



INTELLECTUAL BLINDNESS IN GITA MEHTA'S KARMA COLA

S. Deepan* Dr. L. Rajesh**

*Ph.D, Research Scholar, R&D Cell, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore.

**Assistant Professor, PG & Research Department of English, Rajah Serfoji Government College (Autonomous), Thanjavur.

Abstract

Gita Mehta's Karma cola is a powerful critique on modern life exposing the superficiality and the shallowness of spiritual, political and secular modes of life. There are many central issues in the novel are the gurus and their spiritual bedlams, a confrontation and an encounter between the East and the West: the orient and the occident. The novel discusses not only a variety of experience in the ashrams but also informs the cultural collisions of the East –west encounter, the materialistic gurus and their spiritual causalities'.

Keywords: Resurrection, Blindness Mysticism, Degradation, Collisions.

Introduction

The novel throws light upon several metaphysical magnanimities such as Karma, Nirvana, Resurrection, Death, and Kaliyuga and so on. The depletion of such sacred entities in the hands of materialism forms the major arena of discussion. The blend of mysticism and materialism starts even with the title "Karma" the spiritual drink that gets precipitated with every birth is exchanged for "Cola", man-made outcome for material gain. The subtitle of the work "Marketing the mystic east" deliberately shows the triumph of commerciality upon spirituality, Greed upon Value and Money upon Man.

Gita Mehta's anxiety for cultural, spiritual degradation gets kindled at her being teased in publisher's party to elaborate Karma on having dressed in sari. Gita Mehta's pouring out of words that "Karma isn't what is cracked up to be" claims at her reverence for mysticism and at the same time degradation of its status. Her anger results in the book with an empirical analysis of mysticism metamorphosed as materialism.

Mehta's calling spade a spade proves herself impartial between the East and the West. The genuineness adds a feather to her work

Spiritual Bedlam and Soul Questers

The work "Karma Cola" by Gita Mehta marks her repentance at the inability of present day mystics. Rather than admitting their ignorance, the present spiritualists are misguiding their disciples on wrong track. They even boasts themselves at this deed without realizing its consequence of inviting either the doomsday or end of kaliyuga soon.

The main objective of spirituality is morality. Yogis wished to emphasize discipline among mankind and they strongly believed that their desire could be attained through divinity. Thus they created the fear of existence of God, in particular, fear of action and fear of destruction. The concept of Lord Shiva, as the destroyer of sin and sinner restrain not within eastern boundary alone. Even the western Expatriates are trained in this fear gets evidenced from W.B. Yeats' "*The second coming*" God as the purifier, punishment gives are metaphored through sphinx. Thus the concept of survival of mankind remain the same beyond the discrimination of East and West.

While then westerners mark the doomsday in the name of Apocalypse, scientific insistence of nuclear holocaust, the Orientals groom it as kaliyuga.

Goethe's Faust stress upon the survival of man being overtaken by greed to destruction, Eastern mysticism elaborate it on karma in kaliyuga. Western continues find their life getting materialised with man marking the significance of monetary benefits than morals. Orientals are found with misdeeds, dumping their karma for births leading to annihilation.

The concept of 'death' exists to be an eternal voyage in the serene sea of divinity. It remains bounded only to the body of the mortals but not the soul. It is considered a blissful blessing upon the tormented soul which would get released thereafter. It is the way of unison with the omnipresent.

The Yogis of the past was very well aware that,

"Spiritual opening is not a withdrawal to
Some imagined realm of safe care. It is not
Pulling away, but a touching all the
Experience of life with wisdom and with a
Heart of kindness, without any separation". (Jack Kornfield)

Occidentals drifted themselves away from their native land on precept of materialism. They called themselves renunciated. Actual fall of renunciation comes with the western expatriates staying in their own nation and trying the better salvation for their issue. To the contrary they drifted their homeland.



Several mystical concepts stay misunderstood among the western expatriates with ignorant acknowledgement of the East. The present scenario makes it clear of the occidental innocence being used by orientalist in the name of spirituality. Besides such transcendental ideas, the west are used even at simple claims. One such instance is where the people are practised to change their original names by the names of God and Goddess. This presents the extremities of innocence on west insight of trick with the east. The narrator is induced to laugh on hearing the demand for guns and weapons by the 5 year old boy named Helvetian renamed Buddha. When the issue was inquired, the girl replied that they welcome such practices. She further added that they had left all their identity back in their native land and they wish that their names should not recollect them at any cost. The concept of renunciation goes wrong. The western expatriates would have ripped apart their materialism but not their nativism.

Man is circum trapped to emotions and feelings. It is suggestive on his side to let it get expressed outwardly for a healthy survival. Thus the term “Catharsis” plays a key role. Similar to joy and sorrow, anger is also a sort of emotion. While smiling and crying seem acceptable then nothing goes wrong with anger. It is believed that joy doubles and sorrow decreases on getting shared. This lies quite contrast with anger for it tend to break relationship on expressed. At the same time residing it within oneself results in delirium. Antiques resolved that anger could be frozen through meditation that brings peace of mind. But at present, the half-backed mystics’ topsy-turvyed the concept. They preach “Touch Therapy” whereby they allow the people and offer weapon to attack each other for an hour in a room. Their belief that pouring out of anger may reduce its intensity could remain accepted but the way chosen for it remains harmful.

“Father of touch therapies....to sit in on one of the meditations....

As a result, he found himself locked into one of the leather-padded cells with eight other people, all of them armed..... He had also been given weapon..... Wrapped in green cloth, green being the Indian colour of peace”. (37)

The concept of meditation is misguided.

Forgetfulness seems the wonderful gift of the Almighty. But man has misused even it. He fills his mind with vengeance when the action is to be forgotten. Antique counselled “Meditation” in case of his disciples to forget his worldly pressure and to reach divinity. The existing mystics reversed the concept as a tool of recollection which has reached its zenith even to previous birth. Upon the words of her guru, the lady meditates for half an hour in front of the mirror. Her inquisitiveness invested her in trouble where she found herself to be her husband’s mother in previous birth.

“She actually saw herself giving birth to him and breastfeeding him... nobody, not even the Guru could make her snap out of the guilt of how she was an incestuous mother, having children by her own son.”(40)

At another instances, the man who accompanied the narrator called himself to Buddha’s Charioteer.

Guru himself is an ordinary disciple of God. Only the number of years spent in divinely pursuit makes difference. But the westerners believe him equal to God. To the extreme, they consider Guru’s excreta to be something sacred and stand at his doorsteps to fetch it. Every living being including man should evacuate daily in order to keep himself healthier. Disposing of body waste insists upon the renunciation of phlegm from one’s body. Even this has been miscontextualized among the disciples.

“The aristocrat had heard of a guru in a remote village in the depths of the Andhra Pradesh, remarkable not only for his enlightenment, but also for his urine, which changed daily into scented rose water”.(81)

Conclusion

Gita Mehta admits the inevitability of migration between East and West. She expects the expatriates to work hard and fast by which they can varnish poverty, hunger, sufferings from the world. She remains extremely confident that the intelligence of man could even result with medicine that defeats death. Her acclamation of “Go from Zero to Hero” insists upon her optimism for mankind towards betterment.

Reference

1. Mehta, Gita. *Karma cola*. London: Simon&Schuster, 1979. New Delhi:Penguin, 1993.
2. Kalanmani, N. “Soul-Questers & Spiritual Bedlams: a Study of Gita Mehta’s Karma Cola.” *Indian Women Novelists*, Set III, Vol. 4. Ed. R.K. Dhawan. New Delhi: prestige, 1995.
3. Kalanmani, N. “Soul-Questers & Spiritual Bedlams: A Study of Gita Mehta’s Karma Cola and A River Sutra.” *Indian Fiction of the Nineties*. Ed. R.S. Pathak. New Delhi: Creative, 1997.
4. Gita Mehta. <www. People.virginia.edu.html.>
5. BandeUsha. “*Writers of the Indian Diaspora*.” Jaipur: Rawat Publications. 2008.