Tagor’s Play The Post Office: In the Light of Globalization

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ABSTRACT

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), whatever he touched turned into a gold. ‘The Post Office’ is one of the examples of his master pieces. The Bengali edition of the play ‘DAKGHAR’ published in the year 1912. It is a very short play in terms of the size, scenes and dialogues. It has three scenes and three hundred ninety nine dialogues only. In fact, the play does not depend in the story, size, scenes or dialogues. The life-line of the play depends in ideas or concepts. Rabindranath advised us that The Post Office should read through the eyes of a child. Yes, the main character or hero Amal is a child and he is the centre of all the activities in the play. But in the light of globalization every advice or suggestions is questionable. We think, a sensible protest has been ringed out in the play to the refusal tendency of all concern and Amal is the symbol of liberation from all kinds of bondage. This is along with human personality is the ultimate motive of Rabindranath Tagore. ‘The Post Office’ is not only a chronicle story but fixe is the soul of the play. That’s why it is very short. ‘The post office’ is fully an individual one in the series of Rabindra plays. Popularity of this play is really admirable in all over the world. Till now the play is eventual cabalistic. The utterance of the play is really invincible. Thus it has been acted successfully all over the world till date. The greatest symbolic play ever created by Rabindranath is the child pivotal one. This creation is deliberated as the greatest creation for child centric literature universally.

INTRODUCTION

One of the famous narrators of this era remarked,” Rabindranath wanted to build up that person who is strong enough.”(1) The first and foremost word of Rabindra-oriented theory is all round development of human personality. This very theory is noticeable in every sphere of his literary works. In fact, Rabindra-mastiska (brain) is such a storehouse of mystery that can never be discovered or opened by any critic, researcher or psychologist. The personified translation of the abstract planning of Rabindranath and the sensible protest in keeping view of that, transformed the play ‘Dakghar’ into a wonderful piece of work.

A serene protest has been ringed out in this play against the political endeavor to wipe out the opponent party and the refusal tendency of the ruler years after years. It is nothing but an attempt to analyze the play in terms of the theory, eternal soul and God, limit and limitless. Rather, if we look into it a little bit, through the mind’s eye, the play is not a protest with the so-called slogans “knock down, wipe out” it is a revolution through silent protest. ‘The post office’ is nothing but a simplified story of an ailing boy’s enfranchisement through death.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODS

Testing or keeping previous in mind, using the observation method about the play ‘The Post Office’ to find out new aspects or results without bias is the objective of this research paper.

The main theme and the reality of the play:

The main theme of the play ‘The Post office’ is protest of life against death-this is exactly of what is thought till date. The way Amal is living his life is actually nothing but death. Though Bengali literature is filled the post box of ‘The post office’ till now with ‘thor-bori-khara’ and ‘khara-bori-thor.’ This is cited as an example: “This very play of Rabindranath has adopted death as its central theme.

It’s not a death of some Tom-Dick and Harry. A boy, aged hardly six or seven years, whose prime status would have been to be dazzling brightly in the early hour of his life, staying right at the opposite of death. This play is based on his degradation, fatigue and death. Even if the playwright uses the literary art of simile and imagery in this play, this play is about death and there is no controversy among the readers or audiences over it.”(2) But doubt is beyond the sphere of doubt. Because, coming out of the doubt of imagination and concealing the emotions as much as can be, if we try to realize the play The Post Office closely, it will be seen here that Rabindranath Tagore has moulded the silent protest of life against death through the emotions of Amal. Everyone was present when, in the last scene of the play, Amal is going to take his last breath, irrespective of theist and atheist. None is unwanted there. In fact, this is the realism of life. This assimilation is omnipresent in the universe. So, this play is not a play of death so far, rather a play of protest against death in the true sense of the term. Because, “vindication is such selection from which the processing of exclusion of individuals is going on, unless vindication is not possible. We are happy excluding the negativism; we want to make our cherished position intact. Rabindranath said that we have to surpass but not without circumventing anything. Thus, we have to remember two important dialogues in ‘The Post Office’. At the last scene, when the Royal Physician, entering the room and said, “what
is it! Everything closed around! Open wide all the doors and windows. (Touching Amal’s body) My son, how are you feeling? Then, opening all the ‘doors’ and ‘windows’ has gained another level. … After sometime, when the development of the play makes a situational time in the sense of the audience, Royal Physician said, ‘He will introduce to everything. (To Madhab) Get this room neat and clean with decoration of flowers to welcome the King. (Addressing the leader) That man should not be allowed in this room’.

But Amal objected by saying—‘No, no, Doctor, he is my friend. He is the person who has come before you and delivered the letter of the King’. Even, no one is left out in the last scene. Though grandfather reproaches, ‘Shut up, unfaithful fellow. Don’t speak’, he does not order Madhab Dutta to go out of this room. This sense of ‘oneness’ or ‘unity’ in the family leads us to the path of fulfillment. ‘No separation’—this is the reality in the play The Post Office.’” (3)

The real meaning of Amal’s sleep or death:

Amal has transformed from his prolonged death to a life of serenity. ‘In the play, a vague atmosphere has been created over Amal’s falling asleep. Afterwards, Rabindranath informed sternly that Amal is not dead. Even then it can be said that the play is too symbolical. The terms ‘post office’, ‘letter of the King’, etc. have been used here with a symbolical meaning’ (4). If we look into the symbolical usage of two central terms like ‘door’ and ‘window’ very carefully, it will not be possible to find out the protesting consciousness of Tagore. Because, “It is better to present one image in a life time than to produce voluminous work.” (5) But, one type of adversity keeps working in our mind about any theoretical discussion. There is a fictitious complaint behind all this. ‘Truly speaking, we have become too much convincing to the easiest path. No one is agreeing to do an extra work. We spend much more time in making self-deceived logic than giving fraction of it in asking. As a result, the number of blindness increases. When the world is becoming impartial and inseparable at the time of facing the 3rd Millennium, the brightening of the end of our emotions and experience is inescapable. How do we understand, if we don’t have the inner vision?’ (6) This question is inevitable in this world of globalization. The exact and continuous discussion of any creative literature will remain intangible, even if the sense of wonder of Bibhutibhusan Bandopadhay in ‘What is this? What is that?’ is conceived but not attracted to sense the perseverance across one step and ‘why is this? Why is that?’ Because, “all the creations and predestined factors are continuously being broken away for the inward and outward dialectical tendency.” (7) Rabindranath said that, If we go to find the meaning in the petals of another play ‘RAKTOKARABI’ (Red Oleanders) and comes out any harm, it is not the responsibility of the poet. In a word, we don’t give any importance to such statement in spite of the poet’s intense warning and our curiosity to theory does never recede from continuous progress in fear of the harmful effects. Because, “Where is life, there is question—they go side by side” (8). It cannot be that report does not change in terms of question and time. A very meaningful observation of S. K. Desai about the play ‘The Post Office’ is, “The Post Office might be the world; the king might be God sending messages of eternity to everyone, according to their capacity for reception through the visible Nature…” (9) So, a number of evaluations come into existence through the path of time and new query. And more valuable is such writings in which such evaluations occur more and more. Therefore, it is not always possible for a curious reader to follow the path of the writer or a critic. Reading to him is the name of process of a life-cycle. We should keep in mind that, though persons like Amal can see the sky beyond the sky, but Madhab will never see that.

‘Madhab Dutta : Doctor said that you will fall ill on going out the room.

Amal : How does the doctor know?

Madhab Dutta : What are you saying Amal! Doctor does not know! He has read such a big big volume of books.

Amal : Can you learn everything by reading books only?

Madhab Dutta : Well! Don’t you know that?

Amal :(Gasping) I don’t even read a book. That means I don’t know anything!

Madhab Dutta : Look, the famous learned men are all like you, they never go out of the room.

Amal: Never go out?

Madhab Dutta: No, never, they did not have any time. They only read books sitting inside, they look nothing outside. Amal Babu, when you will grow up, you will also be a pundit like them, you will read a number of books, even one will be wondered seeing you.

Amal: No, no, uncle. I totally surrender to you. I don’t want to be a Pundit (bookman) uncle; I will never be a pundit’.

Amal has refused time and again to become a so called learned man while conversing with both Madhab Dutta and curd vender. ‘No, no, I shall never be a pundit’, ‘Don’t ask me to be a pundit, uncle; I shall never be a pundit.’ It’s like a determination that comes out as a protest. The protest of Amal against the pundits is a clear display of Rabindranostiska (brain), but not a new display at all. ‘panthi or book’ and “blockage” come out as synonyms again and again in the Tagor’s literature. It is even noticed in the stories like “totakahini” as much as in the plays like “sharodotsab” and ‘dakghar’. The dull bookish culture excluding the attraction of easy time is against the support of Rabindranath which is not unknown to us at all.

In a real dull life Amal is almost dead. The presence of Amal exists in the name of Madhab Dutta very symbolically. Here Madhab=Earth and Dutta=Offer. That means, a crude man of family in this mortal world and the responsibility of Amal is bestowed on him. It might be a planning of banter or satire of a dramatist like Tagore. Rabindranath has spread the silent protest in the name of the characters like Amal=innocent, Sudha=nectar etc. in such a way that the ‘diversity of life’ is noticed everywhere.

The central image reflected in Amal’s feelings avoiding the bondage of this mortal world.

‘Amal : The hill which is seen in the distance sitting by the window-I wish I do cross the hill.

Madhab Dutta : Oh, what an insane talking! Don’t have any work, pass across the hill! Don’t know what is he talking about? You have to understand the fact that, when it stands high as a huge fence, it is impenetrable. So, why is it necessary to make such a hill with so many huge rocks, eh?”

The conversation between them two has wonderfully woven out the difference between them. One is very realistic while the other is too much imaginative. One is confined in old custom and speculation, while the other is in the dream of the earth surpassing sky. The problem is that men like Madhab Dutta wants to steer the world, dominate the world. But the compunction of Rabindranath is naturally but truly submerged to Amal. There are so many examples scattering...
here and there in the play The Post Office. One of the most pleasant images of Rabindranath is to knock down or open such imagery on to come in contact to the outer world. The wonderful use of imagery, the comparative discussion between the Royal Physician and the so-called Doctor has certainly lifted the drama The Post Office to another dimension.

Here two types of doctor suggested two different treatments for Amal—the so-called Doctor is certainly an ordinary quack, at least the way he treats in the play proves that and for this reason he only understands the treatment of some general ailment. He failed to diagnose the actual symptoms of Amal. He did not even understand that the ailment of Amal, though apparently seems physical, is actually a psychological ailment. Amal is generally an emotional boy of imaginary world, who is dead in the dark of life. The Doctor suggested who would not go out of the room. This suggestion is like slavery to him. On the other hand, the Royal Physician has truly diagnosed the problem of Amal, ‘Open, open all the doors and windows.’ As a result of which, Amal too responds quickly to the treatment saying ‘I have no ailment, no soreness. I can see all the stars in the sky for being opened all the windows, all the starts now twinkling beyond the sphere of darkness’. Here Rabindranath has created a joyful atmosphere by using the appropriate application of the interjection ‘ah!’ in the light of which our consciousness is manifested again and again.

CONCLUSION

The stern world which appeared before Amal through the guardianship of Madhab and the circumstances, for which Amal has been habituated in such a life which may be termed as ‘death in life’. This is the play all about—the silent protest. Thus, what is told from the beginning as Amal’s ‘falling asleep’ or ‘embracing death’ is nothing but a transportation from death into life in the light of new questions.

Note:

I have used the original Bengali play ‘DAKGHAR’ for my discussion. All the textual and incidental quotations translated by the present author.

REFERENCES