagery to show the picture of streets of Delhi in the poem Shiv O Delhi, as :

Your streets and alleyways were like to contours
of a virgin's torso-taut and scented (16-17)

A trace of humour is used by the olfactory image 'scented'. It is used to convey as it is the contaminated society. To drive off the decayed odour of the streets scent is used. Shiv K. Kumar uses irony to make the people think over and also to give a delight to the readers. Some landscape images like "DDA flat (25)JamaMasjid(30), Rajghat (41), Jamuna River (46), Najafgarh drain (47), mandihouse (51), NDMC Tower (52) all give the reader closeness with the poem ODelhi!

The allurement of Indian landscape and the unequivocal speciality of India are explored so well in his poetry collections also. He very often sexualizes the landscape., He produces it in all beautiful aspects too. The opening lines of Cleansing Ganges he presents a nascent picture of innocence :

At nativity all creatures are chaste, like breast milk

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the dowry chick, pecking its way out
of the shell's prison,
The littlum calf, gravitating on its tottering legs
To the mother's udders
And the undiapered babe thumped
and thrashed into primal consciousness (1-7)

Kumar is against mechanical performance of rituals. He is in favour of the subversion of tradition and rituals and therefore, irony becomes a favourite mode in his poetry. As the innocent Ganga comes down to the plains of occupied present, the pristine Ganges becomes a dumping ground for waste matter. Thus he writes in his Poem : (Qutd. Das)

It's only when they are carried down the river of time
That iron sinks into their souls.
The waters then get sullied by ritual and dogma-
Ashes and bones,
Wilted floral offerings to the dead,
And the noontime sweat oozing from the saffron-
Striped foreheads of the crocodiles
Whose yawning jaws chant mantras in some obsolete
tongue.
May be if someone could dismantle all scaffoldings
along the mother river's waistline
and asked the dead to seek immersion
in other confluences
the little fish will then bleach these waters
for the sun's lasers to probe her limpid groin (8 to 22)
(cleansing Ganga)

In his another very Indian poem, Banaras : Winter Morning, he presents the religious picture of India through Banaras, the city which is the symbol of religion and holiness, with the beautiful image of one winter morning the city, he says :

Each tree by the roadside
Smear'd with saffron and white ash-
Its roots seeking succor
From the holy waters...

The poet mesmerized by the city admits :

If I were to die
This is the moment
And this is the place
(Woolgathering, p-23)

In this poem, the poet's philosophical vision of the World with the reflection of Indian landscape reaches a great height.

The Taj is a poem in which the Indian poet Kumar feels for the ruined beauty of the a magnificent monument the 'TajMahal'. His sense of disappointment is expressed as :

Fissures in its return
Now a renovator's nightmare,
How long can it withstand
The riverbed's lethal teeth ? (11-14)

Shiv K. Kumar is aware of the shaping of a national consciousness by the environment of the country, the climate, the background of the tradition. In the poem 'A Letter to My Son' a picturesque description of Hyderabad with all its extremes can be found. Even the climate is brought out so amazingly with much reality. He points out saying Hyderabad as,

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But, here in Hyderabad, I have drawn the curtains
To dodge the Sun's sanguine eye
Glowering in its lethal anger, (14-16)

Shiv K. Kumar in his another two poems 'Dawnbreak over Khasi Hills' and 'Walking by the Riverside' integrates the place with the people .

A poem related with Indian landscape is 'Cleansing Ganga'. It relates to familiar situation in India. There is a picturesque description of the river Ganges. It is recipient of countless tributes. So many hymns are sung in praise of the river. The poem is such a way that the reader can visualize the Ganga riverside. Though they are expatriates they cannot disown the beauty of their native land. This poem is ironical in saying that the human being at the time of birth are innocent as:

At nativity all creatures are chaste, like breast-milk
The downy chick, pecking its way out
Of the shell's prison,
The littlum calf, gravitating on tottering
Legs to its mother's udders
And the undiapered babe, thumped
And thrashed into primal consciousness “ (1-7)

The poet by using the visual imagery shows pictures of the purity of the soul at the time of its birth. Then in a meanwhile they get polluted.

It's only when they are carried down the river of time
That iron sinks into their souls. (8-9)
The beauty of the riverside at night time is painted wonderfully in poetical way:
The moon will recapture in the river's mirrors
shop lineaments of her own face
flushed like a bride's
as she walks into the huptial chamber
holding a lone candle
to be snuffed out
into the Bay's eternity. (23-29)

This beauty is getting spoiled by “ashes and bones” (11), “Wilted floral offerings to the dead” (12), and by the “noontime sweat oozing from the saffron-striped for heads of the crocodiles” (13-14). The poet uses a ray of satirical humour to convey that the priests are not truthful in performing the rituals by mentioning them as crocodiles” (14) Which merely act .

CONCLUSION:

Shiv K. Kumar bemoans for the ruined beauty of their nation's monument or appreciate the beauty to make the readers feel proud of their nation respectively. In some poems like an Old Dry Well, Trafalgar Square, The Taj, Sunday Morning, Shimla, Ruins at Agra, Deja Vu, the poet refers to the dilapidated monuments and lost glory of landscapes with much aching for the lost beauty which shows that Shiv K. Kumar is portraying without showing any false partiality.

Indian English poetry has affinity with all the features of post-colonial literature. As a post-colonial poet Shiv K. Kumar's outlet expresses an energetic assertion of cultural identity through the presentation of Indian landscape and its Culture As for him Bijay Kumar Das rightly said,

“Kumar will always be a source of inspiration for Postcolonial Indian English poets in the new millennium for his daring portrayal of new themes in straight forward language”.

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