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**REDEFINING THE POSTCOLONIAL IDENTITY IN THE  
 SELECT POEMS OF KIRPAL SINGH**

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**Abstract:**

*This paper discusses the poems of Kirpal Singh to lay emphasis on the need for building human relationships in spite of the differences. The poet highlights that the binary concept of the Western writers has negatively impacted on the society and so humanism, universal understanding and mutuality are lost. The poet prays that these barriers should be erased from human mind and a new social order has to be established. Hence, he makes a clarion call to realize, rediscover, redefine and reconstruct one's own identity in order to create an egalitarian society.*

**Keywords:** *differences, binary concept, mutuality, new social order, egalitarian society.*

Kirpal Singh is one of the best writers of Southeast Asian writers. He is an acclaimed writer of post-colonial writer. He is a poet, novelist and literary critic. His poem "To a visitor to Singapore" ironically talks of the visitors to Singapore, i.e. the immigrants that they change his city well. He is not happy with their arrival. With their arrival, they embellish their place with "oppressive" hand. He does not want to compromise with these people. The people residing in Singapore are getting disturbed by these visitors. He hates these people's visits polluting the privacy of the people. Psychological aversion towards these visitors implies that they pollute their culture during their visit. They do not allow keeping up their ideological status. To be free from distracting values of other country visitors is the ideal status. These visitors mischievously disturb the pretty girls of the place.

The poet's hatred towards the arrival of the visitors is evident as his native culture and its peace gets ruined by their visit. He does not like the visitors talking about his city's negative image through their discussion on politics. He shows his aversion by opposing the visitors coming to his place to use his country's resources. Riya Swan is of the opinion that the poet "tries his maximum to express his abhorrence for the immigrants to his maximum." (Swan)

In "Black and white" poem, the poet talks of the relationship between the black and the white people. The white man's inhuman smile and the anger he has against the native people. There is still black and white space between these two people. The space is not filled in. Western ideology fails to create him in its own reflection, and the white man could not remove and rewrite his identity.

You are the she I could not grasp,  
 I the he you could not create.  
 ("Black and White")

The native people were deceived by the false hopes of the western people, whereas the latter's actions give pain to him.

I am the metaphor you use:  
 In your reed song is my grief;  
 in your voice, my hope.  
 ("Black and White")

The pen can convey what one has in one's mind whereas the words coming from the mouth does not have

any truth. The western ideologies give false hope to the native people whereas through their writings, they express the reality which gives only grief to them. The same message is conveyed in another poem of Singh titled "the sweet you gave", in which the poet says that the western people sugar coated words, but the people with the native culture has to face only sufferings in the hands of the western people.

knowing how life teases  
the sour of my blistering mouth  
I welcome your sweet intrusion  
so deliciously wrapped.  
("the sweet you gave")

The innocence of children is glorified in the poem "colours/blinds", as the children do not see any discrimination with other kids. It is the adults who thrust such poison into their minds. Kids are happily colour blinds, it is the adults who change the kids and insist them to see the people with narrow-mindedness. The young minds have the conception that all the people are one. But through myths and legends, they are instructed to see the people with colour discrimination. Cruelty is thrust into their minds.

these young whose beautiful innocence we colour  
giving them myths and legends to  
frighten  
their discovery of truth, of blood, of oneness. ("colours/blinds")

Blindly believing the other country people to lead us towards the bright future is ridiculed in the poem 'lacking'. Singh says that people trust them in shaping their future, for creating better tomorrows. But slowly they realize that they do not exhibit faith. Because of following their values, the values of their world begin to disappear.

we walk too, we who made their todays  
wondering, wondering, where did  
we go wrong?

The realization comes at last that something went wrong somewhere. It is the native people who are the reasons for their present blissful status. If the natives do not awaken themselves like the Singaporeans, they need to get smothered and disappear one day.

After the realization, people should be ready to redefine themselves and be ready to begin a new life. With the exit of the colonial people from their country, they have only the loved ones around them. Their blessings are going to guide them. Togetherness is the aim of this poet. Otherwise if they stand apart, they will be split once again. So to lead happy and peaceful life, he informs the people to stand united. The blessings of the ancestors will guide them towards success and peaceful life. People should remember their ancestral past and be one with that.

With our loved ones around us  
And their blessings to guide us  
We walk, hand in hand. ("For us")

The journey of our life is going to start now. Sooner one day, we would feel that with today, we have begun our commitment. We would remember one day that our mutual experience can provoke joy. Unity amongst us can bring joy to the people

Seal the pledge of that first  
encounter  
When, knowing our mutual selves,  
We leapt to the rhythms of joy.  
("For us")

People are happily leading their life at present. The painful moments have ended; time has made them forget the sorrows they had faced. Singh talks of the people who struggled during the period of

colonization. From their perspective, the present and past conditions of society are contrasted. Earlier were the days of struggle, there was a fusion of native culture and dominant culture. People dislike such hybridity. But time has taken away the pain. People in the present time are not familiar of the hardships people had encountered in the past, they know of the pleasant and colourful things. People in the present days are not screaming, but their televisions are screaming aloud. They find pleasure entertaining themselves. They are fortunate for living in the present peaceful atmosphere.

so the passing hours take the pain  
away  
and we settle to watch the  
countdown  
the tv is screaming aloud about  
let us give thanks for being here,  
alive. ("For Passing, 2003)

The horrid painful past and peaceful present are contrasted. When people remove the colonization from their mind also, they can lead cheerful life.

Singh has made a study on the human relationships. He talks of his mission in writing poetry in the following lines:

I write from a mission to educate the sensibility of those around me. To expand the consciousness, to just perhaps convince people that in this morass of humanity, what is lacking is a little kindness. Very simple! (*Of Interlogue*)

He wants people to have human concern for the fellow beings. He wants them to be united breaking the barriers like racial discrimination, western standards and inhumanity towards the fellow beings. To remove all these barriers, one has to realize, rediscover, redefine and reconstruct one's own identity.

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