

**The Conflict between the Colonizer and the Colonized
in Ruskin Bond's *A Flight of Pigeons***

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Abstract- The conflict between the colonizer and the colonized is one of the most important themes discussed in Ruskin Bond's *A Flight of Pigeons*. This paper shall try to discuss the concept of conflict between the colonizer and the colonized from a different point of view. It will also highlight the 1857 rebellion in the northern and central parts of India. This Indian uprising was considered as the first war to gain freedom and independence. The purpose of this research paper is to study the conflict between the colonizer and the colonized during the British colonization period of India. The identity issue is associated with the colonized in the colonial system as a victim. However, when analyzing the literary work, this research paper will show that both the colonizers and the colonized are victims facing a similar problem of struggle in order to regain their identity. As soon as the colonizers arrive in India, they experience a quick shift of identity. They change from being average into being masters, and become superior to the colonized. However, they have to face the same identity problem. They have to struggle for their identity exactly like the colonized. My research findings indicate that each of the colonizer and colonized interpret the concept of colonization from their own perspectives. The colonizers look at the colonized as slaves and inferior and they want to take back something from them claiming that it belongs to them. On the other hand, the colonized see the colonizers as beasts that want to snatch their identity from them. This paper will give specific discussion about the revolt in northern parts of India. As a result of this revolt, a national movement starts to get independence and freedom. To conclude, my research will discuss the questions about the concept of colonization and identity loss, as well as talking about the struggle of both colonizers and colonized during the British colonization of India.

Key words: Colonization – Colonizer – Colonized – Conflict – Independence.

Introduction: *A Flight of Pigeons* is a novella by Ruskin Bond that is based on real historical incidents. The narrative focuses on the relations of control in the cross-cultural and political

(societies). However, it basically addresses the effect of the encounter on the individual's life apart from nationalist identities. The novella highlights on the problem of colonization because the story is about the time of revolution for the Indian independence. Both the colonizers and the colonized were in a state of insecurity, because colonizers considered India as a safe home for them, and the colonized people were struggling to regain their lost identity and effective existence in India. Furthermore, the story also emphasizes on the hardships and obstacles that northern and central parts of India during the 1857 rebellion experienced during the fight against the British.

The nationalist movement began on the 10th of May, 1857, as the Indian soldiers who belong to the company's forces protested against the officers and took control. This protest spread to other towns, cities and neighboring states providing a challenge to the company and interference in their kingdoms. During Bond's trip to Shahjahanpur – a town that is about 250 miles from Delhi_ he was able to write about the setting of the events of the narrative.

Colonialism and Post-Colonialism can be considered as interdisciplinary movements that aim to create a new form of the past, present and future of colonized countries. Its main objective is to affect the lost identities, labors, languages and cultures as well as the concept of nationalism, race, identity and marginality. Homi Bhabha has described the state of the colonized as chaotic or uncertain. The model that is presented by the colonizer is not accepted by the colonized. The identity issue is mostly handled within the sphere of the colonized. Though the colonized in the colonial system is seen as the victim, yet, when we analyze the concept of colonization critically we shall realize that the colonizer is also a victim of facing the same problem of identity loss. Their identity confusion starts as they arrive to the colonial land. They turn from being colonizers to being masters and superior to the colonized who are timid and unknown in their own land. As a writer, Ruskin Bond does not consider himself as superior to Indians nor inferior to the Europeans. As having a dual heritage of India and England, he feels satisfied with both cultures , this creates a kind of non-tension between the East and the West.

Ruskin Bond's *A Flight of Pigeons* displays the struggle of British through the family of Ruth Labadoor who became orphan and helpless as the result of adverse situations. This is not the case of only this family, but also many families were totally ruined and destroyed due to war atrocities and became homeless. The houses were burnt in an unhuman way, many innocent

people were killed. This tragic catastrophe was not only for colonizers, but also the colonized people suffered very much. They lost their children during the fight for independence. All of this was not the fault of the killed people, however, it was the fault of people who indulged in politics and participated in war to create violence and tension. This came out with the result that the civilian innocent victims, the women and the children were the only losers and silent sufferers.

Throughout the novella, Ruskin Bond depicts his characters as growing beyond racial distastes. He exposes the racial stereotypes of Orientalism that look at Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs as biased and fanatic. He highlights the notions of human associations along with all forms of piety and the possibilities of mutually-enabling acts in the social daily life of India.

Examination: Ruskin Bond is one of the most famous authors in Indian Literature. He seems to have dual heritage. He was born in India as an Englishman during the British rule. As he grew up, India got liberated and became a free nation. At that time, many English and Anglo-Indian families decided to return to Britain, and many others stayed in India. Ruskin Bond's family was one of those settled down in India. First he experienced a loss of identity, but later on he explored his roots in India and was fascinated by this wonderful nation. Ruskin Bond has written many nationalistic literary works including *A Flight of Pigeons* which is a mixture of fiction and non-fiction. The novella starts with a very horrific scene which is the murder of Ruth Labadoor's father at St. Mary's church by the Indian rebels. Ruth and her mother, Mariam, become homeless and in a state of danger. Then, Lala Ramjimal who is the servant of that British family comes at the right time and saves them from the rebels. He gives them his house and endangers his life to save theirs. He is characterized as a true Indian who does not care about race, colour cast or creed. The main characters of this novella are Ruth Labadoor who is the narrator of the narrative. She witnesses the murder of her father in a church. Then comes Lala Ramjimal who is the most trusted friend of the Labadoor family. He provides them shelter and protection from the Indian Rebels. Finally Javed Khan who is a brave Pathan¹ who falls in love with Ruth, but he dies at the end of the novella. The story ends with the return of the Labadoor family to their relatives safely with the help of some friends and others. The novella throws light on the suffering of miserable people during wartime. Local people living in the northern parts of India started killing the army employed by the British colonizer as well as burning the male members of Firangis (white skin people). They also captivated the girls and women. Ruth's father is not a big officer, he is only an ordinary clerk in the government but still a white man. Her mother comes from a

Muslim background thus she knows how to deal with local people especially Muslims. She always keeps avoiding Javed's marriage offer to her daughter. After the murder of Ruth's father, Ruth and her mother stay in the Pathan community for several months being treated very well. However, the loss of Ruth's father was inevitable and they were unable to take a decision whether to stay there living like free people or to go and search for their relatives. They even do not know whether their relatives are still alive or dead. Javed keeps urging Mariam to accept his marriage to Ruth. She accepts on one condition that if Delhi fell to the locals and the British were evacuated out of the country then she would accept his offer. Out of the blue, the British regain their position and authority in the country. However, with change in political situations, many *Nawabs* were hanged and people ran away to other countries including Javed.

Conclusion: This research article addresses the theme of the conflict between the British colonizer and the colonized during the fight for the Indian Independence. It also throws light on how both the colonizer and the colonized suffered from the same problem of identity loss. As seen in the novella, Lala Ramjimal represents the personality of a true Indian who does not discriminate people by race, color cast or creed. It seems that he takes a biased attitude in the novella. This leads to the interpretation that Ruskin Bond may have implied his identity in the work through the character of Lala Ramjimal, since he has a dual heritage of England and India. He is neither on the side of the British nor is he on the side of the Indians. The novella takes up an interesting flight, but as the story progresses, it loses its charm because the struggle of the victims has ceased. On the other hand, the raw culture and traditions presented by the author are real and help taking an opportunity to experience life during Colonialism period when it was a normal thing for white men.

References:

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