

THE ROLE OF DOCTORS IN THE NOVELS OF THOMAS DIXON

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Abstract:

Doctors always play an important role in the society. Among merchants, Engineers, lawyers the most respected professions are doctors and teachers. The teacher becomes doctor after Ph. D and the Doctor not only cures but advises, teaches and instructs the patient. Teacher looks after the psychological part while doctor thinks of the physical health. Teacher cures mind, doctor cures body. The ideal is 'sound mind in sound body, hence both doctors and teachers play an important role to serve mankind. One thinks the mind other trains the body. In the present paper the roles of the doctors are thought over in brief. The idea of good, helpful, principled doctors is well defined and expressed in Dixon's novels.

Key Words: *Doctors, merchants, Professions, patients, mind, physical health.*

Since the times of Greek tragedy and the Shakespearean tragedy, there have been characters of Doctors. In the Augustan age, the wit and satire were related to make fun of Doctors in the writing of pope, swift, steel, Addison and to some extent in Dryden. The tradition continued in the Romantic, the Elizabethan, the Victorian, the Edwardian, and the modern literature.

The best examples are Christopher Marlowe's ambitious man 'Doctor Faustus' (Doctor Faustus) in Elizabethan times next George Bernard Shaw composed drama regarding the success and failure of doctors. The greed and devotion of the profession of Doctors in *Doctor's Dilemma*, in Latin American literature Gabriel Garcia Marque in his novel '*The Autumn of the Patriarch* and Alejo Carpentier's *Explosion in a Cathedral* created the characters of Doctors in the Australian fiction Peter Carey and Richard Flanagan respectively created the roles of Doctors. *The Story of Septimus Smith* and Flanagan's Booker Prize winner novel has the hero Doctor. D. Evans in *Narrow road to the deep North*. In Indian literature Tagore, Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, wrote about Doctors. The trouble with the Doctors' profession is that they are liked as well as disliked for their manner and ways to earn and to treat the patients. Shaw's '*Doctor's Dilemma*' has a rich doctor who to cure his young patient who is an artist, while the old poor doctor cures the old man successfully. The medicine and diseases are the same, one fails and others succeeds it is tragedy of the patient as well the Doctor. The present paper is related to Thomas Dixon's fiction. Dr. Henry Woodman (*The Root of Evil*) plays an important role that continues nearly for 250 pages but the roles of Dr. Williams in (*The Sins of the Father*) is in the last part of the novel, it is the role of only 25 pages Dr. Mulford (*The Foolish Virgin*) has the role of only 30 pages in the end but these Doctors change the entire story completely.

Dr. Henry Woodman is a man of principles but due to, the evils plays of Bivens, he is poor, hopeless and helpless. His daughter Harriet is both weakness and strength. He is unable to kill Bivens due to her but he gets great help from James Stuart who loves her and helps Dr. Woodman in his tragedy, his greatness being poor, angry and frustrated. He steals a box of jewels from Bivens home and confesses his guilt to his

daughter Harriet and her lover. Stuart marries Nan Primrose but in foolish pursuit of wealth, she becomes a puppet in the plans of Bivens. When Bivens in the end is the victim of paralysis, Nan leaves him and returns to Stuart. Bivens while dying praises the role of Doctors and their great ideals.

When Dr. Woodman returned home that night from one of his endless tramps among the poor, Harriet opened the door. (Dixon1911:145)

Dr. Woodman is a helpful man who loves his daughter, his neighbour, his friends and his patients.

The secretary who had lingered long over his champagne was busy trying to write the names of the guests on separate cards. The doctor bent low over the table for an instant, and when he left, one of the jewel cases rested securely in his pocket. (Dixon1911:284)

It is the tragedy of a good person victimised by tragic situation and he is tempted to commit a crime due to his anger and revenge. It is an example of an ideal and good person acting as a greedy and restless man.

I've waited a long time, old man, but I've got you where I want you now. The Doctor never listed his head or moved a muscle. His eyes were fixed in a senseless only the body was present. The soul was gone. (Dixon1911:301)

Dr. Woodman had earlier confessed to his daughter and her lover, Stuart about the theft and the box is returned to Bivens but Bivens is a cruel and wicked man who does not withdraw "thief case". The old man thanks Dr. Stuart and gets a promise from him to look after his daughter Harriet. After Bivens death when Nan returns to him, He builds a house for Harriet An Epilogue page-407. He helps her financially as well as psychologically. Dr. Woodman, Harriet and Stuart present the bright side of mankind whereas Nan Primrose and Bivens show dark side of her, (mankind).

In *The Sins of the Father*, there is a doctor named Williams whose role in the novel is very significant for he reveals the truth of the birth of Helen. Daniel Norton having an ailing wife appoints Cleo peeler, a Negro girl as the governess or caretaker of his son Tom. At a weak point sexual relationship is created between Norton and Cleo. When he gets the post of Honour in the city, he sends Cleo away he gets two letter from Cleo about her pregnancy and later on the birth of their daughter. Norton manages expenses for both mother and daughter.

Time passes and Tom and Helen are young. Norton invites Helen to live with him, though he hides the fact that she is his daughter. Cleo makes a plan of marriage of Tom and Helen, in order to grab Norton's property. Both being young fall in love. Norton tries to convince Tom but it is all in vain. At last in anger, he tells Tom that Helen is his sister, therefore they can never marry. In fury he shoots Tom and then himself. Daniel Norton dies but Dr. Williams saves Tom's life. He challenges Cleo to prove that Helen is her daughter, Cleo's daughter is dead and she has borrowed child from other woman. He tells Cleo that Helen has not a single drop of Negro in her blood. Tom and Helen are married in the end and memory of grandfather 'Daniel Norton' they name the boy as 'Dan'. The novel is deadly against Negro people.

When Dr. Williams entered the room Helen was still holding Tom's head in her lap. He had stirred once with a low groan. The major is dead, but Tom's alive, Doctor! (Dixon1912:456)

After the horrible event of Norton shooting first his son and then himself, the sad girl Helen cries and informs the Doctor that Major Norton is dead but Tom is alive, she implores Dr. Williams to save Tom's life. Dr. Williams calls Cleo and asks her about Helen's birth.

I'll stake my immortal soul on it that no girl with Helen's pure white skin and scarlet cheeks, cleancut features and deep blue eyes can have in her body a drop of Negro blood! (Dixon1912:458)

The Doctor declares that Helen has a pure white skin and she can never be Cleo's daughter. The twist in the novel is, due to, the doctor's investigation and declaration. Daniel Norton had paid the price of his sins

however the end is happy for Tom and Helen had named their son as Dan. The Doctor's role is very helpful for he saves Tom's life and supports the girl Helen. Cleo's plans are completely destroyed in the end. Norton has written a letter but foolish Andy and Minerva failed to give it to Tom. Norton has sacrificed his own life.

In *The Foolish Virgin* the role of Dr. Mulford is that of not only a Doctor but settler of the broken marriage of Jim Anthony and Mary Adams. Mary Adams, discarding opinion of her friend Jane Anderson, foolishly marries Jim Anthony who is a thief and criminal. He takes Mary to his native place. He meets his mother Nance Owens but mother does not know that Jim is her departed son. She only remembers that her boy has gone to New York, only.

When Jim shows the wealth, the golden ornaments, Mary knows that they had been stolen from one woman she knows and recognizes the ornaments. Nance in the night in order to grab the gold stabs Jim and takes the ornaments to hide underground but Mary follows her, Mary tells that Jim referred to her about his mother Nance Owens. The mother repents she thanks Dr. Mulford who saves Jim. Mary leaves the criminal husband and his killer mother. Dr. Mulford takes care of Mary and her son. Jim had built a home for Mary and his child. Dr. Mulford helps the estranged husband and wife and the child is happy to get his father at last.

Nance was chattering her answer to his greeting. Oh, I'm feelin' fine, Doctor she dropped her voice confidentially and you're just in time for a good dinner. My boy that was lost has come home. (Dixon 1915:296)

Nance has earlier fatally wounded her own son but she thanks Dr. Mulford for curing her son and his health. She thanks him for she had got her son who was lost and the Doctor had saved his life.

Eighteen months swiftly passed with the little mother and her boy still in Dr. Mulford's sanitarium. She had allowed herself to be persuaded that he had the right to be her guide and helper in the first year's training of the child. (Dixon 1915:332)

Dr. Mulford had given shelter to Mary Adams. He met Jim but did not tell Mary anything about him. Jim had recovered and with the stolen gold, he built a house for his wife and son. The Doctor helped to bring them together again. The baby liked the Doctor and use to say 'dood bye Doctor'. The Doctor convinced Mary live with his parents.

Dr. Woodman, Dr. Williams and Dr. Mulford play great roles in their respective novels. Dr. Woodman supports Stuart and opposes Bivens. Dr. Williams forces Cleo to tell the truth about Helen's birth, he compels Cleo to accept that there is no Black blood in Helen. Dr. Mulford helps Jim Anthony, the criminal and changes him into a good person. He also wants *The Foolish Virgin* to be wise in the end.

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