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## A Glimpse of Some Major themes in the poetry of ShivK.Kumar ( Death,Sufferings,Love,City-lifeand Contemporary Reality)

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### Abstract:

The theme of a poem is the message an author wants to communicate through the piece. Some major themes in poetry are Love, Death, Religion, Spirituality,Nature, Beauty, Aging, Desire, Identity,Self. Love, nature, history, religion, and death .

The present research paper is a glimpse of some major themes in the poetry of Shiv. K.Kumar.He is awell-known Indian English poet.He has published seven volumes of poems which firmly establishes him as a modern Indian English poet.Critics on the basis of the central emotion and idea, find various major and minorthemes in the poetry of Shiv K.Kumar like: Love and compassion ;sex,companionship,betrayal and frustration ;existential concern,pain and suffering ;faith ,conflict and self –search;decay ,death and resurrection ;beauty,joy and eternity; national landscapes and identity ;East –West encounter;autobiographical concerns and typical Indian poems .

**Key words :**Unresolved emotions,suffering,failure in love ,expression of self

Death, Love, Pain, Unresolved Emotions among others are the primary concerns in the poems of Shiv Krishna Kumar popularly known as Shiv K Kumar. Death was the theme of the first poem he publishedtitled “An Encounter with Death”, which was occasioned by the

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death of his mother. Death and suffering is a major theme in the poetry of Kumar. He does not idolize death, he is not fascinated by it nor does he find it as an escape. He does not find an identity in it. He does not personify it. He does not connect it to God either. For him, death is the end. It is painful, simple, real and unnerving. Death, in the works of Shiv K Kumar, is dealt as a simple and obvious end to the beginning of 'Life' and not as an emotional or spiritual event. Death is described as a leveler for all the classes of human beings and for all life categorizing humans sharing the same platform with all other living beings, together. We as humans do not want to accept that death brings us equal to all the living creatures on earth. The futility of life is understood in a different perspective with this. His poem 'Suicide' begins with the description of futility of life. 'The Python's sinewy grip...' represents the futility of humans in a life created by themselves. The use of the word 'pillar' creates a sense of dried up emotions and that of a static life which is too tough to change. It can break, but it will remain stagnant so long as it exists, static common and unwanted and 'beyond redemption'.

Love is another major theme in Kumar's poetry. He never romanticizes or celebrates the lust element of sex, but talks about the purity of love. There are poems which are inspired by love and woman and his failure with the erotic. And through his poems he also gives the reason(s) for the failure of his pure love. The other theme opposite to love of which he talks much is death. Love and death together drive Kumar to become the poet of the self. With a kind of self-analysis in his poems, he allows his inner conflicts, anguish, frustration, confrontation and other such experience to come out as projections. On the surface, he perceives every reality with his dexterous use of ironical mode. And the images used become symbols through which he wishes to explore reality.

The third major subject in his poetry is city-life. The life in city forms a charged local of different pictures of discords in his poetry. Shiv K. Kumar as a poet talks about various things but remains trapped in the firm grip of his emotions. It is so because he is unable to

come out of his state of conflict. He finds no route out, yet displays his persistent struggle to resolve or dissolve his conflicts in his poems. In biological terms, his spontaneous outpourings form a sort of his prenatal experience of expressions. *Articulate Silences*, the first volume of Kumar's poems, contains a lot of short lyrics about contemporary reality which depict the horror and boredom of life. The poem, "*The Co-ordinates of Pain*" gives way to the pain of the poet as he tries to escape from it through the medium of poetry. The poet says :

This saw of pain,  
Piercing though the tendons of my heart,  
must seek its own notion,  
Push articulation over the rock's steep edge  
and burst into the yell  
that first broke the sound, barriers.

Prof. Kumar excels in short lyrics. He too tries to accept life as it comes. In the first - volume, *Articulate Silences*, Kumar has introduced the two major themes of his poetry - i.e. love and sex, particularly the failure in love and sex and contemporary realities, like landscape and national identity. Many poems like : "Rickshaw Walla" "Duty free", "Karma", "Epitaph on an Indian Politician", "Sounds of Hunger", "Genesis", "An Encounter with Death", etc. deal with these themes successfully.

Enough suffering has come to him and he has faced several crises of great intensity. It appears that Kumar's poetry is born of grief. Three of them have left indelible marks on his psyche as a sensitive soul. India had to witness the traumatic event of partition, the tragedy in which countless people, perished. This was the first crisis in 1947, when Kumar like several other Punjabis had to cross the border burdened with harrowing memories and wounded personality. A long legal battle against the tenant was the second suffering .He had to fight a fruitless and unending legal battle which ultimately resulted to a compromise was very

shocking to this academician who wasted his valuable time in police station and TisHajary Court.Divorce, a shattering experience which he had to pass through in his mid forties was the third crisis in his life. This was another partition he suffered, this time on psychological grounds. However, he feels that it was a moment of release from a painful life lived through an “uneven landscape of time” with someone, meant nothing but incompatible partnership altogether. In the poem titled ‘Divorce’ he describes it in the following words when he says :

From the womb of time  
I emerged a fledgling  
In white plumes  
Singing out a pain.

As a post – colonial poet, Kumar makes an attempt to come to terms with contemporary realities. The picture of the capital city of India i.e. Delhi is brought alive in a poem called “O Delhi”. To read the poem is to know ‘the horror and boredom’ of life in this City and it is to see it inside out. Kumar recalls his harrowing days when he landed in Delhi as a refugee. In a ‘frigid morning’ Kumar landed in Delhi, which received him with open arms. He says :

.... I felt redeemed  
As you threw open your gates – Kashmiri and Ajmeri  
to Welcome indoors a fugitive from another land  
I savored your hospitality.

But this Delhi is no more. The poet, who like Adam inherited ‘a new garden’ asks Delhi : ‘What have you done to yourself?’ And makes a forecast :

I prophesy that you too will fall  
Like Nineveh and Babylon  
and no new Indraprastha will rise  
from your barren ashes.

Another significant aspect of Kumar's poetry is that it transcends the limitations of an individual's life and achieves a kind of universality by speaking about the contemporary society and life, the world over. An intelligent and intellectual poet of the east, Shiv K. Kumar primarily is a poet of his motherland. Wherever he has been, he has displayed his Indian experience with the psyche of an Indian. The confrontation between East and West often comes to the fore in his poems, though underneath outward manifestations his unconscious compulsive conflicting tendencies are operative. In a beautiful poem called 'Refugees', he broods over the miserable condition of the refugees and brings home their plight in the changing situation. He writes :

Blinkered like yoked bulls,  
burdened with ancestral memories,  
they trudge on, counting the milestones  
which look like maimed tombstones  
while the time's womb holds out  
only a still - born.

As a modern poet, Kumar makes an honest attempt to write authentically about contemporary reality. Most of Kumar's poems reveal an alert and subtle intelligence engaged in the clarification of ideas and experiences. One finds in his poems an intensity and rawness of feeling. For Kumar, poetry thus becomes an effort at self exploration. It is his medium to explore his inner-self as well. His achievement lies in the fact that his poetry reveals the depth of feeling behind various experiences he communicates. He delineates the felt life through his poetry. It is his medium to explore his inner-self as well. All the individuating flashes in his poems establishes him as a mature poet who does not buckle under any pressure.

Shiv K Kumar as a poet has earned for himself a niche of glory among Indo-English writers. Though he started late with his pen on paper, he has successfully convinced his readers that his poems are gems and jewels in their own special form and style.

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