Movies and Medicine: An Interview with Dr. Agahse

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THE ROLE OF MOVIES IN MEDICAL HUMANITIES

Question: Inspite of being in a profession where students do not find time for any extra curricular activities, how were you initiated into acting and how did you find the time from a busy medical curriculum to pursue your hobby?

Prof Mohan Agashe: Well in my opinion we learn to act by the age of two or even earlier while academics come much later. As kids we learn everything simply by acting---we learn to talk by repeating/copying, we copy our teachers, our parents and i was initiated into acting in the same way as other children.

The situation of present day education is such that we focus only on academics and cut off all inputs for our senses. It is these senses which help us explore the world and develop our personality. We put them in the backseat and focus on cerebral growth and go on adding subjects.

As a child I participated in kho kho, dramatics, group discussions with writer directors, swimming etc and as i grew up i became more consistent and serious in pursuing my hobbies.

Question: How and why did you decide to be a doctor—and a psychiatrist?

Prof Mohan Agashe: The problem with pursuing medicine in India is that you have to make a decision at a tender age of 17. We are brought up in an overprotected environment and the decision is usually the family’s rather than the individuals and in my case was no different. However the decision to pursue dramatics was my own. I had learned to negotiate with my parents—and the deal was---if i maintained good grades they allowed me to pursue my interests in return.

Choosing medicine as a career was not a conscious decision but choosing psychiatry as a speciality was a conscious decision. Since childhood i had an innate curiosity about human nature. This has linked me to my hobby of acting and my profession of a psychiatrist. Psychiatry focuses on text and subtext or emotion. Text can be read from the textbooks and subtext from theatre.

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