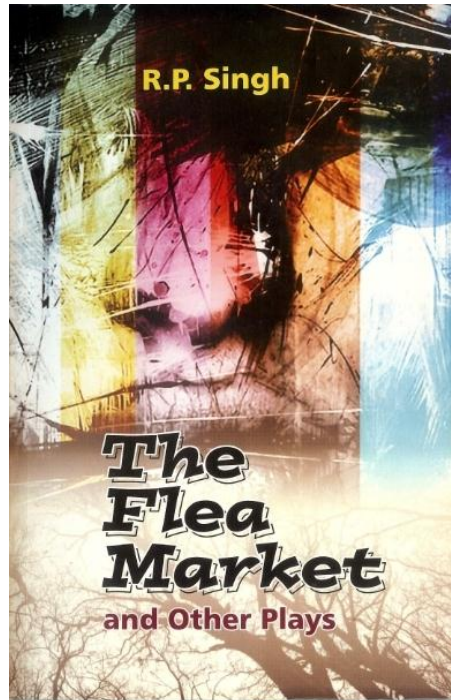


The World Has Turned “A Flea Market”: Reading R.P. Singh’s
The Flea Market in
The Flea Market and Other Plays

Dr. Bishun Kumar



Symbolic Representation of the World as a Flea Market

The play *The Flea Market* by a budding dramatist, humanist and a student of cultural studies symbolically represents that this world is just like “a flea market” where everyone exposes his/her paraphernalia to attract and entice the customers so that s/he could trap them for sucking their blood to quench his/her desires, leaving them to be succumbed to death whether it is man (male) enticing the women (females) or *vice versa*.

Perpetuation of the Suffering of the Other Sex

In such a market the trade of contemporary man seems only to perpetuate the suffering of the other sex- the woman and *vice versa* in the age of feminism by the irrational feminists. The

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play shows us certain traces of colonialism, though, the faces change, yet the ideology of alluring, titillating and othering remains the same. *The Flea Market* throws fresh insight into the colonial history of the Third World countries that the waft and weft of the Occident was just to perpetuate the pain of the Orient. The same is observed in the capitalist ideology where the upper/aristocrat class has left no ground to stereotype the role of working class as laborers for ages and ages. This is how the power politics has started doing all the meanest roles to demean and degrade the human essence/sentiments.

The Inhuman Practices in Academic Explorations

The playwright has pinpointed that today the academic explorations have reached at so high positions that we are honoured with higher degrees/ higher researches and enjoy prestigious positions but they have widened the gap between the West and the East, between the capitalist and the worker, between the neo-rich and the unfortunate, between man and woman, moreover, these have sectioned or cross-sectioned the humanity, that was once an entire whole, in tribes and races, not only in bits and bytes but also had made them non-identical perhaps, have killed it.

An Attack on the Theories with Negative Ideologies

The play *The Flea Market* satirically attacks on such human enterprises that had brought decadence in the world. The leading character Asian with nick name Ketan, by profession a professor, is not only a representative of Asia rather than of the entire East, criticizes the higher education, higher degrees, sophisticated positions for being devoid of potentials of human race such as love, emotion, attachment, humanity, sincerity, etc. He finds Corsea a spoilt product of theories and ideologies:

You are theorizing life, dear. You live in ideology, and ideology mars emotions; it will molest the passion, the zest for beauty ... simply put, it is rotten. Life doesn't sail in theories, yea, they can make you mad like anything, ... many s philosopher came and went, many theorists died, could they bring humanity to the right path? (*The Flea Market and other Plays*. New Delhi: Authors Press, 1914, p-47)

Ketan finds human essence in primitive life, free from all theories and ideologies and wishes as, “We shall turn primitive. No knowledge, no discussion, no discussion, no tension, no worries, but all for love (*The Flea Market and Other Plays*, 40).

Corsea, the French Lady – Symbolic Representation

Similarly, Corsea, a French lady, who is a cultural anthropologist, stands as a representative of French young ladies rather a lace of all Western countries symbolically represents three things. The first is deterioration and emotional betrayal of feminist ideology and of women’s love sentiments. As Asian finds her, “How she falls into a love trap? But ... hail to Vatsyayana, I will convince her that” (*The Flea Market and Other Plays*, 34). Her reaction against feminism discloses the widening gap between the man-woman relations and how politics in academics and ideological differences have dragged the central nucleus, the man-woman complacency to its binaries and polarities, if one stands at the North, the other stands at the South Pole. For having been failed to realize her biological desires and sensual cry of her heart, she hates Feminism and doubts every man a fraudulent:

Hah! I know your filthy mind. I am a woman loving woman. I don’t appreciate to be called by a cliché Lesbians. I hate ‘Feminism’. The very “F” letter scorches me. Yes, I am, It’s a treason of academics ... they defame us. (*The Flea Market and Other Plays*, 26).

Human Affection Eradicating the Gaps

The hatred against each other marks the impact of colonization and ideological differences. In the play, hatred turned into affection between Asian and Corsea marks the fusion of the East and the West, the Orient and the Occident and at the same time it successfully eradicates the gap between man and woman arisen because of sex polarities and thus, it prepares the ground for the demolition of all the theories, concepts and ideologies which, instead of humanizing the life, politicize it.

The Western Ideology of Othering and Its Consequences

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The second is western ideology of Othering the third world, making humanity in its miserable condition. Asian's remark, "... many s philosopher came and went, many theorists died, could they bring humanity to the right path? (*The Flea Market and other Plays*, 47)" reflects the overtones of colonial politics and postcolonial voices. The character regrets over the dehumanized state of colonial, postcolonial and contemporary degradation and the third is the perverted cross-gender identities.

Corsea's hatred against man as an entire race is a co-reactionary outcome of her husband's patriarchal dominance, ideology of women's enslavement and radical ideology of feminism that has determined to knock down all patriarchal hierarchy. She is crushed between these two and therefore, she fails to identify her sentiments of love, emotion and biological desires. Moreover, in reaction to patriarchy, she perverts herself to a lesbian. Her perversion is a brilliant example of same-sex-relation whether gay or lesbian relations- both of them take place as an alternate sexuality for being ill treated, exploited by their opposite sex that has generated a repelling force within them.

Effects of Human Affection

This alternate sexuality finally confines them to an ideological but windowless 'A Room of Their Own' and fall desperately when they find no exit. Asian's soothing affection for Corsea is a 'window' to bring them out of their own suffocating room and the very emblem of tying knot between man and woman.

Reference

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