

Research Paper

Education



Rehabilitating Antique Master of Education: A new Historical Survey of Goldsmith's the Deserted Village

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ABSTRACT

Molding of the past may mold someone, but rereading of Oliver Goldsmith will lead one with amazement when one will discover a healthy educationist in him. This paper will concentrate on the basic principles of education as propounded by Goldsmith with the special reference to The Deserted Village. The research article will historically scrutinize the pre industrial Britain and education in the lap of nature. Our analysis will also investigate the echo of an ideal teacher as perceived by the man in concern. The final endeavour of is to locate Goldsmith on the postmodern context effectively and fruitfully.

Keywords : Goldsmith, A Healthy Educationist, Rehabilitation, Pre-industrial Britain, 21st century Reception of Goldsmith

INTRODUCTION:

When one is poor, poverty is the best education that one can experience. Such grim fate taxed the pathetic portrayal of Oliver Goldsmith and his life. British literature accessed many great masters of education who made many searching analysis with educational methods. In this context, Goldsmith comes pretty early in the queue. This article will concentrate on the educational atmosphere and teaching methods as it is reflected in the writings of Oliver Goldsmith. Keeping the suffocation of pre industrial England in mind, this research paper will further meditate on the perennial role of environment as the most active operator of educational methods. This paper will also raise the issue of contextual value of such atmosphere and the reception of Mr. Goldsmith in doorstep of twenty first century. In this relation, there will be ceaseless endeavour to put Goldsmith's The Deserted Village on the blotting paper of New Historical theory so that the readers may have a better perception of it.

GOLDSMITH AND THE GOINGS OF THE DAY:

The year 1840 is the official date of the beginning of Industrialization in Britain. This came as shockwave to those who were sensibly beware of the goings of the day. Enclosure Act came with the threat of shrinking the green land. Industrialists came with the enormous prospect of urbanizing the rural areas. The prospect of buying of the labour and selling of it became the order of the day. Rich industrialist came with the motive of acquiring the land. Villagers were leaving the land. Their march was towards the budding cities. Merry England was rehearsing the tragedy of it. Greenness vanished and in place of it there came din and bustle of the city. This prospect of growing industrialization shocked many and traumatized few sensitive observers like our man in the motion:

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
When every rood of ground maintained its man;
For him light labour spread her wholesome store,
Just gave what life required, but gave no more:
His best companions, innocence and health;
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.
(The Deserted Village, line 57-62)

THE DESERTED VILLAGE: A TRUE MEMENTO OF MORAL LOSS:

The Preacher: Scholars often agreed on the issue that The Deserted Village was the immediate negative response to the beginning of Industrialization in Britain. In the narration of

preacher's mansion Goldsmith is philosophic as well as nostalgic. The portal of the preacher was remote one. He was familiar to all. He knew the secrets of winning the hearts of all learners:

A man he was, to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year;
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change, his place;
Unpractised he to fawn, or seek for power,
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour;
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
(The Deserted Village, line 141-147)

The man in the description is a preacher but has the essential quality of a teacher. The episode of the sheltering of the wounded soldier may be taken as a perfect demonstration to good hospitality. How should be the reception of a newcomer student in his first arrival? A newcomer pupil is almost like a wounded soldier. He needs hospitality and good reception. Fair dealings would bring forth a man. Inhuman approach will spoil it as whole.

The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire, and talked the night away;
Wept o'er his wounds, or tales of sorrow done,
Shouldered his crutch, and showed how fields were won
Pleased with his guests, the good man learned to glow,
And quite forget their vices in their woe;
Careless their merits, or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.
(The Deserted Village, line 155-62)

Like wounded soldier a good teacher should deal with his learners more fairly than anything else. As the humanitarian dealings of the preacher removes the wounds of the soldier, the rational purport of the teacher will remove the intellectual inabilities of a newcomer student. Good educational method also suggests the dual dealings of the teacher. Rudeness should be scoffed off and nobility must be encouraged:

He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain;
(The Deserted Village, line 150)

To be more precise the preacher is the ideal teacher figure as it is perceived by Goldsmith. The illustration of another metaphor may demonstrate Goldsmith's view of nourish nurture that a teacher can best offer to the pupil:

And, as a bird each fond endearment tries,
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.
(The Deserted Village, line 167-70)

The learning adaptation of a newcomer pupil is almost like immature flying attempt of a new born bird. The approach of the teacher is like the earnest effort of the mother bird. The sincere endeavour finally leaves the baby bird to have its wings. A good and ideal teacher should sincerely assist in the moral elevation of student.

The School Master: The Deserted Village portrays another archetypal and virtuous character in the portrayal of the village school master. Even in this case Goldsmith will sound once again a good observer of the society and a polished educationist as well. The village school master used to teach in a little school that the poet Goldsmith has narrated as 'noisy mansion'. He is severe man with stern looks and vigilant eye. There rises the question of the tolerance of the teacher. Goldsmith the educationist was a believer of stern looks and keen observation. When he refers the names of 'every truant knew' it simply declares the special dealings of a teacher with the intellectually backward learners:

There, in his noisy mansion, skilled to rule,
The village master taught his little school;
A man severe he was, and stern to view,
I knew him well, and every truant knew;
Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face;
(The Deserted Village, line 195-200)

Modern educational methods include project method, lecture method, demonstration method, question answer method, deductive and inductive method, story-telling method etc. The Deserted Village by Goldsmith proposes us a new and innovative method of story-telling where stories will be assimilated with laughter and cheerfulness. Giving of lesson will be more healthy and fruitful when learners will be laughing and learning. Better to say, through laughter lessons will be given:

Full well they laughed, with counterfeited glee,
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned;
(The Deserted Village, line 201-4)

The fields of the knowledge of the teacher also deserve our critical reception. Higher education prescribes specification of the fields of learning. Then, what should be the field of knowledge in the elemental level? Here again Goldsmith is equally careful. The presentation of the village school master clarifies it all.

The man in narration is good writer. Good teacher should be a good writer. Elemental mathematics ('cipher') should be playful forte. About measurement he must have fair idea. Consultation would be common criteria of good teacher. Authority in philosophy would some additional quality of a ideal teacher:

The love he bore to learning was in fault;
The village all declared how much he knew;
'Twas certain he could write, and cipher too;
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
And even the story ran that he could gauge.
In arguing too, the parson owned his skill,
For even though vanquished, he could argue still;
(The Deserted Village, line 206-12)

The partial demonstration of the text establishes the common view of good and effective teaching and the favourable atmosphere of teaching. Perhaps both the preacher and the village school were Goldsmith's idealized teachers. Thoroughly a literary man though, Goldsmith did have fair view of education, its distribution and the ideal environment of teaching-learning process.

TWENTY FIRST CENTURY RECEPTION OF GOLDSMITH:

Postmodern theorist like Lyotard and Baudrillard often switch their focus on the knowledge of 21st century. Previously, there was boundary between narrative knowledge and scientific knowledge. The advent of postmodern knowledge has melted the curtain between the two. Now, the essential difference between the two is submerged. The education method that Oliver Goldsmith prescribed for us was mostly in the lap of the nature. Narrative knowledge is almost perished. The idyllic setting was brutally destroyed by long expected industrialization in Britain. As the boundary between narrative knowledge and scientific is over it has a tremendous impact upon language as well. In plain English, postmodernism has infected both postmodern knowledge and language. If knowledge and language are influenced by postmodern techno-culture how teaching method can remain simple and lucid. It deserves upgradation. Many springs of expectation and technological advancement have complicated the issue more.

CONCLUSION:

The cares and the anxiety that Goldsmith has shown are mostly imaginary and fictitious. Joshua Reynolds was a close friend of Goldsmith. And it was Mr. Reynolds whom the poem was dedicated. It was he who put fingers against Goldsmith. But such imaginary fear and fictitious anxiety may not be real or might not be believable. It can be undoubtedly confessed that Oliver Goldsmith was unofficially acknowledged educationist 18th century Britain. He is untold master of education with handful of educational methods and learning. This article is a great honour and tribute to this great master of past.

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