

The Woman Question: Interpellation Of Patriarchy

Saikat Mondal¹, Prof. Dr Chidananda Bhattacharya²

Research Scholar, Dept. of English, RBU

Abstract: This review paper examines the interpellation of patriarchy in Ruskin Bond's literary works, exploring how his stories and novels reflect the pervasive male dominance and its impact on women. Bond's narratives, set against the backdrop of Indian society, vividly portray the gender discrimination, exploitation, and societal expectations that confine women to subordinate roles. Through a detailed analysis of characters and themes in works such as "The Room on the Roof," "Delhi is not Far," and "Susanna's Seven Husbands," the paper highlights the constraints and sufferings of female characters. Despite the oppressive environment, Bond also acknowledges women's strength and resilience. The paper contextualizes Bond's representation of patriarchy within the broader sociological constructs and theories, offering insights into the overlapping social structures that perpetuate gender inequality. By critiquing the traditional roles and advocating for a feminist perspective, Bond's literature provides a critical lens on the patriarchal conventions of contemporary society. This review underscores the necessity of examining literary works to understand and challenge the entrenched norms of patriarchy, emphasizing Bond's contribution to the discourse on gender and societal dynamics.

Keywords: Patriarchy, Ruskin Bond, Gender Discrimination, Feminism, Women's Representation, Social Constructs, Patriarchal Society, Female Protagonists, Misogyny, Cultural Critique.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Patriarchy delineates males as the supreme authority of society. The contrast here brings upon the social system and develops a hierarchy as well as hegemony. A differentiation brings out the contrast between the binary biological sexes. Patriarchy is a perceived notion of stereotypes and conventional ideas that portrays violence against women concerning misery along with exploitation. This is not just a system that observes such criticism; it is also a system that traces its roots. Ruskin Bond also brings in a similar dependency in his stories and novels. The sociological construct and the theories that compose the overlapping social structures help to define patriarchy.

The societal context here determines the social and economic conditions and its absence of moral and ethical views. From the context of the overlapping structures, sociologists have provided some vivid formats of defining patriarchy. These are related to the state or the power and representation. The violence that women are prone to, the household where they are raised or they are likely to raise their children, the sexuality that deposes along with paid work and culture are misrepresented. Hence the general criteria to the ill-treatment and separation as discussed in Ruskin Bond's endeavors in his stories, certain aspects the writer criticizes.

II. PATRIARCHY IN RUSKIN BOND'S WORK

A variety of components comes along with the satirizing of the social systems and operational criticisms. These are all dependent on marital relationships and gender discrimination as represented. However, the most crucial component here is the limitation that elaborates the patriarchal society and its projection. Society brings in gender discrimination along with the dominating males. The extended and defined context here is that females are supposed to be standing there and watching them getting exploited. In Ruskin Bond's novels and stories, there is a presentation of well-expressed conditions of women in some of his famous novels like "Delhi is not far," "Vagrants in the Valley," and "The Room on the Roof."

All of these encompass a representative aspect of societal conditions for women. The patriarchal system elaborated by Ruskin Bond introduces women trapped in responsibilities and patriarchal conventions. Discrimination is made easy with burdensome responsibilities and obligations. However, when it comes to sacrifice and distinctive portrayal of patriarchal conventions, the women's strength and their incorporation are acknowledged. The necessary attribute here clearly brings despair. Ruskin Bond and his endeavors define female suffering as the main criterion in some of his novels and stories. These equally relate to common phrases and patriarchal conventions that are all necessarily important components of the distinct novels.

III. THEMES IN "THE ROOM ON THE ROOF"

In "The Room on the Roof," Bond expresses the patriarchal conventions and the exploitation of women. He brings out the same in,

"I don't want to rot like mangoes at the end of the season or burn out like the sun at the end of the day. I cannot live like the gardener, the cook, and the water carrier, doing the same task every day of my life... I want to be either somebody or nobody. I don't want to be anybody." (The Room on the Roof 28)

Here, there are clear elaborations of womanhood as a concept and a vital entity of society. There is a perceived concept of obligations and responsibilities. The prime soul of these patriarchal conventions includes the portrayal of women and their distinct nature of desires and emotions. There are various other generations of ideas that relate to the appreciation of happiness and a woman figure. This quote provides a range of identifications about a woman living the same monotonous life every day throughout her life. For mothers and grandmothers or any other woman that we can relate to, the relevance can pertain to the scenario represented here.

IV. WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES AND EMOTIONS

The expressions of anguish, frustration, and exhaustion combine the aspect of the social construct in society. The quote expresses all of these. There are an example of wives and mothers that significantly portray the characteristic of patriarchy and introduce the interpellation. "The woman's question" is quite evident in Ruskin Bond's endeavors. Concerning his definition of patriarchy, women should depend on their strength and spirit. As expressed in "The Room on the Roof," a similar aspect is introduced through,

"When we are young, we can put up with a great deal of discomfort to follow a dream. If, after thirty-five years, I'm still doing my own thing, it's because I haven't forgotten the dream. Let no man take your dream away. It will sustain you to the end." (The Room on the Roof 196).

V. CHANGING ROLES WITH AGE

Analysis of patriarchy with the women figures and women-portrayal in Ruskin Bond can entitle to the difference in age and the increasing responsibilities when one becomes a mother or a wife. There are major characters established that clarify the emotions of the female character. It is about the self-centered and bothered childhood that relates to these components as a declining context of female tenderness. This equally relates to the notion of attitude and profitable interests.

Women are treated like commodities, especially after marriage. The necessary concept of this quotation brings in a vivid difference and exhaustion as a woman grows up. She is no longer allowed to dream or sustain that dream because she would be so much like a commodity once she is married and would be treated as a fragile entity requiring care and is easy to exploit. However, not all families portrayed by the Ruskin Bond show a similar female character scenario. This means the concept of alarming things and the self-assertion as portrayed by the feminists of the modernist and post-modernist era establishes boldness.

VI. FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES IN BOND'S WORK

Bond and his representation of patriarchy bring in responsibilities and depend on protagonists for introducing ideologies. This also has a feminist outlook to it and grows along with the patriarchal society of the contemporary world. However, when displayed through the feminist characteristics, it is all about the utilitarian principles that bring satisfaction to the male society.

"Delhi is not far" is another novel where the patriarchal society is portrayed instinctively. The male figures here are very significant and they discern the opposite sex. The perception of utility and the concept of entertainment materials are some waters not relevant to women, especially in this novel.

Ruskin Bond expresses,

"What you should do is marry a wealthy woman. It would solve all your problems." (Delhi is not far 14)

This is something that relates to the common identification of entertainment materials and the male attitude. However, with regards to the profitable interests and the basic portrayal of images, Bond provides several ranges of male attitudes and even helps to bring out the female protagonist. She is named Kamla, and in the Ruskin Bond's context of the patriarchal distinction, these statements introduced profitable interests. There is a perfect projection of sexual objects in some of the novels of Bond. This is not just about discarding the manly nature or the stereotypical concept but about being supported. This support is needed because women are fragile. Hence, women are described as burdensome and insecure in several ways within the male-centered society.

VII. INSECURITY IN FEMALE CHARACTERS

"I am a poor man, with a wife to support" said Ganpat and "he(Suraj) constantly felt the urge to possess a woman" (Delhi is not far 31)

This, quite evidently, is experienced within the continuous concept of insecurity and lack of male support. Women are considered to be weak, and it is so much so, that with the introduction of social conventions, they have also started to believe that they are weak. Friendly and direct contact concerning the protagonist of the novel "Delhi is not Far" enables a clear understanding of how Kamla felt delighted about the fashionable haircut. Women are deprived of everything as they are thought to be troublesome.

"But her hair, how is it like that?" (Delhi is not far 32)

There are several dependencies brought together to introduce womankind. The biological symptoms and the physical changes of a girl becoming a woman define puberty. With the concept of understanding puberty, self-assertion becomes an integral part, and hands puberty is capable of inviting danger. The necessary components here, especially for the patriarchal society, assume support and women's experience. This relates to the attitude and the self-centered context of feminine characteristics. Hence, when understanding happiness and pride, it is all about a woman's experience that continuously agonizes and produces insecurity.

VIII. DESIRE FOR PROTECTION

As expressed by Ruskin Bond in the text,

"I want your protection, not your money, I want to feel that I am not alone in the world" (Delhi is not far 31)

Independence and the fragile context of a burden and women being treated as commodities are expressed here. This quotation as explained by Kamla invites danger because it constantly creates the impression that women are a weak and troublesome species. Moreover, the continuous insecurity here depends on the protagonist of this novel creating a representation of patriarchy and its instilled results of social conventions. The delicate nature in which Bond represents females and their extended contention regarding the patriarchal society shows features like neglect.

IX. PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT

Insanity derived from the psychological problems due to exploitation as well as frustration in females is also underlined as a burden. It is not something that is understood but is something relating to the pronunciation of stress and responsibility shackles. However, for most male figures, life is like a free bird where they can neglect people and their sayings. On the other hand, when talking about women it is not just about the context of the property but also about their own life leading that brings in difficulties. Females are not allowed to express their thoughts leaving alone the aspect of remaining free of the shackles.

X. STRONG FEMALE CHARACTERS

In Ruskin Bond's novelette about choice and journey, "Susanna's Seven Husbands" brings in an imagery scene of a black widow spider. The influence of this entire journey along with the protagonist's choice brings upon a particular story of realism. There are horrors scenes represented that are explained in detail throughout the story. The female character painted here is quite strong and her characteristic bends down males. Hence, the general criteria of the heroine, as represented, are also conservative to a certain extent. The story here is an absolute representation of a young woman who defines her crush and brings an honest character into the story.

Hence, Ruskin Bond mentions,

"I can still see her clearly in my mind's eye- slender and dark-haired, with a smile so worm that it is good to melt a Himalayan glacier... nor can I forget her laughter. Sometimes it had a mocking quality; at other times it expressed her sensuality and joy" (Susanna's Seven Husbands 19).

Some important components as determined include the continuous adventures, gentleness, and voluptuousness of Susanna. All these bring in a captivated context of six marriages and the monastic vow that still makes her unsatisfied. The promise of natural desires and sexual desires is all about the social system. All of these are neglected by Susanna. When accustomed to the community and the societal background, the domination becomes excessive. This has governed certain properties and has led to its inheritance of sensuality and sexual oppression. These components are necessary as their comprehension is related to confinement through patriarchy.

The dependence on liberation and passion is also presented here. However, in some cases, the comprehension comes along with the monastic vow and also with sexual desires. Both of these happen at the same time. This, in turn, shows a society with a much more contemporary view. It is because the novelette explains vividly natural desires and those being excessive. For satisfying the unsatisfied, it is her warm attitude and her marginalized concepts of expectations that show her confinement. The other construct here is inclined quite compassionately towards the idiosyncrasies of the unnatural death.

Ruskin Bond mentions,

"Yes, she was kind to children and then animal event to old creatures and freaks... her cruelty was reserved for another species of human..." (Susanna's Seven Husbands 05).

Exasperation and aimless existence are all vividly inferior to the initial charms and the annoying habits. With the identification of extreme narcissism and insecurity, Susanna explains how a third husband died. This is a representation of extreme amorousness and finding a great deal of Susanna. The black widow spider portrayed here brings in a complete collapse of a certain ideology and explains the dark comedy through sarcasm. A strong woman and her male counterparts explain in this novelette. The most crucial component here is the relation to being governed. As explained, it is always about the sexual innuendos and wild seducers who are noted here as the protagonist. About this authoritarian ideology expressed by Ruskin Bond in his novels, several authors and critics give their views.

Naomi Wolf mentions,

“Men are visually aroused by women's bodies and less sensitive to their arousal by women's personalities because they are trained early into that response, while women are less visually aroused and more emotionally aroused because that is their training. This asymmetry in sexual education maintains men's power in the myth: They look at women's bodies, evaluate, move on; their bodies are not looked at, evaluated, and taken or passed over.” (The Beauty Myth 175)

Some of the other contexts here relate to the manipulation and the extent of mysterious deaths. However, the seven husbands as referred to in this text leave her traumatized and fail to please her. They have annoying habits and false vanity. All these explain the intolerance and the aspect of infidelity. Even though Susanna tries and endures everything that comes at her, her blind faith brings her down to the streets.

XI. PERSPECTIVES AND PATRIARCHAL CRITIQUE

There are symbols explained by Bond which represent disappointment and despair in every way possible. Her survival becomes a question and several interpretations come along with it. Joining a nunnery seems to be the only occupation other than marriage. Women are thought to find a point of view of living their life once they join the nunneries.

In the story, the societal rules and the outrageousness of the male characters are clearly shown even without marriage. This means supremacy is declared over women and mockery is placed on main superiority. A general context here is the understanding of the excessive passion and patriarchal context that can find sexuality. It is not just about breaking vows or about self-expression, but it easily relates to once destiny's measured and identified by the person alone.

“She seemed to glow over, give out a certain radiance that attracted men as bright lamp attracts a variety of insects.” (Susanna's Seven Husbands 36).

“Here he was- a handsome young Prince, the envy of all. But he didn't have the one thing that could make him happy- a normal sex drive.” (Susanna's Seven Husbands 25).

Ruskin Bond masters his characters in ways that provide a pan-vision to his portrayal of women. Bond's stories and novels bring social strata into the aspect of a mysterious and nameless context for women. There are several circumstances faced due to the pathetic and intensified context of behaviors and social obscurities. However, the general context of illusion is all about a prodigy that defines women's hood and the unusual context of wealth and beauty. Even the concept of matrimony is not as fascinating as it is shown.

Childhood impressions and domination of the opposite sex are some new hunts for adventures that have been going on for eras. Even then, this is not how intimacy or preservation of women is noted. Patriarchy follows every aspect of a woman's life. Tribulation, humanity, loneliness, representation of women, and sexual distinctness are all necessary concepts that define the climate. These all are topics that collaborate with the gallant characters of Bond's stories.

Necessarily, when revealing the female characters born remain very conscious because the patriarchal society illustrates certain invisible laws for women to follow. Dependency on men and bringing in life serenity through maintaining their vision of life is supposed to be the concern for women. As represented in Panther's Moon, Ruskin bond elaborates on this gallant character of Pooja and her daily life. Indian culture and the delicate subject of women's perception and operation are all blended beautifully here.

“I am coming with you, said Puja. No, you cannot go, said her mother.

It's bad enough that Bisnu is in danger. You stay at home with me. This is work for men. I shall be safe with them, insisted Puja. I am going, Mother! And she jumped down the embankment into the field and followed Sanjay's father through the village". (Panther's Moon 162)

Several dominating aspects come along with the ideology of women. However, when determining the dominance of men, it is all about a perfect feminist viewpoint that exhibits a strong, patriarchal society leaning on and shadowing the women's perspectives. A necessary aspect of the characterization of women especially relating to the patriarchal society illustrates the innate desires and women's psychology portraying the society as a fast representation of domination and oppression. This also brings in a perfect spark for representing a sympathetic aspect towards the greatness of how the reader elaborates the vision.

The modern version brought by feminism is something that Ruskin Bond does not support. There are teen girls who act as heroines in many of Ruskin Bond's famous novels and stories. One of these girls can be considered from the story of "The Girl from Copenhagen".

"Ulla was wearing tight jeans and an abbreviated duffle coat
And as she had brought a little else with her, she wore this outfit
to the theatre. It created why to stir in the foyer, but Ulla was
Completely unconscious of the stares she received." (The Girl from
Copenhagen 103)

Again, this relates to the same circumstances of repeated reference to the patriarchal society. One of the main concepts that are very prominent in the patriarchal society is not respecting women and not giving them their own space to walk or talk to stay alone. Everything needs to be accompanied by a male member. However, for women or the changing world, very feminists have brought about several theories this is never the case. Here in "The Girl from Copenhagen", the girl was stared at and judged when she walked down the road. These can affect life pathetically at the same time. It is also important to note that for this story, the protagonist doesn't reply.

Ruskin, in the story mentions,

"Look, dad, I say I haven't seen an insect like this before. Where has it come from? It must have come down from the sky, he said. It was having come down with the rain" (The Girl from Copenhagen 81)

There is a perfect instance that demands and brings in a mysterious way that surrounds the entire theory of feminism and its relation to patriarchy. Moreover, this insistence on being brought together resolves the mysterious context and the illusion. The female protagonist has come up with the help of several situations. It also relates to some of the important components that are all intensified here. This is also about a heavy force that is initiated only in situations. So, it is not just about the motion of liberation or assurance.

In, "Angry River", there are certain adventurous aspects read by a village girl which sometimes turns out in a beautiful manner. Moreover, determining the portrayal of the girl called Sita is about the adventures and her free spirit detailed here. Hence, identifying the adventure and dealing with tribulation as well as loneliness is something relating to adjustment and attachment.

"For three nights this left under the crude shelter made from Gunny-bags. During the day Sita help to grandmother rebuild the mud hut. Once again, they used the big rock for support" (Angry River 207)

At times, there are major concerns that we need to be the embodiment of humanity as well as preservation and even attachment of women. Patriarchy is installed so deep down that in various mysterious ways the women feel the requirement of a man. Moreover, it is not just about modern-day feminism or about the portrayal of feminism, but it relates to providing women the equal rights and equal orders as men. However,

even after repeated responses and references that are not the key contrast that happens within the society. Ruskin Bond shows vividly the normal scenario of womanhood to move on towards getting a pathetic end.

Even with the aspect of the prodigy, the dreams, fascination as well as fear of the character are all presented. These just revolve around being impressive throughout his childhood. This provides a detailed outline of the tribulation and the courageous aspect of Sita in that case, Puja, the main character of the "Panther's Moon". Staying inside the house and helping the household characters along with the household works is very common in Ruskin Bond's story and his portrayal of patriarchy and feminism.

The characterization of women is criticized openly and is determined by the dominance and rude notions of men and women. Some general contexts also bring together the inherent understanding of patriarchy as an illustration. However, the innate desires that come along with women's psychology and the dominating society extend a supporting hand towards all females and create fictional characters like Puja, Sushila, or Mariam in his stories.

XII. CONCLUSION

Bond's texts equally bring in demand for serenity and the concept of mysterious preservation of humanity and adventure. There are several important determinations including the female characters and their class, especially that represent the attachment and the notion of adjustments with several circumstances. However, the distinctive aspect of Indian culture also brings in patriarchy as an illustration and makes a sympathetic representation of greatness.

Ruskin Bond, in his famous novel "Vagrants in the Valley", speaks about the perceived females who are considered entertaining dolls. This results in a basic self-centeredness and an attitude that relates to just the aspect of physical beauty.

"Only invalids get married so that they can have someone look after them in their old age. No man's likely to be content with one woman in their life." (Vagrants in the Valley 159)

The quote explains the concept of marriage and brings in an invalid contrast here. The attitude, especially the female attitude as represented here, is self-centric when compared to the other feminine characteristics expressed by Bond. Self-centeredness is well expressed by the character of Mr. Pettigrew. It is not just about the feminine characteristics or the employment of physical satisfaction but about borrowing money and moving on with the utilitarian principle. Here the role of the female characters is quite vivid.

As Bond relates,

"Let us be burdens on each other. I am lonely, sometimes. I know you have friends, but they cannot care for you if you are sick or in trouble." (Vagrants in the Valley 196)

There are prostitute characters introduced here as well including Hastini and Mrinalini. The patriarchal conventions and interpretations assumed here are confused in the core of the hearts of women. This means these thoughts and nobility all depend on domestic works and the basic understanding of the self-centric behavior of men. Physical beauty is noted as the most vital asset of a woman. Even though that is not the case, with profitable interests and explanation of women as commodities, they are bought and sold.

"Oh, they are usually the spirits of immoral women, and they have their feet facing backward. They are called churels." (Vagrants in the Valley 172)

Bond expresses deliberate sarcasm when he represents women and their culture stereotypically. This even relates to the continuous experience and women's insecurity within a society that is so male-centred that women face discrimination under any condition. This relates to the display of prostitutes and other degrading elements all over Bond's texts. Women are considered for their work, and they are judged for

how they look. The question of women within the patriarchal society has a lot of protagonists but Bond holds out his supporting hand to make sure that this utilitarian principle is challenged.

There are subjects of separation and ill-treatment which are also satirized here even within marital relationships. This means the dominative nature of patriarchy and its projection are all linked with the representation of the patriarchal system and the condition of women. It is not just about the misery or criticism related to exploitation but about the social construction that maintains a glass wall between the two binary sexes. However, explicitly raising the voice sometimes brings in the traditional roles of women's liberation as well as the exhibition of their position in society. This relates to the limitations and deals with the patriarchal system that holes and to the representative context of satirizing oppression and marital relationships. It is the patriarchal society that hence creates the barriers. In fact, according to Ruskin Bond and his significant illustration through his works, women are also the careers of similar operations.

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