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PSYCHOANALYTICAL EXPLORATION OF THE SELF IN SHIV K.KUMAR'S SELECTED POEMS: A DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT

Shiv K.Kumar's poems are a psychological exploration of his inner self. This article seeks to analyse and interpret psychoanalytical features in the selected poems of Kumar. Kumar is a connoisseur of sufferings. His poetry therefore is born of grief and sufferings. Sufferings may ensue from severe personal trauma. Kumar tries to share his personal experience through his poems. So this article will help one to understand the nature and scope of the theory psychoanalytical criticism and their continuing effects on literary writings that reflected in the poetry of psychoanalytic writer like Shiv K.Kumar.

Keywords: Psychoanalytic, Poem, Sufferings

Psychoanalytic criticism is a form of literary criticism which uses some of the techniques of psychoanalysis in the interpretation of literature. In 1920's a very wide-spread form of psychoanalytic criticism emerged, and procedures of which were established by Austrian psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud. Freud's application of psychoanalytic theory to literature was imitated and then modified by numerous critics. Several writers of poetry and fiction have relied on Freudian models. Some psychoanalytic dramatists are Mahesh Dattani, Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar. Psychoanalytic poets are Kamala Das, Shiv K. Kumar, Eunice de Souza, Mamta Kalia, Sunita Jain and Gauri Deshpande. Shiv K. Kumar's poems are born out of his own personal experiences. His own personal experiences form the basis for his poems. He underwent a lot of sufferings and faced several crises of great intensity as a Psychoanalytic poet.

Suffering is as integral to life as death. Mulk Raj Anand believes that, "Suffering is born of the experience is being plunged in the world in which there are senseless killings." (Vijay 75). As a psycho

analytic poet Kumar is moved by the contemporary reality around the society. The sufferings of the poor affected him and so he wrote poems like *Sounds of Hunger*, *Street Children*, and *Moon gazing*.

Kumar brings to limelight the sufferings of the poor people who starve out of hunger in *Sounds of Hunger*. The poor people are condemned to starve like Tantalus, the Greek Mythological King:

Inside the belly
the torments of Tantalus-
raging fires crunching away
the last of logwood
whose charred ribs crumble
sibilantly into cold ashes: (9-14)

Our society is not an egalitarian society, we still have the rich and poor distinction. In *Street Children* the pathetic of the poor children are described as, "left over's in the dust-/ bin, discarded even by a rag picker." (6-7). The poet explains the fact that whoever it is rich or poor, they all should come to the same crematory ground after death and the whole body is eaten by worms. The poet philosophically says that, "does it matter if at the

end of / the day, it is burial or cremation. The dust eats it all up-bone, flesh and dreams. (17-20)

The children are not aware of their birth, they are:

Born of cyclone, earthquake and drought, they hang in the air like midgets. Identity is for those who are lullabied in cradles, and fed on honey and dreams. (1-5)

The poet pathetically says that the poor children are standing in front of church and temples, begging for food. The people who pass by and the God who created the people did not care for the poor children;

I see them in front of churches and temples, their hands stretched out for boons. But who Cares? Not even the deities, each resting smugly in his sanctorum. (8-12)

The miseries and sufferings of the poor people, at the hands of people who are supposed to uphold law hurts Kumar severely. This feeling is reflected in the poem Moon gazing.

Time was when this man could sense any hostile movement in the cosmos around his ramparts. But now the masked intruders zoom in, like ravens, as if to find some evidence of stolen property from their planet where suspicion worms into everyman's brain like a malignant tumour. (3-10)

Kumar as a psycho analytic poet had portrayed the mental trauma of the protagonist in the coordinates of pain. The coordinates of pain is also an attempt to portray similar mental suffering of the protagonist. He thinks that it must articulate itself, " must seek its own notation" (3) He wishes to transform what is impossible into something possible, "push articulation over the rock's steep edge" (4). It is absurd and improbable. A rock cannot speak. However the verb "push" (4) hints at his resolve to get an explication from what is absurd and impossible. The intensity of his pain is severe and its cause as mysterious as impractical as is articulation from rock. The severity of pain mounts to such an extent that eyes and ears exchange their normal

functions. Eyes begin to hear and ears begin to see the involutions of pain racking the persona's nerves: the eyes hearing the convulsive rumble that spirals from the navel to the agonized throat, the ears perceiving the grey involutions of pain, racking my wincing nerve. (9-5)

These words reveal in simple measure the intensity of pain torturing the protagonist. The pain and agony which he had experienced made him feel lonely even when he is amidst crowd. That feeling is reflected in A Lonely Woman. The suffering of a lonely woman becomes phantasmagoric as she moves from room to room in vain hope to find someone to converse with her. Her aloofness becomes nauseating and irritating, "like the summer files" (9) in her loneliness any effort to whistle amounts to "a coward's strategy to ward off evil' in wilderness" (11-12). Under these circumstances, she feels that her, "The terrace offers no escape either/ for it exposes me to the moon malignant eye, / the stars' grin". (14-16)

She is scared of the weird atmosphere of moonlit night. She finds herself in void. Even nature appears hostile to her in her (nature's) apathy and insouciance. She is burning herself like a wick in an oil less lamp. Her sorrow is unending. Her suffering sinks to deep recesses of unconsciousness only in her sleep. It floats to the surface to torture her mind as she wakes up from her sleep. She averse, "It all ends in my bed's mummy coffin." (17)

Unsatisfied lust becomes another cause of an individual's suffering. The poet presents three dancers, "With the light brown orbs round their nipples smeared with gold dust-powder," (4-5) dancing hysterically to the music of guitar and drums in Buddha at a Night club. The atmosphere is marked by sensuality. The persona, sitting in a corner of the cabaret hall of the night club imagines,

In a forsaken corner, beside an empty decanter, sits a stranger – his half-shut gaze contemplating three pairs of legs, oozing with beads of perspiration, weaving endless cycles of desire and pain, satiety and ennui

His cycles of "desire" and "pain" (19) stem from his lust for the dancers and subsequent frustration results from his unfulfilled desire.

The poem Renunciation is the logical conclusion of the truth that pain is inspirable from life. Thus, he writes:

Pain, he has now learnt, is born
in the mother's womb, and ends only
when the ashes are silenced
by a sprinkling of milk
This happened, more than two millennia
ago
when sages lived in cages, in harmony
with the wind, rain, thunder
and the beasts. (35-34)

With this Kumar has acquired the wisdom of humility and humility is endless.

Kumar painfully regrets at the ruins caused to nature. This idea is captured in poems like Flower – Pot in My Study and An Unseasonal Rain in Nagpur and in The Taj. These poems are against man's contrivances. The inner gloom and limitations of the flower in the pot have been recorded painfully. The pot has been described as a "painted skull" (1) which contains stirrings of limited potentiality. The plant in the study room can neither take deeper roots nor breathe fresh air of nature outside where "Dappled birds" (13) take free lights. Also, the appeal of its flower is limited only to its master who bestows stale appreciation on it. Its leaves have grown "asthmatic" (6) and it is, feeling suffocated amidst the books of plot and Kant that give only cold touches of philosophy. It has suffered dehydration for want of rain – drop mixed with sweet breezes. This pathetic plight of the artificially nourished plant indirectly reflects the romantic aspirations of a flower in distress.

Similarly in *An Unseasonal Rain in Nagpur* expresses the poet's unhappiness over the unusualness of nature caused by the activities of the "nuclear clouds" (10) in the sky that give unseasonal showers and coaxed the unripe and unwilling rose – stems to sprout.

The poet regrets thus:

Even if the rose's brittle stem may now
sprout a red eye, I will not rejoice since any

whimsicality leaves in my memory only
scars of vain promises (1-5)

The poet's belief in natural harmony and spontaneity, as opposed to the artificialities of the worlds, is quite clear.

The ruin of monuments caused by the onslaught of nature pains Kumar and he expresses his sense of disappointment over the decline of Tajmahal's beauty in *The Taj*. He writes, "Fissures in its rectum now a renovator's nightmare. How long can it withstand/ the river bed's lethal teeth?" (11-14)

This chapter ends up with a concise and concrete knowledge of psychoanalytic features. Kumar's poetry is an outcome of his own experience. His daring portrayal of erotic consciousness in his poetry reveals his inner consciousness. According to him, conjugal unhappiness leads to disloyalty and infidelity. He had written many poems based on this idea. His mother's death kindled his poetic genius and he wrote many poems on death. Death has become a recurring image in his poems. Partition, divorce and the legal battle had caused a deep wound and he had written many poems reflecting his inner psyche. Shiv K.Kumar had achieved grand success in presenting the intricacies of his inner life. His poems take us through a journey into his inner psyche.

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