

RUSKIN BOND AND HIS SHORT STORIES

Priti Gupta

Rabinranath Tagore University, Bhopal

Abstract

The objective of this paper is to focus on Ruskin Bond and his short stories. This writer has been in limelight for more than forty years and he has produced large number of stories, fantasies, ghost stories and magic. Critics have commented with zeal and fervor about him. His stories are famous all over the globe especially his literature for children. He received so many prestigious literary prizes and has given worthy literature to Indian English writing that decide the worth of him as a good writer of short fiction. The researcher here tries to explain different short stories to assess Ruskin Bond as a writer of short fiction and will focus on themes and techniques of a literary personality in Bond. The methodology of this project will be descriptive, comparative, analytical and both primary and secondary material will be utilized to achieve the end.

Keywords: Short story, ghost story, limelight, prestigious etc.

INTRODUCTION

Ruskin Bond is an Indo Anglian writer who got birth in India but was from both English and Indian parents. Because of the family issues, he suffered much, which in turn resulted in turning him a good writer. His writings from the very beginning are autobiographical. He has contributed a lot to English literature of India and he was a lover of nature.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bond has produced more than five hundred short stories, short fiction and some novels, which concentrate on different issues and themes.

"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." (Kataria Neeraj 1223)

Bond's love for nature can be seen in the story mentioned in the quote where he teaches how plants need to be planted and cared. Through, tree one learns the struggle of life and the hardships that bar one from all the opportunities. The Blue Umbrella expresses views about gender, women search for identity, patriarchy, greed and selfishness, villainy and comparison between urban and rural life. It also explains different layers of human nature. These stories explain the essence of human relationships for which Bond is a specialist.

"In *Kitmaker*, Bond bemoans the ravages of development which has turned once a lively city into a contested metropolis with no space for innocent activities" (Kataria, Neeraj 1223). Bond is not against the development, which is brought by technology but he laments the harmful side of it, which he saw with its advent, as lives are lost in the process of construction of city. *Kitmaker* has lost his income because no one cares about this game but through the protagonist Bond has tried to protect and propagate the culture, which may extinguish with the pace of technology. On the one hand, Bond cares for humans proving himself a humanist and philanthropist and on the other hand cares for the preservation of our culture. In the story *The Most Beautiful*, Bond has tried to reveal the layers of human nature. The father reacts in a very aggressive manner and rejects his child. For being deformed, a human being is ignored and rejected, by father. The father tries to kill his child but mother saves and Bond is able to show motherly love like that of Nissim Ezekiel.

Although, Bond has tried to blend different themes in his short stories but he has always kept himself alive in his short fiction. There are various hints and incidents, which prove the facts that works of Ruskin Bond are autobiographical in nature. Most of his main characters have R as first letter in their names. He tells about the broken relationships, which was the case of his father and mother separating from each other. His characters are in search of motherly love which helps in understanding his search for a motherly love, his relation with his grandparents reflected in the short stories and his love for nature etc. are all hints that prove his prose as an autobiographical.

"Leopard like other members of the cat family is nearing its extinction in India and I was surprised to find one so close in Mussoorie. Probably the deforestation that had driven the deer into this green valley and the leopard had naturally followed" (Bond 19). Bond is a nature lover like that of William Wordsworth but he also is the protector of nature who writes against the policies of people and government to save it. Wordsworth beatifies nature and links it with God, he says that nature gives peace of mind and one must take full interest in it. Bond

says that trees are his trees and he loves forest animals, even killing of leopard is making him dejected. One is the nature lover and other one is an environmentalist. One calls people back to nature and other demands people to save environment and save life on this earth.

Bond has comparison with Keats, as Keats escapes to the world of nature to forget the worries of life but Bond wants to live in nature and make it home for everyone. Both these writers make use of natural symbols but Keats exaggerates while as Bond's symbols rejuvenate people. Both use magical in their writings but Keats is more powerful here that that of Bond, but bond makes magic horrifying and interesting for readers. His ghosts are not harmful to human life.

Bond even can be compared with that of Sylvia Plath, Kamala Das and Emilie Dickenson but these women writers are blunter than Bond as they have talked about the forbidden matters which Bond has restricted himself from. "Blasted away by dynamite to enable the quarries to get at the rich strata of limestone rock below the surface. The skeletons of a few trees remained on the lower slopes. Almost everything had gone. ...grass, flowers, shrubs, birds, butterflies, grasshoppers, ladybird. A rock lizard popped its head out of a crevice to look at the intruders. Then, like some prehistoric survivor, it scuttled back into its underground shelter." (Bond 496)

Bond is not afraid of anyone, instead he launches attack on all the organizations so that wildlife and environment can be saved. He shows how wild animals, birds and insects feel when their habitat is destroyed and what is their reaction to life threat? He speaks for them and thus becomes an eco-critic.

Bond has spoken about many social issues like life in far-flung areas, interest of people for education, nature and its two sides, man and his struggle for survival in the harsh environment etc. his characters want to learn and they are modified at the end. He can describe issues of women, men, children and adults. His narratives are either first person or third person but the presence of the writer can be felt everywhere in his writings. As an artist, Bond is the best short story writer of India.

CONCLUSION

Starting his career in 1950 Bond has become a popular short story writer. His landscape is in Himalayan foothills, yet the presence of nature with its freshness and life-giving variety makes his writings all the more attractive. Critics call him a short story writer but he is a full-fledged artist and an author of English literature.

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