

The Impact of Behaviorism and the Predilection of Ruskin Bond's Discourse on Society's Psyche

Dr. Rajendra Singh Chouhan

Assistant Professor

Department of Languages (Humanities)

Medi-Caps University

Indore, Madhya Pradesh, India

Dr. Megha Singh Tomar

Assistant Professor

Department of Humanities & Social Sciences

Shri G. S. Institute of Technology & Sciences

Indore, Madhya Pradesh, India

meghat70@gmail.com

Dr. Madhavi Sharma

Assistant Professor

Department of Humanities & Social Sciences

Shri G. S. Institute of Technology & Sciences

Indore, Madhya Pradesh, India

Abstract

The study with respect to interactive behaviorist principles regarding the stylistic intricacies of Ruskin Bond's work tries to understand how these factors affect individual actions, social norms, and emotional reactions. This study aims at probing into how storytelling by Bond

causes people's inherent attributes such as sympathy, durability, and generosity through behaviorism, which is a psychological framework emphasizing the observable behavior governed by external influence. The factor of Bond's spare, lyrical writing lies in its timelessness due to frequent explorations of innocence, nature, loneliness, and nostalgia. The characters and settings of Bond reflect the behaviorist ideas that humans learn through observation, reinforcement, and incentives. Given to the behaviorist theories of learned social behavior, the life in small towns and conventional Indian values in Bond's writings urge the readers to value their personal relations and such simple way of living. The research looks at Bond's most notable works and refers to readers' opinion polls to show that Bond's writing serves two purposes: entertainment and the building of social norms and values. Often while reading Bond's stories, a person feels at ease, remember some fond memories, and provides oneself with a chance to hope that there will be good once again; hence, it shows that Bond's writing provides growth in emotions and thoughts as does behaviorism. The findings of the analysis show that the stories narrated by Bond had deep impacts on social psyches of men in order to pursue positive qualities of life and gain emotional strength. His strange way of narration, interwoven with faithfulness to the behaviorist doctrine, made James Bond an impact that bears a semblance of how literature subtly goes about changing some patterns of behavior-individually and collectively. This highlights the importance of telling stories as vital in the development of society's values and attitudes.

Keywords: Bond, Psychological effects, Tranquility, Deoli, Language.

Language is a trait solely inherent to humans. The ability of a language to elicit strong empathy is what defines it most fundamentally. Authors frequently employ language as a tool for articulating their thoughts and feelings. Over 600 short tales, essays, novellas, and an array of newspaper articles were penned by famed highland author Ruskin Bond employing

the English language as his medium. Bond uses simple yet effective language to delineate his stories, and it seamlessly connects with his readers.

The language of Bond has a cognitive impact on readers' contemplation. The discourse between the two young children in the story *Chachi's Funeral* is poignant and full of psychological ramifications; during their exchanges, the youngsters keep reflecting on the psychological anguish they had endured. In its portrayal of the narrative, *The Photograph* parallels youth to a fleeting butterfly. In the tale *Panther's Moon*, the little hero Bishnu, is an illustration of a potent 'childhood emotional constellation'. Bishnu fearlessly faces challenges, calamities, and obligations. In the short novella *The Night Train at Deoli*, Bond deftly illustrates nothing else but the concept of love at first sight. Bond has crafted his stories in a language that compels incisive scrutiny. Ruskin Bond is able to perceive and communicate his experience of both psychological and cultural realities of life because of the orientation of language.

Language is a heavenly gift from God bestowed only to man, and it is what sets humans apart from other living organisms. A vital and distinctive aspect of human life from conception to death is language which is used universally. O Jespersen determines language as, "a set of human habits, the purpose of which is to give expression to thoughts and feelings." (126)

The language employed by Bond to relay the stories is very straightforward yet very clear; it instantaneously strikes a chord with the readers' psyches. The psychological effect that Bond's language has on readers' psyches is achieved through his usage of language entailing the readers along. His method of composing continues to be endearing because his readers relate to the naturalism in his stories. The charisma can be effortlessly affirmed while reading his narration.

The dialogue between the two young children in the story *Chachi's Funeral* is strong, dramatic, and full of psychological repercussions. As the children converse with one another, they both find themselves reflecting on the psychological anguish they had previously been through. Sunil, a ten-year-old in the tale, resides in a joint family. His 'Chachi' (aunt) looks after him because his parents both work. Sunil is more intellectual and more appealing than "Chachi's" own children, so it is apparent that she isn't fond of him. Being a perceptive child, he could quickly sense his aunt's displeasure and engages in an array of shenanigans to annoy her.

Once feeling hungry, he gets into the kitchen to have some honey. But the jar being on the top shelf, Sunil is not able to catch hold of it, it slips and breaks. For this 'Chachi' spans him with slipper. Sunil's pride is hurt, he storms out of the room and while climbing the roof, removes a knife from his secret hiding place. He plunges it into the window frame swearing to kill 'Chachi'. While he is contemplating about killing "Chachi", his cousin a 12-year young girl Madhu, enters his hiding place querying about his activity. Here, Bond deftly uses the conversation between Sunil and Madhu to imply words in order to convey the misery of Sunil, who intends to stab his "Chachi". Sunil states:

“She hates me, I know. Well, I hate her too. This time I'll kill her.”

‘How are you going to do it?’

‘I'll stab with this,’ He showed her the knife.

‘Three times, in the heart.’

‘But you'll be caught. The CID are very clever. Do you want to go to jail?’

‘Won't they hang me?’

‘They don't hang small boys. They send them to boarding-schools’

‘I don't want to go to a boarding-school.’

‘Then better not kill your ‘Chachi’. At least not this way. I’ll show you how’(Bond 29)

Madhu proposes a suggestion to him to draw Chachi's sketch on paper and stab it. Sunil, who is ecstatic at the thought, draws the picture and repeatedly stabs it. Then he burns that paper as a sign of cremation. When the act is finished, Sunil is overcome with regret and starts sobbing. When Madhu inquires as to the cause of his tears, he responds: “I didn’t hate her so much.” He rushes to ‘Chachi’ and embracing her says, “I love you so much. Please don’t leave us.” (Bond 29). Sunil's hostility is crucially channeled by the young girl Madhu in the story, allowing him to express his rage. It seems as though he experiences a purging of emotions and then reverts to his loving self.

The language employed in the story provides us insight into the intricate dynamics of human nature, including how one person's temper tantrums can inflict another person a severe damage. Once the apex of emotion has passed, its initial intensity and the corresponding need to do harm are both erased. When the psychological pressure deepens, the little boy starts feeling guilty. The boy finally lets out all of his rage and avoids committing the serious crime and he becomes cognizant of it. The reader has to read between the lines to comprehend the hidden message given by Bond in his stories. His clear and concise style produces potent psychological effects.

Portraying the story ‘The Photograph’ from *The Night Train at Deoli and Other Stories* speaks of youth as a butterfly. The butterfly is symbolic to youth, which is ephemeral. The story's ten-year-old narrator, who can be identified as the young Bond, discovers a faded photograph in a drawer after returning from playing cricket with his buddies. He enthusiastically brings the picture to his grandma, who is knitting a scarf beneath a mango tree, and asks about the girl in the picture. While withholding the girl's identity, she describes her as a mischievous girl who enjoyed playing with rough lads and she ride on the backs of

buffaloes. She recalls vividly how naughty and daring the girl in the photos had been: “Most of the time, she hardly wore a thing. She used to go swimming in a muddy pool with a lot of ruffianly boys and ride on the backs of buffaloes. No boy ever teased her, though, because she could kick and pull his hair off.” (Bond 23)

The similarities in their smiles made it apparent to him right away that the girl in the image was his grandmother. “I knew, because Grandmother still smiled in the same way, even though she didn’t have as many teeth.” (Bond 23)

The narrative of the photograph is simple and makes a subtle allusion to the similarity of all youngsters. The language was key in capturing the image of the energetic young brats. In their early years, they are mischievous, amusing, and brimming with vitality; it is only as they get older that they start to change and become solemn and grave. Bond emphasizes how youth is fleeting, much like a butterfly that hovers for a while in one spot. No one is able to retain it for long before it flees to find another resting spot. “. . . made a grab at the butterfly and it flew in a dipping fight and settled on a sunflower.” (Bond23)

The girl in the picture epitomizes youth in all its vivacity and vigor. In spite of her advanced age, she retains the same smile that she did sixty years ago. Her grandson pulls all the tricks she used to pull herself. The grandmother was exactly like the grandson is today. Bond expertly sketches the endearing image of the grandma using basic language that even a layperson who is not into literature may appreciate.

Hemingway's concept of "Grace under Pressure" is embodied by the youthful protagonist Bisnu, who also appears as the main character in the short story Panther's Moon. A man-eating panther terrorizes the village of Manjari, where Bisnu resides. In this village, Bisnu resides with his mother, sister Pooja, and dog Sheroo. After his father's passing, he feels responsible for the house and "considered himself the head of the family." Along with

Sheroo, he commutes daily five kilometres to school. On his journey, he periodically runs into a friend of his as well as Melaram the mailman.

However, the tranquility of life is only momentary, as the panther soon strikes, killing Sheroo and Melaram and terrorizing other people. Even Bisnu runs into the prowler in the jungle one day, but he manages to flee thanks to his prudence and is saved by the villagers. The panther is finally put to death when it tries to attack Bisnu's sister while they are both working in the fields. When Bisnu urges his sister to dive, the panther misses his target and as a result tumbles into a ditch. Bisnu and other villagers attack him and Manjari eventually sighs with relief.

Through the story's effective word choice, Bond effectively depicts the psychological pain experienced by the terrified villagers. His impressions are uncomplicated but render an instant emotive effect. Bisnu's sense of responsibility, courage, and perseverance in the face of challenges are what stand out in the story. While other young boys his age generally play and enjoy themselves but Bisnu has become wise and mature because of his protectiveness of his mother and sister. At the end of the story Bisnu's remark is "You don't know how hungry a man gets, walking five miles to reach home!" (Bond 151). He is a brave young man who continues to take the same route to school via the forest even after the panther kills Sherroo and Melaram. He is a motivated learner who detests being absent from class. Due to his ability to handle difficulties, misfortunes, and obligations, Bisnu is a prime example of a positive "childhood emotional constellation."

A tourist (Bond admits to being himself) and a young girl who sells baskets at the train station at Deoli are the subjects of the semi-autobiographical short fiction "The Night Train at Deoli." While on his way to see his grandfather in Dehra, the narrator (traveler) encounters a girl at Deoli. The girl approaches the narrator with a basket to sell and their eyes meet. Without saying a word, they simply stare at one another. The narrator is tempted to

follow the girl to the carriage door as she leaves the window across which he is sitting. He exits the compartment and stands next to a tea shop. She sells the narrator a basket, and he continues to look into her eyes. The girl returns the gaze, and the guard blows his whistle at the exact moment. Before the train vanishes into the wilderness, the narrator hurries to the gate of his compartment, and they continue to look at one another. When the narrator is returning from Dehra, he searches for the girl at Deoli Station. Despite his hesitation, he wants to ask the girl to go with him. After promising to see her again, he finally walks away, and the girl nods in agreement. The following year, when the train stops at Deoli, the narrator searches diligently for the girl but is unable to find her. He approaches the stationmaster to inquire about the girl, but in vain. Since then, he has constantly tried to find the girl whenever he has the chance to pass through Deoli but has been unsuccessful in doing so.

This kind of relationship, which is present in this novel, is difficult to categorize. However, nobody can challenge the development of a bond between the narrator and the girl selling baskets. The connection is powerful enough to keep them in each other's memories for a very long time. The only other theme in the novel is love at first sight. Heard melodies are sweet but unheard are sweeter (Keats); Bond effectively captures the power of anticipation through his flawless language and style.

In the short story *The Women on Platform No. 8*, Bond skillfully describes a single episode of a craving for love and belonging. The protagonist of the tale is a 12-year-old boy named Arun, who arrives by himself at Ambala Station to wait for a train headed north. At Platform No. 8, he encounters an unidentified middle-aged woman. Arun engages in a heartfelt conversation with the woman and accepts her offer of samosas and sweets.

In the story 'Most Beautiful', the author explores the complexity and struggle of a mentally and physically challenged child seeking acceptance in society. The narrative

emphasizes Suresh's longing for a normal life and the hardships he faces as a result of his mental impairment. Suresh is harassed, insulted, and degraded by children his own age.

The apt words expressed at the right time strike the humor-inspiring chord. Simplicity of language in Bond's stories, gives rise to the psychosomatic effect, irony, and satire. With appropriate timing and simple words, humor may be created that touches the heart and produces emotion. It dwells in the readers' minds for a very long time. Bond communicates in a dialect that is commonly recognized. His tales are set in either rural or middle-metropolitan areas. His characters can be farmers, owners of small businesses, mowing contractors, mail carriers, tonga drivers, school personnel, gardeners, or former government employees. His narratives contain episodes that are based on real-world occurrences and are universally relatable.

Everybody can relate to the relatively commonplace incidents that Bond depicts in his books as there is an absence of colossal occurrences. His stories don't feature any superhumans or superheroes. Bond covers common folks from middle-class families and what they experience on a daily basis. He paints a picture and produces a story using his language. The reader develops a mental picture of the incidents and events as they read his books. In this way, language serves as an essential instrument to support psychological depth of thought.

Conflict of Interest: The corresponding author, on behalf of all authors, confirms that there are no conflicts of interest to disclose.

Copyright: © 2024 by Dr. Rajendra Singh Chouhan, Dr. Megha Singh Tomar, Dr. Madhavi Sharma Author(s) retain the copyright of their original work while granting publication rights to the journal.

License: This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, allowing others to distribute, remix, adapt, and build upon it, even for commercial.

References

Jespersen, Otto. *Language: its Nature Development and Origin*. London: G. Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1922, Print.

Bond, Ruskin. *Chachi's Funeral from the volume The Night Train at Deoli and Other Stories*. New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd. 1988, Print.

Keats, John. *Ode to Grecian Urn*. Web. 8 March 2017 <[www.poetryfoundation.org/..](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/)>