

# Ruskin Bond's Favourite Theme- Euphoria and Nostalgia of Love

Paper Submission: 10/07/2020, Date of Acceptance: 25/07/2020, Date of Publication: 26/07/2020

## Abstract

Love happens to be the universal governing theme in the literatures of the world. It can be transcendental love, hedonistic love profane love, materialistic love. Each artist has his own style, own attitude to life and love and his own way of looking at them and expressing them. Some see love as the incarnation of god and some find love as their inspiratory power. Some became artist after finding betrayal in love and some found in literature a medium of expressing love for their beloveds. Art works as a source to bring out the emotions of heart. It can be Keats, kalidas, Ghalib or Shakespeare – all their work revolves around the orbit of love.

**Keywords:** Ruskin Bond, Fiction, Stories, Materialistic Love, Nostalgia.

## Introduction

The sweetest aspect of love lies in the emotions that arise in a relationship between a young man and a young girl. This interaction has all the sweetness of life when they are together whereas the same results in bitterest experiences when they are separated from each other due to circumstantial compulsions. Union in love has the fragrance of a rose while the separation contains the prickling pain of thorns. This is the enigma of human love. Love happens to be an inevitable experience in every life at some stage or the other creating an intolerable storm in the human heart.

Ruskin Bond's stories are wrought with love, pastures of life with the belief of Wordsworth and the heart of Keats. His stories express the feelings of thrill, wonder and extreme happiness that lie in the first meeting. But love may, as in the personal love affairs of Ruskin with female counterparts, remain unreciprocated affecting the protagonist's life each time in some way. Bond's love stories deal with the dominant theme of "*The Longing after something lost*".<sup>1</sup> Two people haply meet in his stories, their paths Criss-Cross each other, there is an infatuation, sometimes even a short affair but this does not last long and they part soon, but their lives have been changed in some way or the other.

Ruskin Bond's fiction consists of various themes from autobiographical experience to love stories, myths and legends, gossip of the market and the villagers. Among them the most interesting stories are on the various moods of love- from "Euphoria of New Love to Nostalgia of Lost Love."

*The Room On The Roof* brims with the spirit of epiphany when Rusty finds himself infatuated by the charm of Meena, the mother of his student, Kishan. All his dreams of love and romance and heroics gain life in the form of Meena. Mrs. Kapoor was the first beautiful and motherly lady he had come in contact with in his lifetime. Thus Rusty's mind was full of passionate thoughts and a certain restlessness which is symbolic of the *Euphoria of New Love*.

Rusty was conscious of a wild urge, a desire to escape from town and its people, and live in the forest and Meena with no one but Meena.....<sup>2</sup>

*The Room on the Roof* was Ruskin's first novella and the theme of dealing with the people in love or in need of love that started from his first book continues up till now. A yearning for love which is lost after altering the life of the person in some way or the other is the evoking them of most of his stories.

'*Love is a Sad Song*' and '*Miss Bun and Others*' are a couple of his autobiographical stories with intenseness in them. They were written at the heat of the moment and are a straight narration from his journal. The former story focuses on the point that "*Remembered passions grow*



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sweeter with the passing of time.<sup>3</sup> Young Bond, an Anglo- Indian would be writer falls in love with a young girl that stirs deep feelings in him. The story depicts the ups and downs in the love affair that ended in failure. The narrator who is about Thirty is about double the age of Sushila who is only sixteen and still studying in school. Their gradual attraction develops into natural physical intimacy, this can be taken as an encounter between innocence (Sushila) and experience (narrator).

The protagonist develops a deep attachment to Sushila and wants to marry her and expresses his desire before Dinesh, the uncle of the girl who replies: "You are quite mad, falling in love with a girl half of your age." And the fear comes true, when he is considered an unsuitable suitor to Sushila precisely because he is British.

In spite of so many unsuccessful love affairs, Ruskin does not acquire a tragic attitude to love. He is deeply moved when the relation on which he has bestowed his heart comes to an end. But he rather calms himself and acquires an equilibrium and retains it.

In the case of Ruskin, life does not stop by a certain love affair though there is pathos at the end of the story- a parting scene and a journey to a new cosmos and the love is taken as an experience or incident of life that comes and goes. But a person has to move on and on.

Most Britishers have a fascination for Indian women and Bond also has a liking for Indian beauty in the choice of women he happens to fall in love with or finds attractive. He is easily attracted towards the dark mysterious beauty of Indian women. Sushila, the love of his life and heroine of "Love is a Sad Song" and "Time Stops at Shamli." is a typical Indian beauty.

#### **Aim of the Study**

Bond's female characters have an innate womanliness in them which makes them quite distinct. According to Aziz Haider- Woman in the stories of Ruskin "is just like a creation of nature, as simple as a flower plant with its flower, whose beauty lies in its very being. It exists and is admired for his existence. Woman is there right from the stage of a little girl to the old grandmother of the author hero. She is like Eve in paradise before the fall of man. She is the caring mother of an ugly boy, she is the neighbour's wife who is eager to find a bride for him and ends up as his wife herself as the only suitable bride for any bachelor, there is that guardian angel who has the dignity and piety of a noble woman and yet practices prostitution. The woman characters in Bond have something in their mould which makes them quite distinct from those of the other short story writers".<sup>4</sup>

'The Night Train At Deoli' and 'The Eyes Have It' are other such stories of similar themes where love ends at the beginning, leaving the protagonist behind to tackle with his broken heart. It is like a comet of love and affection which leaves behind a burning trail of desire and longing. A developing relationship that gets exhausted at its very beginning, The protagonist, a college going student is traveling to Dehra during the summer vacation to meet his grandmother. During the journey, he develops an

unspoken, unrealized and unexpressed relation with a girl, he encounters at the Deoli station. The relation enlivens his return journey. A fire of love was smouldering deep within their hearts. The protagonist "felt the impulse to put her on the train there and then and take her away with me. I could not bear the thought of having to watch her recede into the distance of the Deoli station."<sup>5</sup> But alas, his dreams never reached a real stage."

Most of Ruskin's love stories are sad poignant perhaps in conjunctions with his own experience. His endless longing, 'a love of long ago', sustains his art and showers, innumerable atoms of everlastingness. All those dreams of Bond that were fulfilled and yet not fulfilled carried him forward with a greater force resulting in the huge canon of evergreen delightful literature.

#### **Conclusion**

Reading Ruskin Bond one is reminded of the time- honoured motto that love know no failure and the act of love is a triumph by itself irrespective of the final outcome on the physical plane. His wistful stories of unrequited or fleeting love have definite echoes of Tennyson's immortal lines from 'In Memoriam.'

"I hold it true whate'er befall; I feel it when I sorrow most, 'Tis better to have loved and lost;

Than never to have loved at all." <sup>6</sup>

#### **Endnotes**

1. Ruskin Bond: 'Introduction', *The Night Train At Deoli (Delhi, Penguin Books, 1988)*, p.10.
2. Ruskin Bond: *The Room On The Roof (Delhi, Penguin Books, 1987)*, p.87
3. Ruskin Bond: 'Love Is A Sad Song', *Collected Fiction*. p.18.
4. Aziz Haider: 'The Woman In Bond's Short Stories', *ibid.*, pp.126-127.
5. Ruskin Bond: 'The Night Train At Deoli', *ibid.*, p. 46.
6. Alfred Tennyson: 'In Memoriam (XVII)' *Poems of Tennyson Ed. T. H. Warren, (London, Oxford University Press, 1950)*, p.376.