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Ruskin Bond - A Man of Imagination

Anchal Bhutani

Anchal Bhutani, a MH-SLET/ SET (Maharashtra) qualified, has worked as a Teaching Associate with Raffles University.

Abstract

The name Ruskin Bond is a renowned writer, or a profound storyteller is synonymous to love, nature, and mountains. The article will give a glimpse of his journey and his literary works. According to psychoanalysis, a writer's work is a reflection of his/her life and the surrounding; Bond is no different. His writing has a significant influence on his life and the place where he was brought up. He is famous for writing short stories for children, and the paper is going

to discuss his contribution to children's literature. The paper is going to shed light on the writing style, his simplistic approach, and finding resurrection in the life of children.

The writer took a holistic approach while describing a place, a season, or a person, or even the Indian God. While he is presenting a conflicting persona, he also mentioned the origin of the character. His writing style consists of irony, humor, and metaphor that can easily make a write-up engaging to the readers. The paper also will try to give an idea about the adaptation of his literary work in Bollywood films. Lastly, it is also going to discuss how to incorporate Indian culture in his writings.

Keywords: Ruskin Bond, Indian English literature, Indian writing in English, Bollywood films.

Introduction

A man who lives in the mountains finds nature as his muse. The eminent author Ruskin Bond is known as Children's author. Indeed he taught us to love and fall in love with every minute thing we encounter every day. To every book lover, the man is not a mere author but a magician who can paint a picture of a cloudy sky and rain in the mountains with words. His ability to describe nature in simple words has ignited a sense of romanticism within us. Even though it has been known as a children's author, his literary characters can easily sink in love with solitude. The article is going to discuss Bond's life and literary works.

A Brief Insight of Life and Career

Ruskin bond was born in Kasauli, Himachal Pradesh; he was born to Aubrey Alexander Bond and Edith Clarke. When he was only six, his mother moved to Dehradun, and he was sent to a boarding school in Mussourie. At a very early age, his parents got separated, and little Ruskin had to stay away from his father, who he was very attached to. Ruskin Bond did his schooling in 1950. His love for writing started showing up at a very early age, and he has been taking part in several writing competitions in his early years.

The Incredible Journey of 'Rusty'

His love for writing and his experience of formative years gave birth to Rusty, and that is how the journey began. Rusty is a literary character of his very first literary work called 'The Room on the Roof.' He started his venture into writing at his teenage, and he embarked on the journey by writing a semi-autobiography and introduced us with a little boy called Rusty. A boy with no family was forced to embrace his loneliness. Being an Anglo-Indian boy who lives in Dehradun has an urge to sink in Indian culture. And his urge leads him to make friends with some Indian boys in Dehra. His love for adventure made him a rebel that was simmering in him and tolerating the harsh behavior of his guardian Mr. John Harrison. The character immaculately projects complexity in a relationship, confusion about life, love, and happiness. With the character Bond has etched an image in our mind of the adolescent period.

A Critical Review of Literary Style

Brought up in the hills, the scenic beauty of Himalayas greatly influences the writing of Ruskin Bond. Even though famously known for his contribution to children's literature, he also received critical attention for mainstream literary works. His literary works consist of novels, poetries, and countless short stories and essays. Bond's writing can be categorized as post-independence Indian literature with a British influence. His first book came out when the author was just 21 years old. His first novel has a precious influence on his formative years, and his first few novels are not targeted for a particular readership.

In 1970 the writer started writing for children, and his lonely childhood reflected in his work. Once, the writer also said that his melancholic childhood memory made him understand the children better and brought him closer to nature. However, his work does not only revolve around distress childhood, life in mountains, the beauty of hills and rains or people, and train that has enamored his readers but the simplicity that lingers in us.

In his 50 years long literary career, he has written more than 100 short stories. He was never limited to children's literature but explored many other genres like fiction, romance, non-fiction, autobiography, travelogue essays, ghost stories, stories about the pre-independence era, revenge and surrender, etc. His writing style is seamless like a continual flow of water, and that comes from his exceptional power of imagination.

The Cinematic Representation of Bond's Literary Works

The literary works of Ruskin Bond is a perfect combination of innocence and experience. He is like an artist who draws inspiration from the elements of nature paint aesthetically with words. In his work immense respect to human life, his affinity with nature, admiration to the value of the relationship, and mostly appreciating the ordinary things of daily lives have been vividly noticed. Most importantly, the readers also find all these elements with a hint of irony and gentle humor. Due to this unique style of portrayal, his work has attracted many of the Indian film directors to adapt his works gave it a cinematic representation.

In 1978, the eminent director Shyam Benegal adopted A Flight of Pigeons and made Junoon. The Bollywood film starring Shashi Kapoor, Shabana Azmi, Naseeruddin Shah, and many more talked about Indian mutiny and feudal society. Another Indian director called Vishal Bharadwa, adopted one of the earliest works of Bond 'The Blue Umbrella' and made a film on the same name. The film also awarded with National Film Award as the best children's film. His first novel Room on the Roof was adopted for a TV series on Doordarshan called 'Ek Tha Rusty.' Later in 2011, Vishal Bharadwaj adopted 'Susanna's Seven Husbands' and made 'Saat Khoon Maaf.' In that film, Priyanka Chopra acted as Susanna, and Bond himself played a cameo role as Church Bishop.

A Detailed Discussion about Some of Ruskin Bond's Literary Works

Ruskin Bond, an iconic children's author in Indian literature; for his diverse work in literature, he was conferred with Padma Shri Award in 1999. When a little boy was going through a series of events like loneliness and failure of family bonding, writing became his only way of catharsis. Even though life has given him thousands of bitterness, he somehow was able to see the light at the end of a dark tunnel. His optimism towards life has given him the strength amidst his loneliness and isolation. Having been born to Anglo-Indian parents, Bond found a home in the lap of Himalayas, and he also said that his love for India comes from the deep core of his heart. It is the atmosphere of the Himalayas that fulfills his soul and makes him able to give an imaginary vision.

The article is going to discuss some of the notable literary works that earned him recognition.

The Room on the Roof

The novel named 'The Room on the Roof' is Bond's first novel that he started writing at the age of 17 when he was his aunt's house in London. The novel was published in his 20s; the novel earned his John Llewellyn Rhys Prize in 1957. The book tells the story of an orphan teenage boy called Rusty, who is living a miserable life at his guardian's place. In the story Rusty is being suffocated by the strict rules that are imposed on him by his guardians. In pursuit of freedom, Rusty ran away from his guardian's house and started living with some of his friends whom he is known for a very short time. Eventually, he starts realizing the hardship of life when he started facing several challenges.

In this novel, Bond depicted many things like love, relationship, friendship, responsibilities, adolescent stage, and the confusion of age. The simplistic writing style and engaging plot earned Bond the title of writer. Some critics also call this book as his semi-autobiography.

The Blue Umbrella

Loving the ordinary things of life can only be possible for Ruskin Bond, who finds optimism and hope in every aspect of life. The story revolves around a little girl called who lives in Garhwal village and her bright blue umbrella. As the story goes, it tells how a man tried to steal the blue umbrella from Biniya and was banished from the village for his miscreant. But Bond was never unkind to any living and the non-living element of nature, and so are his literary characters. In the end, Biniya grows sympathy towards the banished man and brings him back to the village by gifting him the blue umbrella.

Our Trees Still Grow In Dehra

Besides the novel, the man is known for writing numerous short stories, and 'Our Trees still grow in Dehra' is an anthology of short stories. The short stories talk about the beauty of the season in the mountains and life in the mountains. He also mentioned how human life is hurting the natural balance and invoking some acts of deforestation and extinction of wild animals.

The Night Train at Deoli

The Night Train at Deoli is written in a narrative form and presented the life of a college student and his flow of emotion, love, and fantasy towards a girl he encounters on the trip. The story unravels a tale of the boy in a powerful way where his emotional turmoil is presented effectively in the context of British India.

Susanna's Seven Husbands

The author diverted from the scenic beauty and good side of human beings and shed light on the other shade of human life. 'Susanna's Seven Husbands' is a story that tells you six spine chilling murders and, in the end, surrender to the almighty. The author explored the sociopathic behavior of Susanna.

A Flight of Pigeons

The novel is based on the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny in India. The story gives you a glimpse of British rule as well as India's feudalism with a hint of religious issues. The backdrop was painted with the immaculate style of writing. The story ends with the defeat of India's rebel to the formidable British army after fighting for a year.

Specific Aspects of Bond's Literary Works

Ruskin Bond, the name is an amalgamation of mountains, nature, rain, people, emotion, Indian customs and rituals, God, and Indian festivals. He paid a visit to every alley to make his work rich for his readers and found hope and life everywhere. We get numerous works where he mentioned about Indian customs and rituals of North India. He has profound knowledge when it comes to Indian culture and community, and he also said the dark side of it as well. We find all the details from the dressing style of Indian women from the pre-independent era to post-independence. His literary work is not devoid of Indian festivals like Holi. In his first novel, 'The Room on the Roof,' he mentioned the north Indian festival Holi. Besides that, he also mentioned festivals like Janmashtami. He even did not step back to saying the Indian Gods while writing. He portrays Indian Gods by mentioning their importance in human lives. He depicted God with metaphor in many of his writings.

While describing the colonial period, he mentioned the presence of Sadhus and snake charmers. Due to his love and knowledge for the country made him no less than any Indian writer. On his journey to literary works, he found simplicity from daily life, his power to see through life enables him to create some magnificent literary works.

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Anchal Bhutani

Anchal Bhutani has received her bachelor's degree in B. Com (Honors) from Gargi College, Delhi University and Masters in English from MGSU, Bikaner. She has qualified MH-SLET/ SET (Maharashtra). She has worked as a Teaching Associate with Raffles University and as a Content Writer for Zomato.

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