

Tribhuvan University

Depiction of Indian Cultural Values through Magic Realism: A Study of Selected Stories  
from Ruskin Bond's *When Darkness Falls and Other Stories*

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## Approval Letter

This thesis entitled "Depiction of Indian Cultural Values through Magic realism: A Study of Selected Stories from Ruskin Bond's *When Darkness Falls and Other Stories*" Submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Ms. Goma Regmi, has been approved by undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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## Abstract

This research analyses how Ruskin Bond's some selected stories from *When Darkness Falls and Other Stories* use magical realism as a technique to mingle the opposite values like real and fantastic, natural and supernatural, the past and the present and life and death. It attempts to show how Bond presents the Indian culture, tradition, belief system and behavior of people by using the technique called magic realism. Using the non-western setting of India, the writer challenges the westerners who blame non-westerners as traditional and superstitious. Bond valorizes the concept of magic realism, which focuses on multiple truths by questioning single version of reality. The magical elements like ghostly visitation, supernaturalism, haunting, charms and spells, dreams and foretelling come true in the real life experiences of Indian people. Magic realism in Bond's stories is not only monolithic rather it has multiple versions such as postcolonial, postmodern, ontological and has association with children's culture. Presenting the relationship between real people and ghostly appearances, the stories portray the attachment of Indian people with supernaturalism. The stories wave the elements of supernatural and extraordinary happenings about the victimization of the characters with ordeals in life. Magic realism in the stories gives subversive effects of supernaturalism and presents unusual and extraordinary with the context of firm reality.

Contents

Acknowledgements

Abstract

I. Ruskin Bond's *When Darkness Falls and Other Stories* as a Magic

Realist Fiction 1-11

II. Depiction of Indian Cultural Values through Magic Realism: A Study

of Bond's Selected Short Stories 12-42

III. The Politics of Magic Realism in Bond's Selected Short Stories 43-45

Works Cited

## I. Ruskin Bond's *When Darkness Falls and Other Stories* as a Magic Realist Fiction

The primary concern of this research paper is to focus on the implication of magic realism in Ruskin Bond's some selected stories from *When Darkness Falls and Other Stories* which present supernaturalism as the common phenomenon to the Indian people, their way of life, belief system and behaviors. Bond here creates a kind of amalgamation of the opposite values like real and fictional, natural and supernatural to portray the attachment of Indian people to magic, mystery, ghost and haunting in day to day life. In "When Darkness Falls", Markham, a war veteran condemns to lifetime of loneliness by a tragic accident serves like a ghostly figure with one eye, jaw and sans nose. "The Ghost in the Garden" presents that ghostly visitation occurs in the life of common people. "Return of the White Pigeon" portrays the sad wife of colonel who returns after her death only to find that her husband has moved on to another life and another wife. Hameeda's engagement with a boy after her death is supernatural but presented naturally in "Topaz". "Susanna's Seven Husbands" is an amazing story where the merry widow who loves each of her seven husbands to die. Presentation of the relationship between human being and ghost is common to magic realism which is found in the story, "Family Ghost". Supernaturalism, ghostly visitation, belief in spirit, jinn and fairies are the magical elements with which Bond blends real experiences of Indian people.

Ruskin Bond, an Anglo-Indian story teller, has written for grown-ups and children alike comprises about one hundred thirty books- novels, short stories, essays and poems and anthologies. So far as the themes of Bond's stories are concerned, he writes about Indian culture, nature, supernatural, magic mystery, suspense, death and life, unfulfilled dream, ghostly visitation, macabre and so on. Bond's stories provide a glimpse of life in India's

small towns. Most of his stories are autobiographical. Some of his collections of stories are *The Season of Ghost, Time Stops at Shamli and Other Stories, A Face in the Dark and Other Hauntings, When Darkness Falls and Other Stories, Dust on the Mountain etc.*

Bond is well aware of human psychology. He portrays the magic of supernatural elements in the tales. Though in the age of science, one finds it difficult to digest his fictional encounters with the ghosts and jinns, none can deny that they do exist in the psychology of each society either in the east or in the modern west. Bond scribbles fantastic tales of ghosts and spirits. He juxtaposes such magical elements to the real experiences of the people occurred in daily life.

Bond is mainly associated with children's literature. An interview in *Readers Digest* provides the reason of Bond's fascination about children in his writing. Bond explains: "After my father passed away, I had a lonely childhood. It helped me to understand children who had problems. Childhood memories are visual memories. We remember them most vividly" (39). Bond has written so many stories and novels for children. In his childhood he faced so many difficulties and he has presented the childhood experiences in his writings. Ruskin Bond differentiates stories and novel in temporal framework. He prefers story than novel. He asserts: "A short story is a slice of life; it's an insight into a character, in a novel, you are very often covering a period of time. The characters are changing over a period of time, where as in a short story you are going into an immediate movement" (40). For Bond, story is more concrete because it is set in immediate moment but characters in the novel are changing over a period of time.

The style of Bond is conversational, the way he is talking to himself. That is why he uses the first person quite a lot. It makes it more personal in a way. He has developed his

individual style of narration. His narration is marked with simplicity of tone and depth of meaning. He is a conscientious writer. Though writing for him is a spontaneous overflow of emotions, his stories are carefully crafted. He believes that thought has to be translated in intelligent and readable language if they are to convey anything to other. His style of writing has not changed a great deal over the years.

The characters in Ruskin Bond's stories are victimized with several ordeals in life. Magic realism helps to analyze how the reality is blended with magical occurrence to fulfill the quest of the characters. Markham, who is wounded terribly in the war, becomes dangerous to look at and never comes into the outer world. This reality of Markham's life became supernatural for Mrs. Khanna as she is frightened wildly supposing him as a ghost. Though Markham's sense is normal, he is abnormal in his physical appearance. Susanna's act of destroying her seven husbands is very mysterious. Though there are sheer chances responsible for the death of her husbands, Susanna's enigmatic power becomes the cause for the eyes of society. Susanna was the cynosure of all eyes but none of her husband remained alive with her.

The continuation of love after death is found in two of Ruskin Bond's stories; "Return of the White Pigeon" and "Topaz". A colonel's wife returns to her husband after her death in the form of white pigeon and mourns, seeing her husband with another wife. The forecasting of colonel's wife in the death bed comes true that she visits her husband in the form of white pigeon after her death. The white pigeon rests on the grave of colonel is the love and devotion of wife to husband in supernatural way. In "Topaz", Hameeda fulfills her quest after her death by doing engagement with her boy friend. The boy's reality is blended with magical world of Hameeda with their reunion.

The relationship between human being and ghost is common to Ruskin Bond's stories. The friendship and betrayal of an idiot with the ghost called Munjia, are portrayed in the story, "Family Ghost". The appearance and disappearance of Munjia and his act of making the king's and moneylender's daughters dangerously ill and idiot's disguise to Santa to cure those two girls are presented as natural occurrence in the story. The story, "The Ghost in the Garden" portrays the relationship between the narrator and ghost of Rose, who had committed suicide hanging on the mango tree. The narrator's act of putting a rose flower on the grave of Rose, the appearance of Rose while playing piano, her dancing on the garden and leaving a wet rose on the pillow of narrator are supernatural elements which are presented naturally in the story.

In *When Darkness Falls and Other Stories*, Bond waves the elements of supernatural and extraordinary happenings. The stories are simply about the victimizations of the characters with ordeals in life. Regarding this, an article in *Asian Age* mentions:

In *When Darkness Falls and Other Stories*, Ruskin Bond displays all the qualities of a master storyteller: a deceptively effortless style, an eye for extraordinary in seemingly humdrum lives, and a deep empathy with the characters. We make the acquaintance of Markham, a war veteran condemned to a lifetime of loneliness by a tragic accident; Susana, the merry widow who loved each of the seven husband to death; the sad wife who returns after her death only to find that her husband has moved on to another life and another wife; a simpleton who outwits a crafty ghost; . . . Humorous, sad and nostalgic, the stories in this collection are a treat for all Ruskin Bond fans. (Par. 1)

Bond here opines the difficulties of his characters and shares empathy. All of the characters have to face the ordeals with various reasons. Bond mixes up nostalgia, sadness and humor

at the same time to provide a clear picture in the mind of the readers. Debashis Bandyopadhyay compares Kipling's and Bond's subject matter in their writing. He asserts:

Like Kipling, Bond too uses the supernatural to a meta-critical end.

But in his work, the supernatural gets generically embedded in naturalist discourse and transacts with nature in terms of parody. The narrative power of supernatural discourse when parodied turns upon itself to expose its insubstantial claim to power. (144)

In his opinion, Bond's supernaturalism is naturally presented. Readers believe events as real and feel supernatural as powerful. The theme of Ruskin Bond's writing are associated with Indian cultural values, children culture, Indian people's way of life, portrayal of nature and human relationship. Regarding this, Ram Kulesh Thakur explains: "He has been accredited with Nature Writings and from a rich pictorial description of nature, travelling experiences, supernatural elements and nostalgic memories, Bond also presents a web of human relationship in his short stories" (v). Bond's fiction presents a wonderful blend of supernaturalism and human relationship, body and soul, past and present and life and death.

Amita Aggarwal pinpoints the reasons for the death of Susanna's husbands in the story, "Susanna's Seven Husbands". She opines that Susanna is seductive women having enigmatic and mysterious power for the eyes of society but she is generous and loving too. Here, Aggrawal provides multiple version of truths by breaking the single and absolute truth. She asserts:

The story, "Susanna's Seven Husbands", is about a vamp of obscure traits. Susanna, the lady of seven husbands, is a cynosure of city youth. She is sought after for her wealth and beauty. The list of her wooers is quite long. Seven out of them marry her to die within the year of their matrimony. The lady is generous in her bounties, but

rigorous towards her menials. Highly unpredictable Susanna becomes a prodigy of fear and fascination. Bond portrays her character on three possible lines- first, she kills her husband for some better childhood impression that prompt her to dominate the opposite sex, second, it is simply her nature to hunt for new adventures, third, sheer chance is responsible

ultimately for the death in succession. But for the people of her town, she is an enigma, a lady of supernatural power. (105)

Aggarwal asserts that Bond characterizes Susanna and provides the causes of the death of her husbands. The reason could be her childhood bitter impression towards male, her nature to dominate opposite sex and probably the sheer chance which brought disaster. Anyway, the cause of death was Susanna , in the eye of society.

Although the different critics, magazines and publication reviewed this collection of stories through various perspective but this text has not been analyzed from the perspective of Magic Realism. Thus, I have analyzed this text through the perspective of magic realism which mingles reality with fantasy in order to explore the Indian history, cultural heritage and people's way of living. I have taken the support from different critics to prove this text as magic realist fiction.

The first period of magic realism is set in Germany in the twentieth century, the second period in Central America continues internationally to this day. All these periods are linked by literary and artistic figures whose works spread the influence to Latin America and from Latin America to the rest of the world. Magic realism was first introduced by Franz Roh, a German art critic in 1925 who consider magic realism as a reaction to expressionism. The development of magic realism spread with the works of Cuban writer Alego Carpentier ,

Italian writer Massimo Bontempelli, Latin American critic Angel Flores, Latin American novelist Gabriel Garcia Marquez and an Indian writer Salman Rushdie.

Magic realism challenges the opposite polar like life and death and pre-colonial past verses the post-industrial present. In 1970s and 1980s, some fiction writers Emma Tenant, Angela Carter, Salman Rushdie use this technique. Magic realism was not developed separately as a tool rather it achieved its effects by exploiting and achieving the characteristic of realism, surrealism and romanticism. It has been used in English literature since 1970s. There is the use of combination of magic and imaginary perspectives of Romantic Movement of realism.

Magic realist writers, particularly Alejo Carpentier, were influenced by both Roh and the surrealists. As well as Roh's influence, another important thread in the development of magic realism can be traced from post-expressionist and surrealist Europe to Latin America. Alejo Carpentier proposed that the marvelous real defines that most appropriate way of seeing the history of Latin America.

Another term that is frequently associated with magic realism is that of the fantastic. Neil Cornwell assumes Rushdie and Morrison as fantastical writers in *Midnight's Children* and *Beloved* respectively which goes against the idea prevalent in magic realist criticism that the narrator and reader accept the existence of the magical elements in the text. The magic realist critic Amaryll Chanady pinpoints the difference between fantastic and the magic realist that the fantastic literature has confusion between belief and disbelief but this hesitation becomes factual for magic realism.

Magic realism blends real and unreal, natural and supernatural world and the real world of fantasy. It mixes realistic narrative with fantastical elements by adding supernatural

elements to the factual details. It relates with the life of common people but there are some elements which are related with the magic world and fantasy but they still are with the façade of reality. Maggie Ann Bowers shows the link between these two terms ‘magic’ and ‘realism’ asserting:

This approach to literary realism is the most relevant to magical realism, as magical realism relies upon the presentation of real, imagined or magical elements as if they were real. The key to understand how magical realism works is to understand the way in which the narrative is constructed in order to provide a realistic context for the magical events of the fiction. Magical realism therefore relies upon realism but only so that it can stretch what is acceptable as real to its limits. (22)

Probably the best-known writer of magic realism in the English language is the British-Indian writer Salman Rushdie. He uses the magic realism to complicate the binary between Indian and British identity. His *Midnight's Children* presents a group of magical children born on the historical boarder of India's independence from Britain. The majority of magic realist writing cannot be said to occupy the mainstream of these countries' literary production. For instance, in Indian writing Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh and Arundhati Roy are very notable prize winning writers and all are writers of magic realism. Though they are from the same country, they do not constitute a movement or group in Indian literature, each being unconnected to the other and located in different countries.

Magic realism has its connection to postmodern and postcolonial studies. Both magic realism and postmodernism adopt historical references. As we have seen many magic realist works include historical reference, not only to situate their text in a particular context but also to question already existing historical assumption. The writers like Garcia Marquez,

Rushdie and Morrison use magic realist devices to disrupt fixed categories of truth reality and history. Magic realist writing can be described as postcolonial in the sense it is set in a postcolonial context and written from a postcolonial perspective. Due to its dual narrative structure, magic realism is able to present the postcolonial context from both the colonized and colonizers' perspective through its narrative structure as well as themes.

Ontological magic realism is originated by Carpentier who first presented his idea of marvelous realism in Latin America in 1949. Ontological magic realism brings the elements of magic, supernatural and cultural context from the culture where the text is set. In such realism one can change a shape at will. Writers such as Carpentier, Garcia Marquez, Rushdie, Morrison and Okri all derive the magic realist elements of their texts from the mythology, cultural belief and context in which the text is set. There are two approaches to understand the variants of magic realism. On the one hand, magic realism is subversive because it alternates between the real and the magical using the same narrative voice. On the other hand, magic realism is transgressive since magic realism crosses the borders between the magic and real to create a further category 'magical real.'

Magic realism is mostly associated to children culture. It provides a perfect means for children to explore the world through their imaginations without losing a connection to what they recognize as the 'real world'. Magic realist texts offer the opportunity for children to explore disruption in their ordinary world and provide the knowledge that such magic and extraordinary can be contained. Roger Drury, Maria Nikolajera and Louisa Smitha are the critics of children's literature who claim that the children can be interpretative and positively obsessed by getting the magic realist texts.

Ruskin Bond is also a postmodern writer who uses magic realism to represent the Indian cultural values and tradition. The postmodern magic realism searches the multiple causes of the death of Susanna's husbands in "Susanna's Seven Husbands." It breaks the singular reality that Susanna kills her husbands with her enigmatic power and highlights the multiple reasons, such as, a sheer chance in every incident is responsible for the death of her husbands. "The Ghost in the Garden" searches the history of Rose with the help of neglected old mango tree, gravestone, gramophone and the story of Rose by Miss Kellner which come side by side with magic, haunting and supernaturalism.

Ruskin Bond's magic realism has also adopted postcolonial theory to present political and social attitude that oppose colonial power. In the story, "When Darkness Falls", Bond hybridizes the two opposite cultures such as western and non-western. Markham is the representative of colonized who is disfigured in the war tearing away his face. So, his disfigurement symbolizes the distortion of non-western cultures because of colonialism. "Return of the white pigeon" also blends the two cultures; English and Persian. The Persian wife represents the non-western culture as she is faithful to her husband and she has belief in visitation of the soul after death. In contrast, the English colonel has no faith on magic and visitation of the soul. Through this story, Bond portrays the spirituality, purity and devotion of non-westerners in love and marriage. Ruskin Bond's magic realism is ontological too. His description of Indian cultural heritage, belief in superstition and ghosts are the evidence of adopting ontological magic realism. The idiot's act of changing his appearance to 'santa' and the appearance of colonel's wife in the form of white pigeon are related to ontological magic realism. Stories of Bond are set in India, which presents Indian culture, tradition and people's way of life.

In this text Bond associate magic realism with children culture. Most of his stories are based on his childhood experience. "The Ghost in the Garden" portrays the small boy's curiosity to know the history of his grandfather's first wife who had committed suicide. "The Family Ghost" is based on the story telling method. Here, the landlady tells the ghost stories to the children. As Garcia Marquez's magic realism, Bond's magic realism also comes from grandmother's method of storytelling, and her stories that include folktales and superstitions from their rural region. Therefore, Bond's magic realism is associated with children's culture; postmodernism, postcolonialism, supernaturalism, hybridity and so on. Bond describes the Indian tradition, belief, system and life style of Indian people. His magic realism is mixed of historical fiction. As he is a non-western writer, the oxymoron 'magic realism' is common phenomenon to non-western location.

This research has been divided into three chapters. The first chapter presents a brief introduction, including textual information, literary views, hypothesis, methodology, thematic introduction of the author and the background of the theory. The second chapter deals with textual analysis with the application of magic realism in the text and finally, the last chapter will be the conclusion of the research which briefly encapsulates the overall project.

## II. Depiction of Indian Cultural Values through Magic Realism: A Study of Bond's Selected Short Stories

The objective of this chapter is to focus on the implication of magic realism in selected stories from *When Darkness Falls and Other Stories* by Ruskin Bond. This research goes through the discursive analysis of six stories of Bond, "When Darkness Falls", "The Ghost in the Garden", "Topaz", "Return of the White Pigeon", "Susanna's Seven Husbands" and "The Family Ghost". Through these stories, Ruskin Bond portrays the Indian culture, tradition, people's faith on religion, superstition, magic, supernatural, and celebrates the Indian values of adopting magic and superstition as cultural identification. The westerners accuse Indians as superstitious, traditional and are thought to be believing in supernatural, charm and spell, ghost and haunting. However, Bond breaks this idea of westerners and claims that every culture has its own history, cultural heritage and belief systems.

This research demonstrates the Indian culture having the belief in magic and supernaturalism. Bond's stories are away from science that denies the existence of superstition. In Indian society, magic and supernaturalism merge with reality and extraordinary and give birth to normal and everyday life which have non-western quality. In Bond's stories, the real becomes supernatural as Markham's real appearance is supposed as a ghost by Mrs. Khanna. Visitation of the soul after death is presented which is totally supernatural that is attached with the reality by giving the factual detail in the stories such as "The Ghost in the Garden", "Topaz", "Return of the White Pigeon" and so on. The relationship between human being and ghost has been possible in "The Family Ghost". The use of magic realism is dominant in Ruskin Bond's stories that has broader cultural, political, social and historical implication.

Magic realism is a literary genre, which mixes the realistic narrative with fantastical elements. The unbelievable and extraordinary occurrence are made believable and ordinary in magic realism. The supernatural elements are combined in the factual details as the readers accept both magical events and real events at the same level while reading the texts. Even though, magic and reality are opposite to their meaning, magical elements provide a vivid picture to understand the real life experience. Magic realist texts have narrative device in which the realistic events recognizably mingle with magical elements of dream, ghost, foretelling, charms, spells and so on.

The main concern of magic realists is to explore what they see as contemporary reality, how the faith and belief are guiding people, rather than to provide an alternative way for changing people from magical truth to scientific truth. One of Bond's stories, "When Darkness Falls" is about a war veteran, Markham, who condemns to lifetime loneliness by a tragic accident in the war, serves like a ghost with false nose, jaw and one eye for people. However, he is normal in his mind and soul, his physical abnormality destroys the life of Mrs. Khanna, himself and the old empire hotel. Markham's face is torn away while he is serving in Barma in the war that causes him to be ghostly figure and he becomes the creature of circumstances hiding in a darkroom throughout his life.

Magic realism has its concern with postcolonial studies. Magical writings are set in a postcolonial context and written for the postcolonial perspective that challenges the assumptions of an authoritative colonialist attitude. It refers to the political and social attitude that opposes colonial power and recognizes the effect of colonialism on other nation. Regarding this, Christopher Warnes asserts: "Magical realism in its postcolonial forms can thus be seen as a response to the "othering" that accompanies western colonialism, supported

as it is in the modern period by the Universalist claims of reason" (152). Postcolonial magic realism naturalizes the supernatural, integrating fantastic features smoothly into the realistic narrative. Maggie Ann Bower quotes the idea of Elleke Boehmer regarding postcolonial magic realism:

Drawings on the special effects of magic realism, postcolonial writers in English are able to express their view of a world fissured, distorted, and made incredible by cultural displacement . . . [T]hey combine the supernatural with local legend and imagery derived from colonialist cultures to represent societies which have been repeatedly unsettled by invasion, occupation, and political corruption. Magic effects, therefore, are used to indicate the follies of both empire and its aftermath. (qtd. 97)

Boehmer claims that magic realism can be concerned with different cultural version of reality such as, the colonized cultures are fragmented, disfigured and unsettled because of colonialism. The colonized are suffered from cultural displacement because of attack and political degeneration.

Like Boehmer, Bond portrays the follies of colonialism and its aftermath with the magical effect of Markham's suffering and death because of political invasion: "While Markham was serving in Burma during the war, a shell had exploded near his dugout, tearing away most of his face. Plastic surgery was then in its infancy, and although the doctors had done their best, even going to the extent of giving Markham a false nose, his features were permanently ravaged" (1). Markham is 'marginalized' or 'othered' who becomes the victim of war and condemns to a lifetime of loneliness. He is the representative of distorted culture in the sense, he is disfigured in the war. When the war turns away Markham's nose, he is given

artificial nose which symbolizes the artificiality of colonizers who provide fake identity to colonized.

Markham is ghostly in the eyes of Mrs. Khanna and other people who confront him: "He was a ghostly figure, no doubt, and the few who had glimpsed him in those late hours had taken for a supernatural visitor. In this way, the hotel had acquired a reputation for being haunted. Some guests liked the idea of having a resident ghost, others stayed away" (4). The reality of Markham becomes supernatural for other. Everyone becomes terrified seeing his ghostly figure. He hides himself on the basement room of the hotel and when he secretly comes out to see the outer world, the hotel owner, Mrs. Khanna encounters him and is frightened supposing him as a ghost:

. . . She saw a face at the skylight. Not really a face. Not a human face, that is. An empty eye-socket, a wicked grin, and a nose that wasn't a nose, pressed flat against the glass . . . For the next couple of days Mrs. Khanna was quite hysterical and spoke wildly of a wolf-man of Rakshas who was pursuing her. (7)

This abstract presents Indians' faith on magic and supernatural as Mrs. Khanna is terrified with Markham because of her internalized concept of ghost and haunting but that is Markham's reality. In the next encounter with Mrs. Khanna, Markham confronts his reality with her, saying: "Quite normal, Mrs. Khanna, he said, again and again, his voice ascending. I'm quite normal!" (16). But Mrs. Khanna never takes him as normal. The unusual fight between Mrs. Khanna and Markham causes the hotel be fired and both of them are burnt inside the hotel. This blending of Markham's reality and Mrs. Khanna's thought of supernaturalism is the magic realism, which the readers accept undoubtedly.

Markham is the representative of the colonized who become the creature of circumstances throughout their life because of war. Markham faces existential crisis because of his disfigurement. This clarifies the cultural distortion in India because of colonialism. Regarding the magical effects of colonialism, Eva Aldea asserts: "The fact that magical realism can be concerned with different cultural versions of reality potentiality allows it to deal with questions of the cultural hegemony and its role in colonialism, and to explore the politically subversive power of exposing the relativity of such hegemony" (3-4). The colonial hegemony imposes the power to colonized society, which results in the cultural displacement creating a fragmented identity of the victimized. Markham is confined in a dark room but there too, he is not safe. His supernatural face frightens Mrs. Khanna so, Negi advises him to leave his residence:

'Mr Markham, sir, you must keep away from the rooms and the main hotel. Mrs Khanna is very upset. She's called in the police and she's having the hotel searched.'

'I'm sorry, Mr Negi. I did not mean to frighten any one.' . . . 'This is my only home. Where would I go?' . . . 'I know, Mr Markham, I know. I understand. But do others?' (10-11)

The cultural displacement of Markham is presented by his existential crisis. He has to hide in a dark room and he cannot live there permanently. He requests Negi to keep him quietly.

Negi is another victimized character who is the staff of the Empire Hotel and gives shelter to Markham secretly. Markham has existence in the world because of Negi but he is charged in the destruction of the hotel and the death of Markham and Mrs. Khanna. Bond's empathy towards Markham is expressed in the introduction of his book: "He is normal as you or me, perhaps more so. His disfigurement is accidental. How would we have reacted in similar circumstances? Hidden from the world like Markham, or confronted it with half a face? . . .

Not an easy choice, my friend" (viii). Bond uncovers the difficulties of Markham to serve like a ghostly figure because of the effect of colonialism. He is normal but made abnormal because of war which causes different ordeals in his life. So, the magical effect in the story provides suffering of Indians by colonialism and its aftermath.

The title of the story "When Darkness Falls" is very significant for being magic realist because it symbolizes the occurrence of British colonialism in India which results the cultural distortion, loss of freedom and fragments the identity of Indians. Most of the events are set in the dark basement room of the old Empire Hotel which is sufficient for haunting. Markham tries to come out every time at night, the hotel goes on fire at night and Markham and Mrs. Khanna are burnt to death at night. Markham's life is out of day delight: "Markham was used to darkness" (13). When the darkness falls, the life of Markham and Mrs. Khanna, the old Empire Hotel and the livelihood of Negi also fall. The words like fire, flames, smoke, torn face, one-eye, charred body, Rakshas, wolf man and so on give the intensity of magical elements, which blend with reality.

"Return of the White Pigeon" is another story of Bond, which serves magic realist elements in postcolonial manner. It presents two different cultures which have different belief systems. Magic realism in its postcolonial form mixes elements borrowed from the western and non-western cultures which provide ontological and historical status. Regarding this, Michael Valdez Moses asserts:

. . . magical realism is a form of global meditation that hybridizes the modern and the traditional, the western and nonwestern, the realistic and the fabulous, the literary and the oral narrative traditions, the secular and the religious, the sophisticated and the popular, it

nonetheless manages this fusion on the terms of and within the parameters established by global modernity. (12)

Magic realism juxtaposes the opposite ideas to provide synthesis. It mingles the elements from western and non-western societies, providing the evidences. Bond, in "Return of the White Pigeon" does same, juxtaposing the English and Persian cultures. The Persian wife of an English colonel has a faith on superstition and supernaturalism as she believes in the visitation of the soul after death, which is the magical aspect of the story. The wife becomes dangerously ill and promises her servants that she will visit to her home and husband after her death, in the form of white pigeon. This magic comes into reality as a white pigeon comes at the time when the English colonel remarries and brings an English widow at his home: "But as he was carrying his new bride through the porch and up the varanda steps, a white pigeon came fluttering into the garden and perched on a rose bush. There it remained for a long time, cooling and murmuring in a sad, subdued manner" (37). The wife is very faithful to her husband and loves him even after her death though he marries with another woman.

However, the English colonel has no faith on superstition as he forgets the love of his Persian wife and remarriages an English widow. The westerners have no faith on religion. The colonel is secular and has no devotion and faith regarding love and marriage. He forgets his first wife and soon become attracted with an English widow but his first wife is devoted to him even after her death. This proves the purity of love and spirituality of non-westerners. In contrast, westerners focus on physical love with vulgarity who forgets devotional love. When the servants see white pigeon howling with pain, they remember the promise of colonel's first wife and tell it to second wife and the colonel. But the colonel gives no

credence to the tale. This shows the Europeans' disregard to the magic and superstition. He fires the pigeon to satisfy his wife but the pigeon flies with "a high –pitched woman's scream" (37). The woman's scream coming from the pigeon is very magical because it is the howl of his first wife.

In the story, magic turns into real when colonel died at the same night: "That same night, the colonel died in his sleep. The doctor put it down to heart failure, which was true enough but the servants said he had always kept good health, and they were sure his death had something to do with the killing of the white pigeon" (37). It is extraordinary that the colonel dies on the same night when he fires white pigeon. There is correlation between the killing of pigeon and dying of colonel. Therefore, magic realism challenges the scientific truth as the servants disbelieve the doctor's hypothesis of heart failure about the death of the colonel and claim for supernatural cause, that he dies of his crime. However, the colonel does not believe in magic, he dies unnaturally. It proves the valorization of the non-western tradition.

This story is analyzed on the base of ontological magic realism as well. Carpentier in Latin America develops this idea of ontological magic realism. Every culture has its own beliefs and system and the magical elements from the culture are derived in literature. Writers like Carpentier, Garcia Marquez, Rushdie, Morrison and so on use their cultural system and belief in their writing which becomes ontological magic realist texts. Ann Bowers brings out the idea of Echevarria who describes Carpentier's ontological magic realism as: "Ontological magical realism can be described as magical realism that has its source material belief of practices from the cultural context in which the text is set" (91). The

ontological magic realists borrow social, historical and cultural elements in their writings. They portray the cultural context and highlight the social values and traditions.

All of Bond's stories are set in India and Indians' faith on superstition is mentioned in his stories. "Return of the White Pigeon" is set in the outskirts of Dehra Dun, which portrays the cultural practices of believing on visitation of the soul after death. The first wife of colonel and the servants are representative of non-western culture who have faith on supernaturalism. In ontological magic realism, one can change his shape at will. The wife of colonel takes the form of white pigeon after her death and comes to visit her husband. She changes the shape at will. Even after the death of her husband, she rests on his grave in the form of white pigeon: "Few people pass that way. But those who do, say that they have often seen a white pigeon with a crimson stain on its breast" (38). The continuation of love after death is presented here. The faithful wife even after her death and after her husband's death comes to care for him. That is unreliable but the reality mixes with it that the people keep on seeing the same. The phrase, "a crimson stain on its breast" means the red discolored appearance resulted due to the colonial's act of shooting it.

The title of the story, "Return of the White Pigeon" signifies the visitation of the soul of the dead wife. The unusual promises come true when white pigeon comes to visit the colonel at the garden. The term, 'White' symbolizes purity, spirituality and softness and 'Pigeon' signifies peace and love. So, white pigeon refers to the devoted wife of colonel who is spiritual, faithful, loving and caring. 'Return' refers to visitation of the wife to her husband even after her death. Similarly, the narration starts from the phrases 'about fifty years ago', 'on the outskirts of Dehra Dun', show the method of Garcia Marquez who often notes that

his magic realism comes from his grandmother's method of story-telling, Bond also follows the same style which proves his stories as magic realist.

"The Family Ghost" is another story of Bond, which also centers on ontological magic realism. It is a supernatural story, based on Indian culture, which has faith on ghost, haunting, wicked churels and mischievous prets. This story presents the relationship between human being and ghost, which is sufficient through the title, "The Family Ghost", as a ghost, which is related to a particular family. For Bond faith on supernaturalism is the cultural identification of Indian people. Ontological magic realist writings represent the cultural beliefs and trends. Regarding this Maggie Ann Bowers asserts:

What is also remarkable about the use of magical realism by these writers is that they employ the mode not only because they wish to repeat folkloric mythologies from their cultural community, but because they wish to promote a greater depth of understanding of the present circumstances in which the text were written. (94)

Bowers claims that the ontological magic realist writers depict the cultural context in their text. They borrow the idea from the culture in which the text are set. Bond's story, "The Family Ghost" is about the Indian people's attachment with ghost, called munjia: "A munjia is the ghost of a Brahmin youth who had committed suicide on the eve of his marriage. Our village munjia had taken up residence in an old peepul tree"(86).

Indian people believe that the residence of ghosts are generally the peepul tree, so that, people do not go alone near peepul tree in the dark supposing it for haunting. Not only that, this is also related to the scientific truth. Peepul is the tree which provides more oxygen which is beneficial for human beings and animals. But it undergoes respiration in the night and releases carbon dioxide which is very harmful for human beings as they may be

suffocated by it. Therefore, magic realism sometimes clarifies the scientific truth with supports and evidences. In the story, the magic becomes real and real becomes magical in the sense, the communication and friendship becomes possible between human being and the ghost:

'Not so fast, brother!' cried the ghost. 'Desert your wife, certainly, but not your old family ghost! The shrew has driven me out of my peepul tree . . . From now on we are brothers and most seek out fortunes together. But first promises me that you will not return to your wife.' The idiot made this promise very willingly, and together they continued their journey until they reached a large city. (88)

Human being and the ghost become brothers in the story and they accomplish extraordinary act as the ghost possesses two girls to make them ill and the idiot cures them with charms and spells. Those charm and spell are the magical elements but they are able to cure the daughter of moneylender and the king. It is the reality that the two girls become dangerously ill and the physician pronounces the girls incurable but the spells of an idiot in the disguised form of 'sadhu' recover them. The idiot cures the king's daughter, who is physically and mentally disordered:

Her hair was dishevelled, her teeth were chattering, and her eyes almost starting from their sockets. She howled and cursed and tore at her clothes. When the idiot confronted her, he recited certain meaningless spells; and the ghost, recognizing him, cried out: 'I go I go! Bhum, bhum, bho!'

'Give me a sign that you have gone,' demanded the idiot.

'As soon as I leave the girl,' said the ghost, 'you will see that mango tree uprooted. That is the sign I'll give.'

A few minutes later, the mango tree came crashing down. The girl recovered from her fit, and seemed unaware of what had happened to her. (89-90)

Though the spells of an idiot are meaningless, the ghost makes it meaningful as he recognizes the sadhu as idiot and leaves possessing the girl, as their plan to earn money. The ghost is invisible in front of the girl, so the king believes an idiot for curing his daughter. The supernatural becomes reality when the mango tree uproots there as a sign of redemption, from the ghost according to the demand of the idiot.

The motif of an idiot and ghost is negative because they are just betraying people such as the king and moneylender by making their daughter ill and recovering with meaningless spells. Though, this story portrays magic realist elements, it is the bad cultural practices as the ghost and idiot make a deceptive plan. Through this story, Bond presents the another side of magic realism. Every culture has both positive and negative aspects. Magic realism becomes powerful in the story but the purpose of the characters is negative.

Therefore, this is an ontological magic realist story as it presents the people's attachment with ghost and supernatural. The non- western setting of India, supernatural title , the use of magical words and phrases like , wicked churels, mischievous prets, munjia spells like Bhum, Bhum Bho and the characters like ghost, an idiot and a shrew are sufficient to represent Indian cultural heritage where every magical occurrence are inseparable parts in everyday life.

Two of Ruskin Bond's stories, "The Ghost in the Garden" and "Susanna's Seven Husbands" can be analyzed from postmodern magic realist perspective. In "The Ghost in the Garden", the narrator searches for the history of his step grandmother, Rose. Magic realist texts attempt to recreate the history and question the historical facts, which are called official

versions of history. Postmodern thinking of history usually emphasizes the lack of absolute historical truth and doubts over the existence of facts by indicating its link with narratives and stories. Salman Rushdie, in *Midnight's Children*, Toni Morrison in *Beloved* and Gabriel Marquez in *One Hundred Year of Solitude* use postmodern magic realist elements in their texts. They use magic realist devices to disrupt fixed categories of truth, reality and history. Toni Morrison stories are told from the perspective of women slave using magic realist device to express the reality in order to remind African Americans of their past. Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* serves as a history of Colombia representing Buendia's family.

The most notable postmodern magic realist writer is Salman Rushdie of India. He provides us with perfectly illustrative example of how magic realism can work with the form of historical postmodernism. In *Imaginary Homelands*, Rushdie reflects the view of Jameson and Tonkin stating: "History is ambiguous. Facts are hard to establish, and capable of being given many meanings. Reality is built on prejudices, misconceptions and ignorance as well as on our perceptiveness and knowledge"(25). Rushdie's work illustrates that if history is to be seen from each individual's perspective in order to provide a comprehensive portrayal of India, he most acknowledges the multiplicity of historical perspectives and give equal validity to each other. The perception of history is different in western and non-western societies. In western culture, modernity means to break away from tradition but in non-western societies, modernity is continuation of tradition.

In Bond's story, "The Ghost in the Garden", the narrator revises the history of Rose, his step grandmother who committed suicide, hanging on a mango tree. The narrator's act of searching Rose's history is the continuation of tradition. Bond here, portrays the sufferings of

people who are neglected before and after their death. Bringing the haunting expedition of a mango tree as a magic realist device, Bond reminds the Indian history, which has faith on ghost, haunting, and superstition. Rose commits suicide because of her abnormality, which may be the result of loneliness and unpleasant life, which is presented by the assertion of Miss Kellner:

'Yes', said Miss Kellner pensively. 'She most have been lonely, poor thing. She wasn't very stable, I'm told. Used to wander about on her own, picking wildflowers, singing to herself, sometimes getting lost and coming home at odd hours. How does the old song go? 'Lonely as the desert breeze . . . ' In her croaky voice, Miss Kellner sang a refrain from an old ballad, before continuing . . . . (33)

The unusual acts of Rose may be caused by her loneliness. The refrain from old ballad is also the search of history. The narrator searches the old magazine, scrapbooks and gets gramophone records. It is the reality that the narrator plays the gramophone records and the extraordinary comes to mix up when the ghost of Rose appears with traditional white dress. Her soul gets transformed when the piano of her time is played. Her act of smiling and watching him is because of her happiness. The appearance vanishes when piano is stopped. This appearance and disappearance of the soul of ghost is magical but becomes real when the innocent narrator faces the unusual events.

Magic realist writers think historically and historical references and historical revision occur in magic realist works in order to gain an understanding to the relationship between magic realism and postmodernism. The narrative of *Midnight's Children* follows the history of India through the impressions of Saleem and his own stories of his ancestors. Rushdie, here, retraces the Bombay and India as cultural history. Saleem was born at exactly the same

time that India as nation come into being as an independent state. Saleem comments: "I had been mysteriously handcuffed to history, my destinies indissolubly chained to those of my country" (9). Rushdie embraces the postmodern aspect of attempting to recreate history with fragments and uncertainty. Saleem is a person who shares his faith with the country.

The story, "The Ghost in the Garden" is written from the perspective of Rose as the narrator searches for the real history of Rose; why she committed suicide and why her grave is not kept in cemetery. The history of Rose is representative of the history of Indian women, who are neglected before and after their death. The story of Rose is similar to the women who are restless and commit suicide because of various reasons such as loneliness, boredom, dissatisfaction and so on. Rose haunts after her death because she commits suicide and does not get the proper burial.

To find the true history of Rose, the narrator visits different places and discovers the fact that she hangs herself on a mango tree. He tells this fact to Miss Kellner: "But you heard all about it. And I know how she did it. She most have hanged herself from that mango tree- the tree at the end of the garden, which everyone avoids. I told you I went there one day, an it was very cold and lonely in its shade. I was frightened, you know" (33). The narrator explores the history of Rose by experimenting the mango tree and the grave of Rose. On the one hand, the mango tree haunts him and on the other he gets the grave of Rose in lonely area. Therefore, he discovers the fact of Rose's suicide. In Indian societies, the suicide could not get a Christian burial because taking own life by own self-means to pollute the ritual. According to Miss Kellner, Rose is not kept in cemetery because of her suicide.

The narrator sympathizes Rose that he picks a rose flower from the garden and puts it on the grave of Rose. In the dream at night, he sees Rose dancing on the garden which is full

of dew. The unusual comes to be true when the narrator gets a wet rose flower on his pillow. It is magical that Rose offers him a rose flower in return. This shows her happiness because she is getting love and respect from the narrator. The exchanging of rose flower by dead one and living one is very extraordinary but it is presented naturally in the story. Bringing the contexts of nature and music with haunting, Bond highlights the magic realist belief in Indian society. Set in Indian context, this story has magical title, "The Ghost in the Garden." Ghost is supernatural and the garden is natural so in the title too, there is the blending of magical and supernatural. While concerning about characters, Rose is supernatural, the narrator is natural, and their give and take relationship is magic realist. The double narration by the boy and Miss Kellner provides the way to understand this story as postmodern magic realist text.

One of the supernatural stories of Bond is "Susanna's Seven Husband," which is about the mysterious woman who loves each of her seven husbands to die. It is mysterious that, Susanna a cynosure all eye with huge property and palatial home is generous to build various schools, orphanages and the church but none of her husbands remained with her for long. They die with different reasons but in the eyes of her town people, she is an enigma, having supernatural power, which causes the death of her seven husbands. The postmodern magic realist writers use magic realist devices in order to disrupt fixed notion of history. The Indian critic Kum Kum Sangari proposes that the magic realist attack on dominant culture and its authoritative version of the truth actually provides a new and more "comprehensive mode of referentiality" (163). Here, Sangari provides a new way of understanding historical categories on multiple versions of truth and definition not relying on absolute truth and fixed definition.

In "Susanna's Seven Husbands", Bond tries to bring multiple versions of truth by breaking the single truth that the causes of death can be many but not only Susanna's hatred

towards her husbands. He also provides the possible reasons of Susanna to destroy the seven husbands, in introduction of this text: "Would Susanna have set out to destroy her husbands if some childhood experience had not turned her against men in general? Or was it simply her nature to want to dominate the opposite sex?" (vii). Therefore, this story is postmodern magic realist, which searches the reason of the death of Susanna's seven husbands using the magic realist device of Susanna's enigmatic power. Through this story, Bond attempts to recreate history with fragments and uncertainty. While writing *Fictional World of Ruskin Bond*, an Indian critic Amita Aggarwal uncovers the reasons for the death of Susanna's seven husbands in the story, "Susanna's Seven Husbands." She opines:

The story, "Susanna's Seven Husbands", is about a vamp of obscure traits. Susanna, the lady of seven husbands, is a cynosure of city youth. She is sought after for her wealth and beauty. The list of her wooers is quite long. Seven out of them marry her to die within the year of their matrimony. The lady is generous in her bounties, but rigorous towards her menials. Highly unpredictable Susanna becomes a prodigy of fear and fascination. Bond portrays her character on three possible lines- first, she kills her husband for some better childhood impression that prompt her to dominate the opposite sex, second, it is simply her nature to hunt for new adventures, third, sheer chance is responsible ultimately for the death in succession. But for the people of her town, she is an enigma, a lady of supernatural power.

(105)

Aggarwal brings forward the view of Ruskin Bond regarding multiple versions of truth and reality. For the eyes of society, Susanna is an enigma, which is the single truth of history, but Bond does not agree with the fact and pinpoints the three possible reasons regarding the death of her husbands.

One possible reason is the childhood experience of Susanna who may be the victim of domination and exploitation by the male. Therefore, she may revenge to dominate the male or opposite sex and it may be the explosion of her ego. Otherwise, why does she finish all of her husbands? Taking the life of her husbands one by another may be the rebellious action to take revenge from the male. Another possible reason for Bond is the Susanna's nature to hunt for new adventure. People have different choices and they may fulfill their quest in different ways. Susanna may be the same who might have used her beauty and wealth to finish the fortune hunters. Why to blame Susanna only, her all husbands are aware of her habit but follow her wealth, beauty and prosperity. They are not innocent but possess her to make their future getting her wealth and to consume her beauty. Thirdly, in each incident of death, there are sheer chances like drinking much alcohol, shooting oneself, beaten by cobra and attacked by bandits and so on. So, why can we centralize Susanna for the cause of her husbands' death? So, postmodern version of magic realism searches for the multiple truths and brings the supernatural elements to justify the reason.

"Susanna's Seven Husbands" is the story set in non-western culture, which is influenced by western culture. In non-western society, women do not have more than one husbands but in western culture, women are free for remarriage. This story hybridizes two cultures because Susanna marries seven husbands. Susanna can also be compared with Draupadi of *Mahabharata* who is married to five husbands, called Pandava.

The story has so many magical elements like several deaths and hauntings, with the references of evil spirits. In Indian society, the psychology of people is guided by magic, ghost and haunting. In "Susanna's Seven Husbands" Bond simultaneously provides the double reasons for the death of each of Susanna's seven husbands; firstly, the sheer chance

and secondly, the enigmatic power of Susanna which justifies the oxymoron, magic realism. Her first husband dies because of heavy drinking but this reality is mingled with Susanna's garden having datura bushes and Belladonna, which take his life. A drunken husband is burdensome for her and she is anxious to replace him. The second husband is drowned in tank but he is beaten by her and made half-dead before fall in. The third husband shoots himself while cleaning his rifle but it is also related to Susanna's act as the gun is already loaded without his knowledge. The fourth husband dies of cholera which is natural but Susanna is blamed for giving a good dose of arsenic.

The doctor becomes her fifth husband who proves cholera as the reason of death in death certificate. Therefore, Susanna and the doctor are suspected regarding her fourth husband's death. The magical becomes real when the doctor is bitten by cobra and dies, but the cobra does not harm Susanna: "She had a way with snakes. She did not harm them and they never attacked her" (60). Snake symbolizes the awareness, protection and spiritual guidance. Though the doctor is bitten by cobra, it does not harm Susanna which proves the spirituality of her. Susanna had good relation with them. It is also said that Susanna's vaults are occupied by a family of cobra after her death. Her sixth husband, indigo planter marries Susanna to recover his bad business and to bring good fortune. So, Susanna lavishes strong drink upon him and pours molten lead in his ear which finishes his life. The brigands kill her seventh husband but unusual happens when Susanna provides them employment in the later date. So, there also Susanna is active in finishing him.

Therefore, Susanna's enigmatic power to haunt her husbands and the sheer chance come side by side to make the story magic realist. The conversation between Bond and Naushad who lives near Susanna's house claims the reason of Susanna's hatred towards men:

'Why did she bother to marry them? Couldn't she just have had men friends?' . . . 'Not in those days, huzoor. Respectable society would not have tolerated it. Neither in India nor in the West would it have been permitted.' . . . 'She was born out of her time,' I remarked. . . . 'True, sir. And remember, most of them were fortune hunters. So we need not waste too much pity on them.' . . . 'She did not waste any.' . . . 'She was without pity. Especially when she found out what they really after. Snakes had a better chance of survival.' (59)

Susanna is presented as mysterious lady who is born out of her time in the sense, she breaks the rule of the then society, marrying seven husbands and causing them to die. Most of them are fortune hunters and they are compared with snakes because she finishes them when she finds out what they are really after rather snakes have quite better chance for survival in front of people.

The continuity of marriage and death proves this story as magic realist. Susanna's beauty and wealth makes her cynosure of all eyes, and this reality blends with magic when none of her husband's enjoys her wealth and beauty for long. After the mysterious death of her seven husbands, Susanna lives to a ripe old age being generous to open orphanages, schools, institution and home for widows. So, how can be Susanna a 'bad omen'? She dies peacefully but how do her husbands suffer a lot? It is because they are fortune hunters. She is kind and generous for many and dangerous for some. She has the supernatural power who judges wrong and right. She becomes 'a terrible beauty' in the eyes of society. Presentation of the supernatural is dominant in the story. Susanna's spirit is restless and she often visits the scenes of her former splendour. The palatial house becomes abandoned, feared, shunned and mysterious. Susanna's spirit visits driving her phaeton, riding in the garden near Rajpur Road. Her house turns to be the house of spirits: "One old and massive peepul tree grew out

of the ruins of the house, strangling it much as its owner was said to have strangled one of her dispensable paramours"(57). Peepul trees are supposed to be the residence of ghosts in Indian societies. In the story, it is compared with one of her husbands whom Susanna suffocates. Through this comparison, Bond presents Indian peoples' faith on fantasy, magic and supernatural.

People keep on seeing Susanna's spirit after her death. The surrounding on her house is haunted by malignant ghost and people suffers from snake bite. These all magical elements come to be real in the life of people. Indian people internalize faith on haunting and no one can disbelief the magic because presentation is very normal. The last paragraph of the story is the advice of the narrator, Naushad to Bond, which clarifies the belief on magic:

And after dusk, an old fashioned horse and carriage can sometimes be seen driven through the Roshanara Gardens. If you chance upon it, ignore it, my friend. Don't stop to answer any questions from the beautiful fair lady who smiles at you from behind lace curtains. She's still looking for her final victim. (62)

It is the religious belief that the body of people façade but spirit never dies and that spirit visits if its dream is not fulfilled. This superstition is rooted in non-western society like India where magic is unavoidable. So, Bond valorizes magic realism to represent the Indian cultural system and behavior.

The use of multiple narration makes this story postmodern magic realist. Bond narrates the story at the beginning and later Naushad narrates. But he is also narrated in the sense he uses the sentences: "they said" (59), "It was said . . . I am told"(60). The narration is on conversational style. The story is set in Delhi, at the Rajpur Graveyard, and Roshanara Garden. The characters of the story are extraordinary. Susanna is mysterious as having

enigmatic power and most of her husbands are fortune hunters. The story is rich in rhetorical tropes like symbol and oxymoron, 'terrible price ' and 'a painless death', which are related to magic realism to blend the opposite polar. Susanna is metaphorically compared to the "Black Widow Spider"(62), which is harmful if it is disturbed. She loves to finish all of her husbands because they come to her with selfish motif. The title "Susanna's Seven Husband" is magical because it is extraordinary to marry seven husbands by a single women in non-western society. Therefore, the title, setting, narrative technique and characters support this story to be postmodern magic realist.

"Topaz" is another supernatural story of Bond in which a girl called Hameeda comes to visit a boy after her death. It presents the transformation of soul of Hameeda who fulfills her quest after her suicide by doing engagement with the boy offering her topaz ring to his finger. Supernatural occurs in the story when the boy discovers that Hameeda is not the real girl but that is only her spirit. There is flatterer between belief and disbelief regarding the existence of Hameeda.

Magic realism is associated with fantastical writing because both use supernatural elements in the subject matter. Amaryll Chanady pinpoints the difference between the fantastic and the magic realist:

In contrast to the fantastic, the supernatural in magic realism does not disconcert the reader, and this is the fundamental difference between the two modes. The same phenomena that are portrayed as problematical by the author of a fantastic narrative are presented in a matter-of-fact manner by the magical realist. (24)

The visibility and invisibility of Hameeda in the life of narrator, the confusion between the hanged girl on the oak tree and Hameeda and Topaz in the narrator's finger are magic

elements in the story. Regarding the area of magic realism, Brenda Cooper asserts: "Magical realism attempts to capture the reality by way of a depiction of life's many dimension, seen or unseen, visible and invisible, rational and mysterious"(32). Like Cooper, Bond portrays the mysterious and extraordinary relationship of the narrator and Hameeda, one alive and another dead. By doing this, he challenges the western metaphysics who blames non-westerner for being non-scientific and illogical believing on magic and supernatural.

The transgressive power of magic realism attacks the assumption of the dominant culture and their notion of scientifically and logically determined truth. It creates the category, the magical real, crossing the border between magic and real. So, to valorize the magic realism in non western location like India, Bond merges the supernatural into reality to make magical real. The narrator in the story sees a girl hanging in the oak tree: "It was someone hanging from the tree. A rope oscillated in the breeze, the body turned slowly, turned this way and that, and I saw the face of a girl, her hair hanging loose, her eyes sightless, hands and feet limp; just turning, turning, while the watch played on" (49). The juxtaposition of the moving of hanged body and the record player together arouse fear while getting the story. The suspense increases when the narrator does not find that scene when he goes near.

The appearance and disappearance of body evokes horror and fear in the story. The story turns normally when a girl called Hameeda tells the narrator that her sister hanged on the same oak tree because of her unfulfilled love. The love relation between Hameeda and the narrator is presented normally in the story. Hameeda shares her golden topaz ring to the narrator and never meets him again. Mysterious disappearance of Hameeda again creates tension in the story. The narrator comes to know from her brother that Hameeda passed away

before many years: ". . . It is many years since she died. She killed herself. You did not hear about it? . . . But wasn't that her sister-your other sister? . . . I had only one sister-Hameeda-and she died, when I was very young. It's an old story, ask someone else about it" (54). This mysterious happens naturally in the story. Hameeda hangs herself many years ago, according to her brother which is similar to the story of Hameeda about her sister.

The narrator is convinced that Hameeda is the same girl which he sees hanging on the oak tree. The narrator, being afraid wants to collect the incidents with Hameeda as a dream but the Topaz in his finger forces it to be real: "Was it all a dream? . . . It was impossible to say. But the topaz on my hand glowed softly in the darkness. And a whisper from the forest seemed to say, It isn't time that's passing by, my friend. It is you and I . . ." (55). Hameeda vanishes but the topaz ring left by her remains with him. How can it be possible? The soul of Hameeda comes to visit him and fulfills her dream by offering her ring to him.

The narrator remains in illusion, whether to believe on real existence of Hameeda or not. If everything was dream, then how does topaz come? With the refrain of the song at the lasts, Bond tries to collect the past memories of the narrator and Hameeda. This nostalgic song evokes narrator to remember the romantic past, when they were in love. So, Hameeda's soul comes to fulfill their love. Bond brings this refrain to justify their love while collecting ferns for Hameeda:

We removed our shoes and began paddling upstream. The ravine became shadier and narrower, until the sun was almost completely shut out. The ferns grew right down to the water's edge. We bent to pick them but instead found ourselves in each other's arms; and sank slowly, as in a dream, into the soft bed of ferns, while overhead a whistling thrush burst out in dark sweet song . . . 'It isn't time that's passing by . . .' (53)

The song is magical because there is no one to sing but the narrator hears it repeatedly. It seems their reunion and 'It's you and I' means that Hameeda's spirit is convincing him about their past. So, this story is proved as magic realist where Bond presents the extraordinary supernatural which comes to be real in the life of narrator.

The title of the story, "Topaz" is magical because Hameeda's spirit shares topaz ring to the narrator. Though Hameeda vanishes offering him topaz, it remains with him. This creates suspense to both narrator and readers. So, far as the characters of the story are concerned, Hameeda is supernatural character who comes to fulfill her dream. Hameeda's soul visits narrator in two different forms; being alive and hanging on oak tree. Set in Himalayas of India, this story follows the technique of narration with conversational style. The refrain of song blends the supernatural and real, reminding the flashback of the narrator and Hameeda. The story provides the non-western cultural values that love never dies. There is reunion between the narrator and the soul of Hameeda. Love is pure and spiritual which never facade.

Bond's magic realism is associated with children's culture as he writes so many supernatural stories for children. By reading the magic realist stories, children become interpretive and they change their life positively. His stories, "The Family Ghost", "The Ghost in the Garden" and so on are produced for children, which are associated with magic realism. "The Ghost in the Garden" presents the curiosity the small boy about the neglected and hunting mango tree and the grave behind the bungalow entitled 'Rose'. "The Family Ghost" is linked up with the children's culture. It is the story told by Bibiji, the landlady who always tells the ghost stories to the children. The child's curiosity about the ghost stories and Bibiji's pleasure to tell ghost story proves this story to be connected with children literature. It

is connected with the upbringing of Indian children with magic realism which provides them strength to overcome from fear.

Magic realism in children's culture and ontological magic realism are related to each other. Ontological magic realist texts are set in cultural contexts and these come from "grandmother's method of story –telling" (Ann Bowers 93). Bibiji in "The Family Ghost" and Miss Kellner in "The Ghost in the Garden "are the representative of grandmother who narrate the supernatural stories to the children. The children understand the narrative at some interpretative level.

Magic realism provides a perfect means for children to explore the world by their imagination without losing a connection to what they recognize as the real world. The children are naturally inquisitive and want to discover the things. Regarding this, Roger Drury explains that: "a child seems positively obsessed by a need to experiment with ways of looking at the world, to rearranging place and time, to challenge the stable and predictable from of experience" (180). The curious children can explore the disruption in their ordinary world and resolving the unusual, they restore the normality.

In one of Bond's stories, "The Family Ghost", the small child is always curious to hear the ghost stories and wants to discover the magical world. It is clear from the beginning of the story: "Now tell us a ghost story, I told Bibiji, my landlady, evening ... There must have been at least one ghost in your village.'Oh, there were many, said Bibiji, who never fired of telling us weird tales. Wicked churels and mischievous pretts" ( 86). The child here is eager to know the magical events one after another. While Bibiji is telling the story, he kept on making the question to fill his curiosity. He desires to know each unusual event and observes the magical world. The conversation between Bibiji and the child show that the child always asks her to

tell ghost stories and she keeps on telling. When Babiji tells the residence of mujia in peepal tree, the child's inquiries the reason. This shows that, magic realism links with children culture.

By knowing magic realist world, the children can transform their life combating the negative aspects of their lives. The magical stories provide them by commentary on real political situation and give the moral lesson. Ruskin Bond's stories make the children strong to face the danger by avoiding the fear. Children develop themselves intellectually and become interpreter. In "The Ghost in the Garden", the narrator as a small boy is very curious to know about the neglected mango tree in the orchard, which never gives fruits and nobody goes near it, saying it is unlucky. The child secretly goes near it to know the fact. Actually, his grandmother, Rose hanged herself on the tree but he is unaware of that. Her suicide is the reality and the haunting of mango tree is supernatural. Though the child is unaware of supernatural, he is haunted:

It had been a hot day, but presently I began to feel cold; and then I found myself shivering, as though a fever had suddenly come on. I looked up into the tree, and the branch above me was moving, swaying slightly, although there was no breeze and all the other lives and branches were still . . . I felt I had to get out of the cold, but I found it difficult to get up. So I crawled across the grass on my hands and knees, until I was in the bright sunlight. (29)

Here, the supernatural occurs in the life of a small boy. Why cannot we accept it? The child is innocent about magic but he suffers. The branch, in which Rose commits suicide, is moving but others are motionless. So, ghost and haunting are not only the belief but reality in the life of Indian people.

The child's curiosity is further presented in the story that, he finds the grave of the Rose, not in the cemetery but in a lonely place. He himself guesses about Rose's suicide and asks with old tenant Miss Kellner: "What happened? . . . Oh, you are a trying boy. Why must you know everything? . . . It's better than not knowing . . . Are you sure? Sometimes it's better not to know . . . Sometimes, may be . . . But I like to know" (32). The child raises series of question because he wants to know the magic of Rose and mango tree. His insisting nature is presented by his act of question: "Who is Rose?"(32), "How did Rose committed suicide?"(33), "Why hadn't she been interred beside her kith and kins? Had she wished it so? And Why"(31)? He makes Miss Kellner to answer his entire question though she is reluctant. He is not afraid with supernatural but loves Rose and puts a rose flower on her grave.

Children are friendly with the ghost in the sense the child is not afraid of when Rose appears in his room smiling while he is playing piano of her time. The magic becomes acceptable and real when the child finds the wet rose flower in his pillow. From where does the rose flower come? In the dream too, the child sees Rose dancing on the garden full of dew that comes true when he feels the rose is moist with dew. The child draws the conclusion that Rose offers him a wet rose on his pillow. The children are interpretive and judgmental. They explore the unusual world and highlights the neglected things in the story the child is curious to find new things:

As a boy I was always exploring lonely places- neglected gardens and orchards, unoccupied houses, patches of scrub or wasteland, the fields outside the town, the fringes of the forest. On one of my rambles behind the bungalow, I pushed my way through a thicket of lantana bushes and stumbled over a thick stone slab . . . I looked more closely at the stone slab and was surprised to find that it was a gravestone. (30)

The narrator as a boy is very curious to explore the new things. He visits the neglected areas to find the mystery. This shows that children are interpretative about the uncommon and strange things. The narrator finds the gravestone of Rose and searches the history of her suicide.

In *When Darkness Falls and Other Stories*, Bond waves the elements of supernatural. In the age of science and technology, it is difficult to accept the ghost, haunting and magic because science is factual but magic realism breaks the factual truth of science and assumes the multiple truths. In non-western societies, magical events occur in everyday life. Bond portrays the Indian cultural system and behavior through the device magic realism. For that, he blends the supernatural occurrence with the reality of people. In this story collection, he provides the experiences of common Indian people who face the ghost, haunting, jinn, macabre. The readers can accept the magic of Bonds stories because supernatural is tied with the reality and becomes magical real.

Bond highlights superstition and supernaturalism through the different examples and experiences. He celebrates the non-western qualities of believing on magic. In Indian society, people have a concept of magic, they keep seeing ghost and their normal behavior are attached with ghost and haunting. Being Indian writer, Bond uses magic and supernaturalism in his subject matter. He makes the supernatural appear entirely natural, and therefore they become harder to ignore. Bond himself cannot be far from ghost and haunting. Once, he famously remarks that while he does not believe in ghost, he sees them all the time. In the introduction of one of his collection of ghost stories, *A Season of Ghosts*, he asserts his attachment with ghost:

Sir, do you believe in ghost? Asked a young student from New Delhi school . . . I answered in all honestly, "well I don't believe in them. But I keep seeing them." Seeing, they say, is believing, but I am not sure. You can see a magician or conjurer . . . cut a man in half, but you will believe what you see only if he fails to put the two halves together again. (vii)

In Indian societies, people keep on seeing ghosts. If ghosts do not exist, than how does the faith and concept of ghost come? If it is just faith, why do all people believe on ghosts?

People either from city or from village, educated or uneducated, male or female, young or old all believe on ghosts. So that, magic realism is not fake but the cultural identification in non-western societies.

Bond's magic realism is mainly associated with woman. In most of his stories, magical happenings occur from the side of women. The soul of female characters comes to visit their male partners. In "Return of the White pigeon", the colonel's wife comes to visit her husband in the form of white pigeon after her death. In "Topaz", the girl who had committed suicide hanging on the oak tree appears to share her love with the boy and vanishes after offering a ring to him. This shows her fulfillment of quest after her death.

The story, "The Ghost in the Garden" portrays the visitation of the soul of Rose who hangs herself on a mango tree. The narrator, after knowing the fact, sympathize Rose and offer a rose flower on the grave. He also plays the music of her time and as a result, her ghostly appearance comes happily to his room. In the story, "Susanna's Seven Husbands", Susanna is presented as having enigmatic power who happens to kill each of her seven husbands with various reason. All of her husbands die with different cases but the cause of their death is Susanna's supernatural power in the eyes of the society. In "When Darkness Falls", there is no ghost in the mind of the readers because Markham's ghostly appearance is

reality of him. So, the readers sympathize him but the same figure of Markham becomes ghost for Mrs. Khanna because she is unaware about the existence of Markham in the basement of her empire hotel. She suspects him as a ghost, which takes the life of her, Markham and the old empire hotel.

In his short stories, Ruskin Bond presents the victimization of the characters with various ordeals in their life and conveys the reality of Indian people and their cultural practices through the technique of magic realism. Though the westerners blame Indian people for being traditional and superstitious to belief on magic and ghost, which are totally fake, Bond breaks their ideas and highlights the magic realist tradition of India which cannot go ahead without magical happenings. He portrays the day-to-day life of Indian people and their encounter with ghost and haunting. Bond's magic realism critiques the single version of scientific truth and clarifies the multiple versions of magic realism by juxtaposing reality with magic.

### III. The Politics of Magic Realism in Bond's Selected Short Stories

In the selected stories from *When Darkness Falls and Other Stories*, Bond uses the technique of magic realism to blur the contradictory elements like real and fantastic, natural and supernatural, historical and fictional, the past and the present, life and death and so on. By doing this, he portrays the victimization of the characters to justify the Indian culture and tradition which has belief in magic, ghost, mystery, uncanny and supernatural. Bond, in his stories, challenges the western philosophy that expresses disbelief towards magic and super nature and blames non-westerners for being superstitious and traditional. By neglecting the scientific assertion of fixed reality, he valorizes the non-western phenomenon of magic realism, showing the interconnectedness of magical happening to day to day life. With various evidences of magic elements like dream, forecasting, suspense, horror, mystery, haunting, charms and spells, which come true in reality of common people, Bond justifies the belief in magic realism in Indian societies. These sorts of blending of magic with real is reflected in his stories, in setting, characterization, incident, and contextual situation.

Bond's stories explain the magical elements as normal occurrence, presented in straight forward manner that places the real and fantastic in the same stream of thoughts. In the reading experience, the readers follow the narration accepting both realistic and magical perspectives of reality. The stories trace the encounter of human subject with the mysterious and horrifying supernatural experiences. The story, "Topaz" presents the relationship between lived one and death one. Hameeda shares her ring to the narrator after her death.

"Susanna's Seven Husbands" presents the mysterious death of the seven husbands of Susanna by the enigmatic power of her. The postmodern magic realism searches the multiple reasons of death of Susanna's seven husbands. Though the society blames Susanna for each

of her husband's death, there may be multiple causes in the sense there is a sheer chance in each and every death incident. The story "When Darkness Falls" is analyzed from a postcolonial magic realist perspective. It hybridizes the two cultures; western and non-western. Markham is disfigured in the war which signifies the distortion of non-western societies because of colonialism and political invasion.

Bond's magic realism is associated to children's culture. His narration is based on the grandparent's method of storytelling. His stories, "The Ghost in the Garden" and "The Family Ghost" are magic realist in which Miss Kellner and Bibiji tell the story to children respectively. Bond presents the children's curiosity to find the magic, mystery, neglected areas, uncommon incidents and so on. They observe the magical world and interpret it differently. Therefore, Bond portrays the upbringing of children of Indian people who are more interpretative and less frightened because of the knowledge of magic and supernatural.

Some of Bond's stories are ontological magic realist, which are based on the context in which the text is set. As ontological magic realism focuses on shape changing of the characters, Bond's characters change their shape at will. In magic realism, dream, foretelling, prophecy, charms and spells come true which are presented in the stories "Return of the White Pigeon" and "The Family Ghost". The continuation of love after death is possible in "Return of the White Pigeon". Here, Bond valorizes non-westerners who are pure, devoted and faithful in love, marriage and spirituality even after death. In "The Family Ghost", the charms and spells of an idiot in the form of a sadhu cure the two girls who are not cured by any other scientific treatment.

In Bond's magic realism, we find the transformation of the common and everyday things into awesome and unreal. It is predominantly an art of surprise, where the unreal

happens as the part of reality. The blending of magic with the real is reflected basically in characters, incidents, setting and title of the stories. The use of narrative technique of the text helps to create a magical effect mixing realistic details with fantastic one. The narrative follows conversational style, which is descriptive and rich in details. The use of first person makes the stories more personal which helps to blend magical with the real. All of the stories are set in different parts of India. The supernatural and haunting incidents seem real and believable.

To sum up, Ruskin Bond's stories are magic realist, which presents the realistic vision of life of Indian people with different ordeals, mixing with magic and fantasy. He challenges the western view that disregards non-western tradition for being superstitious and supernatural. He celebrates the non-western culture of India where magical happenings are parts of the cultural identification. Characters of Bond's stories suffer a lot with different problems in their life. So, magic realism analyses how and why people are victimized. Bond blends the real experience of Indian people with magic, supernaturalism, ghostly visitation, beliefs, spirits and so on. By doing so, he criticizes the singular version of reality of science and allows the multiple truths through the technique magic realism.

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