



International Journal of Advance Research, IJOAR .org

Volume 3, Issue 2, February 2015, Online: ISSN 2320-9151

THEME OF SOCIAL JUSTICE IN “THE RAIN” BY WILLIAM DAVIES

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Keywords:

Destitute, Discrimination, Downtrodden, Materialistic outlook, Revolution, Social justice, Tyranny

ABSTRACT:

The following research paper intends to highlight the theme of Social Justice in “The Rain”. Through a common phenomenon of Nature, the poet has penetrated deep into the scourge of modern society and culminated his masterpiece with the dream of a golden age.

INTRODUCTION:

Social justice can be defined as “justice in terms of wealth, opportunities and privileges within a society”

It has been a theme of pivotal significance since long. Whether it is the leaden heart of the “*Happy Prince*” weeping for the sufferings of the poor or the little Kelveys, being kicked out of the territory of the rich in “*The Doll’s House*”; it leaves an indelible impression on the minds of the readers. Numerous Poets, writers and intellectuals have tried to awaken the conscience of society repeatedly.

THE POET:

William Henry Davies belongs to the early period of Twentieth Century. This is the age of modernity, scientific progress and materialistic outlook. Despite having all the forces of Nature under his control, the modern man is imprisoned by the monster of injustice and discrimination. Davies himself suffered a lot in his life. He became orphan at the age of two and was abandoned by his mother also. Circumstances thrust him into a blind alley, and wandering through the maze of life, he spent most of his time as a tramp in the United States and United Kingdom. He lost one of his legs during an accident and led a very miserable life walking barefooted through the desert of life. Like many other voices of Twentieth Century, Davies, also raises his resonant and melodious voice mingling with the drops of rain.

THE POEM:

The poem starts with the music of rain. Theme of rain allures the minds of readers, in different ways, through the works of literature. We feel the refreshing and spiritually enlightening drops of rain in “*The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales*” where it permeates the soil and motivates the soul to undertake the journey of moral exaltation,

*“When that April with his showers soote,
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote,
And bathed every veyne in swich licour,
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
When Zephirus eek with his sweet breeth,*

Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages”

The same rain unveils an entirely different aspect of human nature when it creates no sensation in modern Waste Landers who avoid it and feel cozy and warm in the forgetfulness of frost. They do not want the soil of their hearts to be irrigated by the rejuvenating showers of April,

*“April is the cruelest month, breeding,
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing,
Memory and desire, stirring,
Dull roots with spring rain”*

As Wordsworth during his second visit to *Tintern Abbey*, explores another side of Nature and feels the plight of suffering humanity when discovers in the objects of Nature,

“The still, sad music of humanity”

Similarly, Davies, representing all the poor and homeless people, sitting under the tree, hears the music of

raindrops but cannot enjoy it because the thirst of the arid land of his heart cannot be quenched. This luxury of enjoying rain, sitting in the lounge of a luxurious villa, is purely the delight of elite class. Their supremacy and arrogance gets a boost by the subservient and abject position of those who, sitting at their doorsteps, look upward with spreading palms to receive alms. Right from the beginning of the poem the pleasant and soothing shower of the rain seems to be soaked in tears when 'Rain' symbolizes the shower of the facilities of life or the drops of bounteous rain represent materialistic gains, enriching the already rich or the privileged class of society. The leaves drinking rain in the opening line make us shudder while going through the following lines,

***“I hear rich leaves on top,
Giving the poor beneath,
Drop, after Drop”***

Here 'Leaves' stand for two different strata of society: the privileged and the downtrodden. With swelling bellies and unending avarice, sitting like a dragon on the resources of life they give the poor nominal share only. Their tyranny resembles the callous and relentless attitude expressed in the ***“Hawk's Monologue”***,

***“The sun is behind me,
Nothing has changed since I began,
I am going to keep things like this”***

Davies himself experienced the atrocities of time and was well aware of the plight of common people. Here the wordsworthian concept of taking solace in the objects of Nature seems to be a bit shaky, because the poor are as depressed and helpless as they were before the rain. The music of rain turns into a sepulchral note because it signifies the death of the dreams of millions of poor souls. In the simple yet effective diction of the first stanza, the unexpressed plight of the multitude of downtrodden and destitute is heart rendering and nerve wrecking. Here the echo of ***“All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others”*** resounds in our ears to intensify the gloomy atmosphere.

The second stanza opens with a gust of fresh air in the wilderness of life. Another object of Nature has been introduced as the symbol of some change. Appearance of sun after the rain is always welcoming and the seven colours of rainbow enlighten the senses. But here 'Sun' symbolizes the divine light of justice, equality and fraternity. As sunlight reaches each and every corner of the world, justice should also knock at each door irrespective of caste, creed, or colour. Its light is the harbinger of a prophecy just like the ***“West Wind”***

“If winter comes, can spring be far behind”

When the Sun of Justice will rise, everybody will be benefitted equally by the benediction of this light. Each dark and round drop will be blessed by light without distinction.

FINDINGS:

This ***“Utopian Dream”*** of equality and social justice is the desire of numerous suppressed souls. As sunlight illumines each particle, similarly, the revolutionary light of social justice will erase the dark smudges of tears and scars of tyranny from the whole world. All barriers and restrictions will be eradicated. Its light will reach every corner of the world. All valleys will be exalted and all mountains will be razed to ground. The life which seems to be 'full of care' will be transformed into a symphony of equality, justice and mutual harmony.

Conclusion:

This simple, melodious yet thought provoking poem comprises two stanzas. It conveys implicit hopelessness in the first and explicit dream of a promising future in second one. Glorifying the objects of Nature, it implies certain revolutionary ideas that give it a universal and immortal status.

Acknowledgment:

The Authors extend profound and immense gratitude to their talented and distinguished teachers Professor Miss SUMERA BATOOL, Head of Department of English Language and Literature and Professor Mr. MARATAB ALI Department of English Language and Literature, University of Lahore, Sargodha campus, Pakistan; because without their sincere and heartfelt guidance and help it was not possible to materialize the cherished dream of getting this research paper published.

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APPENDIX:

THE RAIN

*I hear leaves drinking rain,
I hear rich leaves on top
Giving the poor beneath,
Drop after drop,
'Tis a sweet noise to hear
These green leaves drinking near,
And when the Sun comes out,
After this rain shall stop,
A wondrous light will fill
Each dark, round drop
I hope the Sun shines bright
It will be a lovely sight*