

MORAL AND SOCIAL VALUES IN TAGORE'S THE POST OFFICE

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ABSTRACT

The Post Office by Rabindranath Tagore considered as a melodramatic work, which delivered the moral values about life and death with simplicity in its structure. Each and every dialogue conveyed meaning to the readers easily, so it comes under children's literature. Several critics judge this work as Tagore's experience in his childhood and present sorrows. This play dealt about the life of a boy Amal who represents as the symbol of angelic creature, the character of a boy had rich in imagination which admired the readers to wretch in the world of fantasy. In the mean time, it had historical context. Tagore has won The Nobel Prize in 1913 for his work '*Gitanjali*' which contain the essence of spiritual. This play too contains the spirituality in allegorical tone. Critics such as Srinivasa Iyengar and Sisir Kumar Ghose valued this play as an allegory of soul. The attitude and the thought of Amal explore the nature of childhood; Tagore elicits the realism in that period. The usage of symbols exemplifies the meaning of the text in different view. Finally, Tagore attains his acknowledgement about the world in this play.

KEYWORDS: Allegory, Symbolism, Realism, Ethics, Liberty and Freedom

The Children's Literature was first emerged in the second half of the eighteenth century and it gets more recognition in the time of twentieth century. This literature accompanies the moral values in that to preach the child. To amuse the reader, it had its own model such as picture representation, images and medieval songs. The genre of it specially used for the reaching of children's such as fairy tales, lullabies, folk song etc. This helps the children to get moral and ethics in life.

The writing of children book contains easy vocabulary to get the meaning and helps the reader to re-read. Authors of the book cautiously select the theme, words because children's re-read the book if they like. Some adults too read this kind of book in order to manage child at home. Tagore's *The Post Office* had several symbols to justify the thought of author. Symbol is the way to convey various meaning than images. So, Tagore gave more importance to symbols than character in it. The play dealt with the world of Amal who suffered by the disease. His imagination gave pleasure to the characters that they cross him.

Critics judged this play as a biographical one because it equals the life of Tagore which was mentioned in his other work *My Reminiscences and My Boyhood Days*. Amal who hates reading books to get knowledge, schooling like Tagore. He feels learning made him to lock in the house so he hates it. The character of Doctor was the representation of learned person who had only bookish knowledge, which had no use in life. Tagore's advice was to get knowledge by the great experience in life.

MADHAV:

No, how can they? Early and late they toil and moil
at their books, and they've eyes for nothing else.

Now, my little man, you are going to be learned

When you grow up; and then you will stay at home
and read such big books, and people will notice you
and say, 'he's a wonder.'

AMAL:

No, no Uncle; I beg of you by your dear feet- I
don't want to be learned, i won't.(31)

This play contains the imagination which made the children to enjoy it and learn about life. The boy who needs to enjoy the outer world seems to denote the theme of colonialism. At that time, India was controlled by British rule. Here, Amal is equal to the youth of the nation who needs freedom from the hold. Throughout this play, Tagore conveyed several issues but the tone he used is understood by the readers whoever catches the exact fact of his period. Amal who faces his world through the window was a silly boy who always thinks about the dream he had in his mind. He speaks with the person whomever cross him and shared his thought whatever it may be. This shows the childish behaviour and the nature of him, but it never irritates others.

Amal's talk with dairyman shows the idea in him about a village. He narrates the exact situation of village of dairyman. He was astonished by the knowledge of Amal, so he gifted curd to him. Amal wants to become a curd seller after their conversation was over. He needs to learn how to make the tone of selling curd. Next, he argued with the watchman who feels for Amal's state. Through their conversation, Tagore gave a great fact that time waits for no one, it goes on forever and one day everyone reaches the place and it is inevitable for all. Even this play shows the feeling of a lonely boy who needs company for speaking and enjoying. The loneliness made him to seek joy at which spot.

Then Amal dealt with headman, Sudha, and Gaffer whom they give company at the time of his loneliness. By dealing these kinds of persons, he needs to become a postman who wanders the whole place and send the message door by door. The freedom he needs in his life shows the freedom needed by Indian at that time of sufferings. Even the nature of Amal shows the reality of child. At first, he wanted to be a curd seller, then a wanderer, and then watchman and at last, he wants to be a Postman.

Tagore expresses the great fact that spirit of one soul attain liberation by the combination of great soul's spirit. The god's grace is the way to get enlightened in one's life. Here, the king is equalizing with god whose appearance made Amal to get purification. The death is not the end of one's life whereas it's the beginning of new one which was mysterious. As a play for children, Tagore never indicates that Amal is dead. He beautifully conveyed that he went to sleep. The sleep here mentioned the permanent one not the temporary. Even the negative words create the negative thoughts to the children. So, Tagore uses the word with some care in this play *The Post Office*.

The conversation between the boys of the village with Amal conveyed that toys he had was of no use for him. This shows without freedom of soul, the life has no use. The desire he had towards the end showed the quality of child stubbornness. The nature of child never changes for any purpose and Amal never admitted any violence to get freedom. Like Indians, freedom is possible only by the maintenance of non-violence.

Tagore gave freedom to Amal only by death. So only by death, we attain peace in soul. Death gave freedom from physical responsibility. It is inevitable that all must reach the spot in our life. Allegorically, Tagore's statements were that the body had an end but never the soul.

AMAL:

I can't say; but it's quite clear to me. I fancy I've
seen it often in days long gone by. How long ago I
can't tell. Do you know when? I can see it all:
there, the king's postman coming down the hillside...(75)

Through the play, Tagore explains the realism in life of one's own, life had several ups and downs, human need to move the way where it goes. He explains that life should meet death at time and it became worth at the time of attaining freedom of soul. Even this play contains the historical issues at that time of Tagore. Tagore concentrates on the area of explaining both the adults and the child readers. This showed that children's literature is not for the children alone but for the preaching of moral values for all the ages. This was one of the best samples for this literature which contain moral, ethical and social values.

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