

Ruskin Bond's *The Eyes Are Not Here* as a Suppressed Emotion Digger of the Blind

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Abstract:

Things in this world keep changing day by day. Nothing remains permanent as it was before is the law of this universe. But fictional works have this power of immortalizing the things till the time it is read, re-read and re-written. Ruskin Bond wrote his first novel *The Room on the Roof* at the age of 17. He gives a nostalgic picture of the room which he had on the roof before 50 years. He nicely immortalizes the room that he spent some time in and now it is broken for the material advancement of the town. *The Eyes Are not Here* is also one such story written with a twisting end. The story not only deals with the emotional pathos in the mind of two blind characters but they also leave a lasting impression on the mind of the readers. The researcher has tried his best to bring out the fact how human heart is sensitive to certain emotional stages!

Key Words: permanent, immortalize, room, roof, advancement, sensitive

Ruskin bond was (1934) born in Kasauli, Himachal Pradesh, India. He grew up in Jamnagar, Dehradun and Shimla. He also spent his beautiful four young years in Channel Island and London and returned to India in 1995. Right now he lives with his adopted family in Landour, Mussoorie, India. He has written over Five hundred short stories, essay, novels and more than thirty books of children. He has published three collections of short stories i.e. *The Night Train at Deoli*, *Time Stops at Shamli* and *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra*. Bond received the *Sahitay Akadami Award* for English writing in India for 1992, for *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra*. Since his first novel *The Room on the Roof* written at the age of 17, Bond has rendered his enthused service to Indian English Literature so as to have been honoured with the Padma Shri Award in 1999 and the Padma Bhushan Award in 2014.

'*The Eyes Are not Here*' is an interesting story written by Ruskin Bond. The story is also known by some other titles viz. *The Girl on the Train* and *The Eyes Have It*. The story focuses on the self concealment of two fellow travelers in a railway compartment. These travelers are the author of the story and a blind young girl whom the writer meets in the railway compartment while going to Dehradun and then to Mussoorie.

When the author was travelling to Rohana, a blind girl got into the compartment. She was accompanied by her parents. They gave her enough instructions as where to place her things, when not to lean out of the window and how to avoid speaking to the strangers. This anxiety of the parents made it clear that the girl most probably was travelling alone by the train for the first time. Then they said good bye to her and the train started. The author wanted to start talking to the girl but wanted the girl not to know about his blindness lest she should stop talking with him. He makes all his efforts to hide his blindness. The researcher focuses here in the story how dexterously he endeavours to hide his blindness.

The author was totally blind. He was sitting in a corner of the compartment. So he was unable to tell us what the girl looked like. But he knew that she wore slippers which he heard slapping against her heels. He liked her voice and even the sound of her slippers. The suppressed emotions of the writer are awakened today and he wants to fill his moments of travelling with the girl with memories.

Then as the train draws out of the station, he starts making conversation with the girl. The author asked the girl if she was going to Dehra. She was surprised to hear a male voice. She was not sure whether there could be anybody else in the compartment. The writer thinks that he must have been sitting in some dark corner so that the girl could not see him and the girl thought that she was alone in the compartment. The girl was to get down at Saharanpur her aunt was to come there to receive her. The author replied that he was going to Dehra and then to Mussoorie. She said that author was lucky to go there because those places were rich with natural beauty. As soon as the girl shows he interests in those places, the writer quickly grabs the opportunity to talk with her. He also reflects in his minds eyes and starts describing the beauty of Dehradun and Mussoorie especially during the month of December.

The author was at his best to conceal his blindness in the presence of the girl. The author did not know that the girl was also blind. After some time, she asked him why he did not look out of the window. The author moved easily along the berth and felt for the window. He sat near the window and pretended looking at the landscape. The he exclaimed that the trees in the distance seem to be travelling with them and they seem to be sitting still. The girls to this replied easily that it naturally happens thus and there is nothing to feel surprise with. Then the girl asked him what time it was then. Now again with utmost skill, the author said that they would reach her destination very soon and did not say the exact time. To this, the girl replied that thank god it was a short journey as she did not like to sit in a train too long. The author's sensitivity towards the girl is so deep that he says to himself that he was ready to sit with her for any length of time. Rusking Bond, here tries to bring out the in depth emotions of the blind. They cannot see the world around them but they have the sixth sense to feel it. Human heart is like a child that does not see any caste, creed, path or religion. It simply flows like brook where it finds its way to let out.

Soon the author moved from the window and began to start at her face. Then he passed a very daring but safe remark, “you have an interesting face”. She laughed pleasantly and said that she was tired hearing from people that she was pretty. Actually the author could not bear to sit in a train for more than two or three hours but he was prepared to sit for any length of time with the girl because he liked to listen to her talks. She would forget their short encounter but the author would remember it for a long time.

When the girl’s station came nearer, she stood up to collect her things. The author being blind could not see her. So, he wondered if she wore her hair in a bun or if it was plaited or if it hung loose over her shoulders or if it was cut very short. He also stood up beside her and raised his hand to feel her hair. All his efforts were in vain as the girl passed away very quickly and only the smell from her hair lingered where she was standing.

Then the author heard some words of apology in the compartment passage. A new traveler entered the compartment. He broke in to the author’s reverie. He began talking with the author saying that he was not an attractive travelling companion as that girl who had just left. The author confessed that she was indeed an interesting girl. The author asked him if she kept her hair long or short. The man replied that he did not remember because he noticed only her eyes. She had beautiful eyes but they were of no use to her. She was totally blind. The author could not notice that because he too was blind.

The title of the story *The Eyes Are Not Here* is very significant because it is based on the pathos revealed in the story. Ruskin bond, the author who is blind tries to create an illusion to be a seeing man. He was very much curious to know about the girl. The passenger informed him that she had beautiful eyes. They both were blind and yet they could see so many things through their eyes of imagination. Thus, the title highlights the undercurrent of hidden pathos in the story. It is indeed a beautiful story written by Ruskin bond. The author’s love for beauty and aesthetic sense makes the story interesting but the author’s inability to see this beautiful world makes it sad. Somehow it shows author self concealing towards the girl whom he wanted to impress.

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