

**COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE POEMS OF BHARATHIDASAN AND
RUSKIN BOND**

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Abstract

Comparison is an act of comparing or the process of being compared. It is an estimate of similarities and differences. Comparative literature is the laboratory or workshop of literary stories, and through them, of the humanities. Comparative literature compares literatures not only as accumulations of primary works, but as the languages, cultures histories, traditions, theories and practices with which those works come”(Roland Greene, “Their Generation, “Comparative Literature in the Age of Multi Culturalism” 1995). In comparison, any two texts can be compared. In comparison works, there are sufficient basis for comparison, that is, a strong number of similarities, which allow us to isolate particular striking, revealing and informing epiphany and untranslatable differences. These differences are the product of language, culture, history, environment and an evolution of art forms and the talents and experiences of individual artists.

The poems of Bharathidasan and Ruskin Bond have been taken for this comparative study. Both have written poems on love, humanism, hope and nature with the smell of the soil. While Bharathidasan reflects south Indian flavor, Ruskin Bond portrays the mountain with its different colours of trees, water, ponds, waterfalls, flowers, bird and insects of northern hill where he still lives. Both are common in their human concern and in their optimistic outlook. They show their regard for nature. Their poems are simple and brief in style but enriched with universality of truth. These poems are pleasurable for reading as well as evocative. The images both handle are mostly drawn from nature

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Bharathidasan was a twentieth century Tamil poet and a rationalist. His literary works handled mostly socio-political issues. In addition to poetry, he has written plays, film scripts, short stories and essays. He was influenced by Bharathi, after whom he called himself ‘Bharathidasan’. He remained a prolific writer until he died. Bharathidasan penned his works under different pseudonyms such as Paavendar, Pudukalaimakal, Desabhaktan. He was a staunch follower of Anti-Brahmanism. He talked of Tamil Race and Aryan Race in his writings. Former Head, Dept of English, Bharathidasan University said; Bharathidasan’s poetry democratized beauty by seeing the extra ordinary in the ordinary. He was a materialistic poet whose imagery was a mix of the abstract and a very physical reality.

Nature is a favourite subject of Bharathidasan. One can observe it through his description of a waterfall. He captured the beauty of a waterfall dazzling in the morning sun. He described a waterfall as a diamond necklace (Vayirathongal). Our mind’s eye can visualize a waterfall flowing from a majestic mountain in the morning hours as a diamond necklace that dazzling on the chest of a beautiful woman in a well-lit room. One can see the remarkable similarities. In the crystal clear unpolluted water falls off the mountain, sunlight dances on it reflecting all the colors of a rainbow. In the same manner light reflects on the diamond crystals of the necklace dazzling the onlookers. Just two words reflect such elaboration that was Bharathidasan(*Tamil Tribune* December 2001 (ID.2001-12-02)).

Bharathidasan gave us a rich collection of long and short poems. His works evoke the vision of an ideal, casteless and classless society and free individual. His poems are very powerful, glorifying the toil of the masses, the beauties of Tamil language and the splendor of South Indian nature. Four anthologies of his poem are *AlaginSirippu*, *KudumbaVilakku*, *PandianParisu* and *CheraThandavam*.

His love for nature is expressed in a fresh and conventional way in *AlaginSirippu*. Tamil is his religion. He looks on Tamil from the universal point of view and calls her Mother. His constant themes are love, place of women, Tamil, Tamilians, Children and Democracy. In his poems he introduces the labour, the weaver and the workers. His poems are on humanism and cosmic dance of nature.

Ruskin Bond is a living legend who portrays life and experiences through various genres of literature. Settled down in Mussoorie, Ruskin Bond occupies an outstanding position among the contemporary Indian English writers. He displays maturity, human life and sophistication. His creative works comprise boy and girl, man and woman, bazaar and shop, hill and plain, the tree and forest. Most of his works are set against the backdrop of Garhwal Himalaya, the land of majestic beauty of nature.

It is an attempt to bring out the similarities of outlook in their poems. Bharathidasan's poems collection 'AlaginSirippu' expresses his love for nature. Some poems have been dealt in this research paper from *BharathidasanKavithaihal* and Ruskin Bond's *Book of Verse* for this comparative study.

Bharathidasan has described the beauty of the dance of peacock in the background of the fields. He compares it with the beauty of women in the poem "Mayil" (*Bharathidasan Kavithaihal*.48). For Bond, the image of firefly renders the mood of being with his lady love. He invites its presence by keeping his window open always. In "Firefly in My Room" (*Book of Verse*.27) In "SirithaMullai" – 'Smiling flowers' Bharathidasan enjoys the cool breeze and the scented smell of it through the Mullai flowers. It looks as if the flower plant is smiling by the touch of the breeze (*BharathidasanKavithaihal* 49). The dandelion renders happiness to the poet in "Dandelion" (35). It is a common weed and the flower is the cheerful one. He increased the value of it that it is divinely made. It gives delight in sunshine, in shade, in wind and in rain. Both writers bring the readers close to the atmosphere through their poems.

Bharathidasan's "UdayaSuryan" (*BharathidasanKavithaihal*49) pictures the resting sun with tender red hands which vanishes the darkness prevailed in the night time. It awakens the world from the slumber and spreads its lights on high mountains, green fields, and streams and fills the heart of people with joy. The sun shatters the door of darkness. The poet thanks the sun of its dominance and supremacy. The rising sun is a replica of the optimistic view of the poets.

The same positive attitude is reflected in Bond's "Don't Be Afraid of the Dark" *Book of Verse* (57). It is the time when the earth must rest and the day is done. The night with moonlight and stars pacifies the tired souls. The poet wants the people to be friend with night where the world is at peace.

The poem "Kaadu" (*BharathidasanKavithaihal* 50) 'wilderness' where Bharathidasan describes typical South Indian forest with bushes, plants, neem and banyan trees, brittle, insects like spider, birds and animals tiger, wild bores and snakes. The poet enjoys the sight and tastes the honey from the beehive and tender coconut water. "Chittu"- 'Sparrow' renders the love of two sparrows in the coconut and punnai trees. "Anil"- 'squirrel' is yet another poem projects the deep and romantic love of the squirrel couples. Bharathidasan explicates the tender love through the images of 'Chittu' and 'Anil' (*BharathidasanKavithaihal*51). Bond's love poems beautify the love of whistling – thrush, a black bird in the forest who sang of its love in the trembling air. The poet thinks of his lady love and the time he spent with her. Just as the lover is visited by his lady love the tree is visited by masked mynas, robber bands and yellow birds for one cherry fruit. Cherry tree can grow in the Himalayan foothills in a rough and stony ground. In Bond's love poems, lovers are making love, they felt that the world swings round, the sky spins, the trees go hush and the mountain sings. In that environment the lovers are trapped. "It Isn't Time That's Passing" (*Book of Verse*3) and "Love Lyrics for Binya Devi" (*Book of Verse*4). Bharathidasan fantastically presents a picture of sky and the rain in "VaenumMullaiyum"

(*BharathidasanKavithaihal*54). Thousands of lights lightened the earth. These lights went off and the sky became dark followed by the thunder and lightning. On the other side looking at the rainbow, the peacock was dancing by watching the pearly rain drop from the cloudy sky. The earth has worn the garments of sky and bristled. The scene brings the union of the sky and earth and ponders joy in the heart of people says Bharathidasan.

In “Tamil Unavu” (*BharathidasanKavithaihal* 74) Paventhar portrays the wonder of nature when one rests on the banks of the river. The scene refreshes him. The wind, the moonlight through the trees, silent song of birds and the sky studded with moon and stars decorate the river beds. He remembers his lover ‘Anajalai’. He ends the poem with praising and glorifying the Tamil language.

Ruskin Bond too describes the natural landscape in “So Beautiful the Night” (*Book ofVerse*21). Where Porcupines come out of their burrows, the night – jar calls tonk – tonk, the timid owl peeps out of his hole in the tree trunk, insects crawl out in thousands. He is watching the star. The trees are stretching their arms in the dark and whispering to the moon. What a wonderful sight it would be and the armies of pines and firs and oaks are marching over the moon lit mountains.

Both Bharathidasan and Bond contribute their insights about the place they believe that they belong. It shows their nativity and the love of the land and the environment they live in.

Bharathidasan’s “IyarkaiSelvam” “VaanamBaadi” “Adhikalai” “Kaalai” “Maalai” and “Thendral” and “NilavuSirithadhu” reflect his passion for nature and Tamilnadu. Bharathidasan has shown his unshakable faith in the ancient Tamil culture, the glory of Tamil language with pride and enthusiasm in his poems. Tamil, Tamil Nadu and Tamil culture are Bharathidasan’s life giving forces.

Some poems of Bharathidasan are examples of the poet’s humanism and universal outlook. The poet belongs not merely to the Tamils but to all humanity.

“Come, let us destroy this warring world
Blowing it off like chaff before storm
And blind superstitions
And create a world a fresh
And call it the world of self – respect
Fail not to see this, O society
We have laid out the path for you
Who else is there for you to do
But march ahead, ahead... a head”

Bond’s poems are also replica of humanism and optimism in outlook. Poems like “Walk Tall” “Raindrop” “Rain in the Hills” “Silent Birth” “Rain” “The Owl” “The Snail” Butterfly Time, “Night Thoughts” represent Bond’s humanism and optimism of life.

In “Hold on to Your Dreams” Bond exhorts all those who have a dream to follow, to go the whole log, and not abandon the ship in mid-ocean. Advance and never halt, and never fear the thorns in the path, is the theme of this poem. In “Raindrop” the ego of human beings is misplaced. All of put together can never approach, let alone equal, the majesty of God. Realizing this, a man should always remain humble, is the message of the poem.

“This leaf so complete in itself
Is only part of a tree

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And this tree so complete in itself
Is only part of the mountain
And the mountains run down to the sea
And the Sea, so complete in itself
Rest like a rain drop
In the hand of God”(*Book of Verse. 19*)

The poem “Walk Tall” (*Book of Verse 23*) is inspiring one and it imparts the age – old wisdom ‘Know thyself’. Bond expresses himself just as he feels.

Azhahin Sirippu one of the best literatures of Paventhar Bharathidasan deals with nature. He expresses the beauty and the majesty of earth in ‘The Mother’s Majesty’

“Whichever side the eye turns to
It sees but the Mother’s Majesty,
Seven foaming seas clothe Her form divine
Scores of worlds which will roll in boundless space
Are tiny balls in Her playful hands”.

Bharathidasan insists on the unity and the harmony of people in “The World is Yours”

“Lift up thy face
Twist up thy world with thine
Wakeful eyes
Sound thy heart in joyous laughter
Lead the world
Pull down the walls that stand between
Thine house and thy neighbours’
Remove the curtain that
Separates street from street,
Break all barriers and
Bring all nations together
Onward go, upward go
Make thine ascent up the mounts
That touch the skies”

There are many similarities between Bharathidasan and Ruskin Bond in their perception of natural world around them. They portray nature as ‘Mother nature’ and they have regard and respect for the environment and the insects and animals living there. They celebrate the love of human being through the images of birds, squirrels. They strengthen the readers through their optimistic view of life in their poems. These poems mirror nature, love, harmony, unity and peace on earth. The poems pay tribute to their mother land and they parade their deeply rooted sense of belongingness and universality.

Bharathidasan poems deal with many social issues like child education, freedom, patriotism, superstitious belief, child marriage, suppression of women in society. Ruskin Bond differs here. His poems do not insist on any social or political problems. He writes poem because it is his first love. He puts down his thoughts, feelings and observations into verse form with the emphasis on Love, Nature, Childhood and Humour. Nature is his religion. Ruskin Bond worships, adores and loves it. That shows his much concern for the environment. In this aspect he too deals with the social aspect of protecting the wealth of the Mother Nature.



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