



PORTRAYAL OF RIVER IN THE SELECT WORKS OF TAGORE, BOND

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ABSTRACT

Nature is man's best companion since beginning. Human beings have been grabbing many things from nature for their survival. After food and basic needs, they depend upon the nature for their pleasure too. Beautiful views in the valleys, hill side, flowers, the birds, animals, rivers, seas, and the music of nature can only fill the ultimate joy in the hearts of human beings. As the profound words of Mahatma Gandhi "Nature can fulfill every man's need, but not every man's greed." Nature gives us whatever we want. If we observe keenly its calmness, its service, its sacrifice, its beauty none other suits to the nature in this universe except the nature itself.

Key words: nature, human beings, river, profound, universe.

As water is lively source to all human beings, flora and fauna. All religions have given top importance to water. Where rivers flow continuously there civilization grows. In Vedas, Puranas and in the epics of all religions descriptions of the river went on well. River water was given excellent priority. Beautiful literature was written on the rivers in Sanskrit and other regional languages latter those were translated into English literature.

Really there is no survival without water. We are using water for many purposes. When we are coming back after performing some rituals or events. Priests or some holy people after chanting some words they sprinkle holy water on us. That tells us after touching the water we are free from that situation or sin. Such an importance has been given to water since beginning.

Creative people in different fields portray River and its significance very attractively. Bapu is veteran director in Telugu film industry. He is expert in making films artistically. In one of his classics, Mutyalamuggu there is a scene between a young married couple on a boat on the river. Actually the scene is about a beautiful song of young married couple. Bapu shoots hundred years of beautiful life between young married couple with the touching of

Telugu tradition and custom in one song. Another Telugu director Vamsi, who has his own brand in the industry, never shoots a movie without the background of the river. Such an importance is given to river.

The description of the river depends upon the taste and skill of the writer and poet. If we observe literature on the river every one can observe it. Poets and writers describe the beauty and the glory of the river waters. Really it is interesting to all kinds of people who have little love towards literature. As water is one of nature elements. Man can accept its need, importance and service to human beings, and all living things.

Ruskin Bond is an Indian English author. He is a specialist in nature description. All his writings based on the backdrop of the Himalayan region. His style of writing attracts very much all kinds of the readers. He is a born genius. He knows how to use nature in his writings effortlessly. He doesn't leave even a small beautiful thing without using them in his writings. In one of his short stories, *How far is the River*, he describes the river maturely:

"Then, as the boy rounded a sharp bend, the silence broke into sound."

A sudden roaring sound, the sound of the river. For down in the valley the river tumbled over rocks, fast and frenzied the boy gasped, and began to run. He slipped and stumbled, but still he ran. Then he was ankle - deep in the pain fully cold mountain water. And the water was blue and white and wonderful.”¹

People of all ages wish to enjoy in the water. Here the boys burning desire to see the river makes him to reach the river after facing many obstacles in his journey. Before he starts he doesn't know the exact distance between his home and the river. Without informing to his parents about his journey, he starts. After reaching his destination he enjoys a lot there. Bond's description of the river crystal clearly shows the beauty and elegance of the river. How it flows. How deep it is, how its colour, and how the water is so cold.

Bond's another tiny novel *Angry River*, shows his eminence in story writing in English. This is translated into Dutch, French and Hindi. In this novel Bond writes about another facet of the river. How Monsoon affects the river's natural state and how it troubles the people who live near by banks. The central character in this novel Sita is a young girl, who lives with her grandparents. They live in a small island in the middle of the river, in a mud walled hut. They have only a few possessions, three goats, some hens and a piece of land for their lively hood. They lead a contentment life.

Sita hasn't seen the furious nature of the river so far. After grandfather takes her ailing grandmother to the hospital in a small boat. She finds the river's condition growing bit by bit:

“Would the river rise still higher? Sita had never seen it like this before. It swirled around her, stretching away in all directions.

More drowned cattle came floating down. The most unusual things went by on the water – an aluminium kettle, a cane – chair, a tin of tooth – powder, an empty cigarette packet, a wooden-slipper, a plastic doll...”²

The innocent young girl couldn't guess the slow changes in the river water. She tries to save

herself from the river floods by climbing peepul tree swiftly. She wants to keep safely some needful things in their hut. She is the witness of all floating objects in the flood water. She observes how the growing water occupies the total island. Hens, buffaloes and snakes are floating in the water. In a hurry she forgets to take the plastic doll which is a very good companion of her own.

“The river was very angry, it was like a wild beast, a dragon on the rampage, thundering down..

The tall old peepul tree groaned. Its long, winding roots clung tenaciously to the earth from which the tree had sprung many, many years ago. But the earth was softening, the stones were being washed away the roots of the tree were rapidly losing their hold.”³

Such a powerful floods damage the beautiful environment on the island. Sita confidently climbs the peepul tree to save herself. But the age old strong and tall tree couldn't stand for ever saving the girl. Slowly it collapses. The crow which is kept her nest on the tree tries to save her nest and the eggs. But it couldn't do anything except surrendering herself as the silent victim. But the girl takes inspiration from the crow and she firmly holds the tree after falling and floating along with water.

Thousands of the people are looking the condition of the river after controlling of the continuous rain. Sita is the very young girl among those people. She is survived by the young boy, Krishnan, who is one of the flood victims, and who is the companion to Sita in the floods. He stands beside Sita and gives her confidence and support to save her from the floods. His friendship makes Sita comfortable to get relax from the fear, loss of her small property and from her loneliness.

Rabindranath Tagore, a versatile genius wrote about the duty and beauty of the river in his short story Subha :

“The river on whose bank it stood was small for a river of Bengal, and kept to its narrow bounds like a daughter of the middle class. This busy streak of water never overflowed its banks, but went about

its duties as though it were a member of every family in the villages beside it. On either side were houses and banks shaded with trees. So stepping from her queenly throne, river – Goddess became a garden deity of each home, and forgetful of herself performed her task of endless benediction with swift and cheerful feet.”⁴

Tagore specially stresses how the rivers fulfil the needs of human beings, and other living things in this story. He compares this river as the daughter of the middle class Bengal people who lived beside the banks of the river. The river never troubles the people by overflowing on the banks. How an important member in a family performs his or her duty, it performs its duty with respectable manner. Poet also compared the river as a queen how it flows. Finally he calls the river as goddess and praises its service many ways. Nature knows only how to serve not expecting anything in return. That we can observe here.

In Tagore’s poem *Our Little River* he depicts the beauty of a small river. He shows how mankind and living things depend on the water:

“Our little river flows in graceful loops
The summer heat dries her to a gentle flow,
both cart and cattle travel across with ease
Her banks are high, her depths are shallow
The sand bed glitters, no trace of mud
The far bank shimmers with Kash flowers
white,
Where flocks of mynas chirp busily all day
And jackal calls arise at night.”⁵

In this small and tiny poem Tagore shows, how nature decorates herself beauty. He describes the gentle movement of the water between very high banks. He tells about the twinkling sand beds with Kash white flowers under the sun. He also mentions about mynas and jackal how they enjoy by river side according to their time bounding. In the summer the depth of the river is very less. That is why both the cart and cattle can cross with ease the shallow water in the river. There is no sign of mud. That is such a lovely river.

Like human beings nature has no partiality. Every nook and corner it serves equally to all living things. Its beauty and grace are same all over the world:

“Each day as their bathing is done
They catch little fish in nets of cloth
Women take home their pots scrubbed
clean
Their washing all done, they return to their
chores.”⁶

As we all know, now the situation is different about the rivers. But in past people used to take their bath in ponds, canals, and rivers after washing their cloths. They used to take their drinking water to their homes from outside only. Every day children, they didn’t feel that bathing was their part of duty in their daily life. They treated bathing as a game and enjoyed themselves a lot swimming in the river. Mean while they caught tiny fish with nets of cloth. Nature treats all the people like a mother.

Most of the writers and poets write on the nature particularly on different seasons in the nature. Nature’s beauty its benediction described by the eminent writers. Nature is eternal just it is changing its characteristics according to seasons. Every season is glorious and has its own beauty. Man’s attachment with nature is inseparable. Primitive man grows up in the lap of the nature. Even though today we are living in concrete, materialistic world our roots are connected with the nature very closely. That is why when it happens to go close to the nature our hearts fill with joy. Nature has such a mesmeric wand in its hands.

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