



Search For Identity and Alienation in The Novels of Ruskin Bond

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Article Info

Volume 5, Issue 1

Page Number : 16-20

Publication Issue :

January-February-2022

Article History

Accepted : 01 Jan 2022

Published : 13 Jan 2022

ABSTRACT : - Child psychology is the field of study about the behavior, development and growth patterns of children and their problems during the adolescence phase. Psychoanalysts form opinion that the foundations of the child's personality, behavior and attitudes have their genesis in the early parent-child interaction within the home. A child being separated from the father has difficulty in establishing satisfactory social relationships and experiences high levels of anxiety. He lacks warmth and affection except for his mother. But what happens to the child who is denied the love and sympathetic concern of his mother? Bowlbey and his associate psychologists are of the view that "maternal coldness" or maternal separation based upon family conflicts or child rejection has a damaging effect on the child's psychological growth and adjustment. Ruskin Bond is a well-known Indian short-story writer in English, who wrote in the light of his own experiences and the impressions he found about things and people he came across are reflected in his works

Keywords: Psychology, Human Relationships, Interaction, Sympathetic, Rejection

The novels of Ruskin Bond in the light of psychology focuses on the fact that alienated child psychology studies require more attention to the views of child development. There are many factors are responsible to create obstacle in overall growth of a child. Because those children who live with parents, they face internal psychological problem due to lack of care and love. The issues are growing increasingly complicated. It is a matter of great importance how the difficulties have been tackled earlier and how the intending generation will face future impending and fearsome hurdles. How Ruskin Bond has narrated with these questions in his works. He is a great artist and able to draw the clear picture of those children who are deprived of love and attention. Women have played a very important role in shaping Bond's life and his works. Deserted by his mother at a very early age and divested of his father's company shortly afterwards, on account of latter's death, he was deprived of meaningful human relationships during the most crucial period of his growth and development. 32 Psychoanalysts are of the opinion that the foundation of the child's

personality, behavior and attitudes has their genesis in the early parent-child interaction within the home. A child being separated from the father has difficulty in establishing satisfactory social relationships and experiences high levels of anxiety. He lacks warmth and affection except for his mother. But what happens to the child who is denied the love and sympathetic concern of his mother?

Bowlby and his associate psychologists are of the view that "maternal coldness" or maternal separation based upon family conflicts or child rejection has a damaging effect on the child's psychological growth and adjustment. Such a child becomes socially withdrawn and depressed. It is obvious that the insecurity, loneliness and the sense of isolation that Bond experienced as a child was a manifestation of his psychological frustration on account of parental deprivation. The "minimum mothering". He received as an infant made him instinctively turn to his 'ayah' for emotional support. He made her his surrogate mother and sought from her the tender love and affectionate companionship he failed to find from his own mother. So great was his loyalty and devotion to his governess that he found virtue in everything she did and became fiercely protective towards her.

This is evident from his remarks: "when one of my parent's guests called her ugly without really taking a proper look at her, I would exclaim, 'No, she is beautiful !' The vehemence of my reply would disconcert the guests and embarrass my parents". Though only a paid servant, the ayah, a sensitive individual understood the child's dilemma. She adored him and was totally devoted to him. She treated him with such tenderness that it compensated for his mother's aloofness. She shielded him from everyone including his parents. Happy and secure in her company, he thrived in her munificence. Like a doting mother she indulged him in every possible way. Sometimes, on his insistence, she even joined him in the bathtub when his parents were not in the vicinity. This close physical proximity worked wonders for the little child's psyche as is evident from his own remarks : "We would wallow together in the long marble bath tub She scrubbed and soaped me, while I relaxed and enjoyed the sensation of her rough hands moving over my back and my tummy".

It is believed that a human being's personality is based on his brought up and childhood environment. The importance of children's environment is undoubtedly increasing day by day. A mandatory appointment of counselors in the schools is one of the examples that support the importance of a healthy environment. In the selected works, both the protagonists Sita and Peter are found their ways of survival in the reality of their situations. On one hand, where Sita is used her reasoning to get escape from the flood and survived, on the other hand, Peter started finding his joy in the impossible imaginations of his mind. Both the characters are portrayed adjusting happily in their respective situations and by dealing with them in their ways. But the limitation of the research paper is laid on the fact where the effect of adverse situation and alienation from reality need to be studied thoroughly. *Angry River* by Ruskin Bond is a novel where affirmation is portrayed through the character of Sita.

The female protagonist of the novel is not literate to understand the societal norms and weakness of her role as a feminist gender. Sita is a girl who outperformed the expectations of the reader and presented in a didactic manner. Due to the absence of parents, Sita is seen living with her grandparents. There is no weakness of gender is shown in the character of Sita as she was able to do all the works of her place. Being the only girl on the island, Sita never gets the opportunity to attend school. The novel itself began with a dark and clouded monsoon which connoted the readers the horrified future of Sita.

The monsoon rain was heavy and the grandmother showed severely ill. Undoubtedly, it was difficult for the poor grandfather to take grandmother to the city hospital at Shagging, leaving Sita behind all alone. Seeing the deteriorated condition of the grandmother, it seemed necessary to take the grandmother to the hospital. Despite being the only child on the island, Sita is not afraid of the thought. But she seemed quite unsure about the weather's ferocity and river's risen level.

The novel presented a protagonist who possesses all aspects seen as a weakness in society. Sita is a girl, illiterate and poor. But contrary to its surface idea and depiction of character, she turned out as an intelligent and reasonable child. Sita's intelligence and apt use of her skills made her survive in flood all alone on the island.

Ruskin bond's novella, the blue umbrella is a story of ten years old girl Binya and her umbrella. The novella *The Blue Umbrella* is an exploration of basic human desires, yet it fulfills its journey through a simplistic discourse, deeply poignant. As Jean Mitry puts in the "Remarks on the Problem of Cinematic Adaptation" that adaptation "is a matter of passing from one form to another, a matter of transportation, of reconstruction" (Mitry 1971). While adapting any work of literature into a film, there always remain some possibilities of the distortion of message. It happens so because of the series of mutations that takes place in the process of film making at all the creative levels, starting from scripting, to narrating, to shooting, to editing - in every stage there are chances of message distortion. The novella was adapted into a film of the same name by VishalBhardwaj. As a novella, the story was popular among children for years, and as a film also it gained attention of audience and critics. But still the question arises- how far the film is faithful adaptation, all the characters are given same space or not, the message of the novella distorted or not etc.

'No room for a Leopard', is about deforestation and its accompanying aftermath. It presents the pathetic condition of the animals after deforestation. It is a very moving account of the killing of a trusting leopard by a group of shikaris. Because of deforestation taking place in the hills and surrounding areas, many animals have been driven into the valleys inhabited by human beings. This exposes them to grave risks and fatal encounters – one such encounter has been described in this story. The story also reveals the difference between the children's thinking and the adult thinking has also been brought out. Children love nature. They love all the creatures. It comes naturally to them. No ulterior consideration enters their innocent minds. They can never ever think of harming the animals or exploiting them for their personal gain or profit. But the adults are solely driven by mercenary considerations. If a leopard's skin can fetch them a good price, they would not think twice before killing him. Compassion, trust, loves... these mean nothing to them. An idyllic world stands shattered because of this selfish cruelty. *Dust on the Mountain* was first published in "Dust on the Mountain – Collected Stories" in 2009. The stories, 'The last Truck Ride' and 'Dust on the Mountain', have much similarity. Actually the subsection V (p 497) to VII (p502) of 'Dust on the Mountain' is almost the same as that of 'The last Truck Ride' with the notable exception of the main character's name being Nathu in the first and Bisnu in the latter.

'*Copperfield in the Jungle*', is an autobiographical story. It tells us how the young Ruskin Bond could never get interested in the hunting expeditions of his Uncle Henry and some of his sporting friends. Killing for food –most animal's die that could be a justified to an extent but killing just for the fun of it could not be justified or understood. "Copperfield in the Jungle" also reconstructs the jungle atmosphere. The young protatogonist accompanies his Uncle Henry and some of his sporting friends for on a shikar expedition in to

the Terai forests of the Siwaliks. We are not told his name but we know that he is 12 years age and have inherited his deep of hunting and killing for the fun of it from his grandfather. So, here we can see the feelings of small child for the innocent animals, and also we can see the kindness, and lovely nature of the child. 'No room for a Leopard', is about deforestation and its accompanying aftermath. It presents the pathetic condition of the animals after deforestation. It is a very moving account of the killing of a trusting leopard by a group of shikaris.

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The stories, 'The last Truck Ride' and 'Dust on the Mountain', have much similarity. Actually the subsection V (p 497) to VII (p502) of 'Dust on the Mountain' is almost the same as that of 'The last Truck Ride' with the notable exception of the main character's name being Nathu in the first and Bisnu in the latter. 'Dust on the Mountain', focuses on Bisnu, a boy, whose search for job enabled him to learn the importance of trees. In this short story Ruskin Bond emerges as an environmentalist explaining the importance of trees an important characteristic of his stories dealing with environmental concern. We have already discussed above deforestation affects. Bisnu's place is shown as such to receive no rainfall as the outcome of ruthless deforestation. Other than deforestation, trees have perished and are perishing due to our carelessness, too. The campers make a fire and forget to extinguish it which sometimes becomes the cause of huge fire. Pine trees that had taken centuries to grow get now ruthlessly damaged and destroyed in the fire. There was no one to extinguish it. It takes days to die down by itself. Due to this carelessness on people's part, many valuable trees are lost. Though such incidents are common on the Himalayas yet people have not learnt the lesson and fail to do their duty without realizing that it is they who are going to be affected of such acts. At the end of the story both Bisnu and Pritam realized the importance of nature after Pritam the truck driver survived from serious accident on the mountain road due to a tree on road. They understood the significance of growing trees and safeguarding not only their own essence but also posterity.

In the autobiographical *Once upon a Mansoon Time*, he narrates an episode about the trees he planted with his father in a dry riverbed in Dehra Dun just before his father's death. When he returned to the same scene after returning from England, the trees had multiplied and seemed to whisper a greeting to him. The protagonist and his father plant trees on a rocky island in a dry riverbed, hoping that the saplings will be left alone and those floods will not wash them away. In *My Father's Trees in Dehra*, the protagonist is now an adult revisits this spot and amazed that the trees are thriving and that his father's dream has been realized. Such images of trees and creeping vines moving toward his father and grandfather in an attempt to communicate appear repeatedly in his poem, essays, and short stories. Bond believes that trees could once

walk about like people till someone cast a spell on them and rooted them in one place. He looks forward to the time when trees will be able to walk again freely. This is quite obviously a metaphor for the senseless devastation of trees in the Himalayan region. Bond pleads that trees are important to the birds and animals who live in the forests, as well as to humans for fruit and timber, for attracting rain, and for preventing soil erosion and keeping the desert away.

In *The Cherry Tree* Bond narrates the feeling of Rakesh as Rakesh plants a cherry tree and cares for the loving sapling through its difficult first year when a goat eats it and then a grass cutter cuts it in two; yet, the sturdy tree grows to full maturity over the year and bears fruit. Birds, cicadas, and bees visit it as often as Rakesh and grandfather do. While Rakesh is proud and amazed at his special compared with a banyan tree and the young grandson Ali with a young mimosa plant. Bond always gets fascinated by the splendor and huge size of banyan. He fools banyan is not only the biggest tree but also the friendliest of all he likes its hospitality. The large innumerable branches of banyan provide shelter to variety of animals: "Apart from boys and girls, it attracts a large number of visitors – birds, squirrels, insects, flying foxes – and many of these interesting creatures actually live in the tree which is full of dark, private corners suitable for variety of tenants"¹⁰. The tree is to Bond like a big family or a boarding house, "in which a number of different families live next door to each other without interfering very much in each other's business"¹¹. The other trees, about which Bond talks affectionately, are oak and deodar. The trees are considered sacred and are worshipped by Indians in different ceremonies and festivals which are a common perform in India. Bond brings forth these aspects as well in his writing.

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