



Beyond the Third Space: Subverting the Colonial Dichotomy in Ruskin Bond's *The Room on the Roof*

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Abstract: “Beyond the Third Space: Subverting the Colonial Dichotomy in Ruskin Bond’s *The Room on the Roof*” portrays the cultural hybridity of the colonizer settler community through this novel, based on the theory of ‘Hybridity’ introduced by Homi K. Bhabha, by analyzing the behavior, events and characters related to Rusty, the protagonist of the novel and by throwing light to the life of Ruskin Bond. It also points to the idea that there is a sphere outside the intermediary condition or the ‘third-space’ of cultural hybridity. The introductory part provides a brief account of the notion of culture with reference to the colonizer and colonized in the post colonial framework, the life and works of Ruskin Bond and points to the idea that there exists a space of emancipation outside the third space.

The main chapter Deconstructing the Polarity describes in detail the intermediary condition of hybridity and the third space focusing on Rusty and the characters and events of the novel related to him. It also points out that the emancipation from the third space of cultural hybridity is possible, where the immigrant finds the wake of a new identity and freedom from the dilemma of hybridity. The conclusion summarizes the arguments put forward in the main chapter and discusses hybridity, dilemma of hybridity and the escape from it. This article, thus concludes that the escape from the dilemma of the third space of hybridity is possible and being an Indian does not depend on one’s place of birth or genealogical roots.

Introduction:

Within postcolonial literature, the area of Anglo Indian Literature as a whole is largely neglected. The most common feature of the Anglo Indian novel is a prevalent conflict of being tugged between two cultures. One is exposed to both the cultures and the result will be an intermingled and manifold culture rather than a pure and holistic culture handed down from generation to generation. The subject is confused about the real roots of culture. This condition or process is described by the famous postcolonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha as ‘hybridization’.



This ‘cultural hybridization’ was the problem of many a people in the post-independence period and some of them have done a great favor to their readers as well as to India by writing down their feelings and their experiences in different forms.

“Culture is . . . used to refer to individual style or character, to a stage of artistic or intellectual development, to the expressive life and traditions of a social group, to a social-historical moment or a broad epoch” (Brooker 750).

Culture has a powerful, active, shaping influence upon ideas, attitudes and experiences. Understanding culture within a post-colonial framework is thus very important. Westerners are often convinced that they greatly affected the ‘natives’ but a situation just contrary or opposite was unthinkable for them. It is in this context that the ideas of Homi K. Bhabha become relevant. According to him, the encounter of colonizer and colonized always affects both. Debates and discussions have often been concentrated on how the colonized is affected. The identity of the colonized is in a great deal affected by the colonized. Considering the collective experience of all the Indian settlers of British origin as a group, we could see very few individuals who have been deeply affected by the native land and culture and clung onto it with full love and affection even after the colonial period. It often results in the creation of a hybrid identity; an unfixed, unstable condition. This ‘cultural hybridization’ is often a topic of discussion but the resolution of this ‘third space existence’ is a reality which has been and is being neglected. It leads the readers to beautiful vistas and often breaks many a false pretension related to colonizer and colonized. An Indian writer, in whose works this conflict is a recurring presence is ‘Ruskin Bond’, the writer of the hills. His own life has been through a deep cultural mingling and hybridism. Taking a deep dive into his life and works helps us know this dilemma in detail. Deeply influenced by his own experiences, Bond’s work centers around the life and experiences related to Dehradun and Himalaya valley towns nearby. ‘Rusty’ is a character who appears in a great number of his works, who is indeed a manifestation of the writer’s own childhood. The cultural dilemma and hybridity that Bond faced during his childhood is well expressed through the characters of Rusty, and very vividly and powerfully portrayed in his first novel *The Room on the Roof*.



The Room on the Roof is the story of an adolescent written by an adolescent. The main characters of the novel are Rusty, Mr. John Harrison, Mrs. Harrison, Kishen, Mrs. Meena Kapoor, Mr. Kapoor, Somi, Ranbir, Suri and Prickly Heat. This novel is about a sixteen year old boy named rusty who is left with no real family after the death of his parents. He lives thereafter, with his guardian- Mr. Harrison, with whom and in whose household Rusty never feels at home. He is going through a lot of troublesome experiences and emotions. He is forcefully tied to the strict rules imposed by Mr. Harrison, and unwillingly obeys them out of the fear of being caned. He doesn't have any friends either. Mr. John never lets Rusty go near the Indian bazaar which is dirty and non-approachable to Westerners like him. But Rusty craves to go there. This novel is rich with real persons and events from Ruskin Bond's life and is thereby autobiographical. The order of incidents and sequence of events is rearranged as part of the 'novelization'. So, a deep look into this book helps us understand the 'cultural hybridization' and its aftereffects on a minority of Western settlers of India.

Cultural conflict, hybridity and the resulting identity crisis is a strong element of *The Room on the Roof*. This project aims to identify the cultural hybridity of the colonizer settler community through this novel, by throwing light to the life of Ruskin Bond and also analyzes the behavior of characters and the events presented in the novel. It thereby points to the idea that there is a sphere outside the intermediary condition or 'the third space' of hybridity created by interaction of two cultures where the immigrant finds the wake of a new identity and emancipation from this hybrid dilemma.

Deconstructing the Polarity:

“. . . and he said I was his first British friend. I told him I wasn't British, I had been born in India, where my family and I had always lived . . . So I was his first Anglo-Indian friend, he said. Even back then, I didn't feel strongly enough about it to object" (Lone Fox Dancing 132).

In postcolonial literatures, the condition of the colonizer and the colonized is the main issue of concern. Often, more importance is given to the mental as well as physical condition of the colonized.



“It focuses on the cultural displacements- and its consequences for personal and communal identities- that inevitably followed colonial conquest and rule and it does so from a non-Eurocentric perspective” (Bertens 200).

Discussing the condition of the colonized without referring to the colonizer is impossible. But the depictions of the colonizer community have often been highlighting the cruel and authoritative power they exerted upon Indians. This is very true, but at the same time there is also a section of the colonizer community who lived in our country after the colonial period, either adapting to our culture and system or shuttling between both our cultures. Theories have been put forward regarding the cultural influence of the colonizer over colonized. The dilemma between both and the cultural influence in the other way around- ‘of the colonized on the colonizer’- are very important. The former one is described by the famous theorist Homi K. Bhabha with the term ‘hybridity’. “Hybridity expresses a state of ‘in-betweenness’ as in a person who stands between two cultures” (Simon 750). So, it is a cultural hybridization. This dilemmatic condition is present in the childhood and works of Ruskin Bond. The protagonist of the novel *The Room on the Roof* underwent the same dilemma until he makes a firm decision.

“For Bhabha, the encounter of colonizer and colonized always affects both. Colonialism . . . is such a radically unsettling affective experience of marginality . . . but the colonial experience also affects the colonizer” (Bertens 207).

Both these observations- the hybrid space and the ‘affective experience of marginality’-, thus presents a new picture altogether.

In the novel *The Room on the Roof*, Rusty is brought up by his guardian within the Indian territory making sure and constantly convincing himself that the boy never experiences the real India or Indian lifestyle. Rusty is wrapped up in a cocoon of Indian culture and his craving to know the life outside is forcefully suppressed.

He doesn’t feel attached strongly to both the Western and eastern territories. Neither has he yet found his real orientations nor is he prejudiced like his guardian to undervalue east and boast about England. This is a condition of an ambivalent existence in a hybrid third space- ‘a space without places’. He doesn’t feel committed to both the cultures in the initial stage.



There are two ironical situations in Chapter II where the writer speaks about the Indian bazaar.

“India started a mile away, where the bazaar began. To Rusty, the bazaar sounded a fascinating place . . .but it was a forbidden place- ‘full of thieves and germs’ said the missionary’s wife- and the boy never entered it, save in his dreams... they did not speak of such places, they chose not to think about them” (Bond 12).

In his heart, he always had an affection and attraction to the Indian life, streets and colors. The more he was restricted, the more he wanted to know and live the Indian life. This shows one side of his cultural orientation. Another instance is the character of a sweeper boy, the so-called ‘untouchable’.

“Apart from Rusty, the only boy in the European community of Dehra was this sweeper boy, the low-caste untouchable, the cleaner of pots. But the two seldom spoke to each other, one was a servant and the other a sahib and anyway, muttered Rusty to himself, playing with the sweeper boy would be unhygienic . . .” (11).

Also, in Chapter IV, when Rusty is beaten by Mr. Harrison for visiting the Indian bazaar with Somi and other friends, the sweeper boy comes and sympathizes with him but he is hurt and frightened by Rusty. He never intended to do so but he was never used to behave to the sweeper boy in other ways. This feeling of hierarchical superiority can be seen as a colonial trait.

In chapter II there is a situation: “. . . Rusty often wondered: with whom, then, could the sweeper boy play?” (11). This is an evidence of the humanity and sympathy in Rusty’s mind. The other ironical situation occurs when he makes the much awaited bazaar visit. There is a prejudice preventing him from easily mingling with the boys of the bazaar. Though, he feels very lost when he couldn’t join their conversation in Punjabi.

“. . . the boy could feel nothing for these people [beggars]; perhaps it was because they were no longer recognizable as humans or because he could not see himself in the same circumstances” (20).

He loves the street but finds some difficulty to adjust and mingle. He is reluctant to be with the sweeper boy but there is a specimen his heart to think about and sympathize with him.



This is a condition ‘in-between’ two cultures- a hybrid space. Hybridity occurs after the interaction of two cultures resulting in the formation of a third space- a new culture. A crossing of the cultures happens:

The stairwell as luminal space, in-between the designations of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white. The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from setting into primordial polarities. This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertained difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy. (Bhabha 5)

This hybrid existence is the realization of a new culture. Rusty, however, finds comfort and solace near everything that binds him to the Indian life. Rusty was afraid of his guardian and the life with him was not at all interesting. According to Rusty,

“On the other side of the Clock Tower lay the bazaar, and in the bazaar lay India. On the other side of the Clock Tower began life itself. All three- the bazaar and India and life itself- were forbidden” (Bond 18).

His definition of line was India or for him, India was his real life. This ‘new-found reality’ was really a heaven for him. The more he interacted with the bazaar, village and the boys of the town, the faster his ties with England and his Western life loosened:

“Well, my guardian is very strict’, said Rusty. He wanted to bring me up in English ways, and he has succeeded . . . ‘Till now’, said Somi and laughed . . .” (27).

According to his guardian, they don’t belong to India, Indian life or bazaar. For Rusty, his life is India itself. Therefore, how could his life not belong to him or the other way around? He receives all these comments when he was excited in his mind about his new-found reality; India. Soon after, he goes again to the bazaar. Ranbir came early morning outside Rusty’s house to pick Rusty to the bazaar for Holi celebrations. He was beating his drum and “The sound conveyed something to Rusty, something wild and emotional, something that belonged to his dream world, and on a sudden impulse he sprang out of bed” (36).



Even though they feel not belonged to both the cultures, they would remain here if they had a choice. This is not the voice of the majority. Most of the British settlers left India soon after the World War II and last years of it and very few foreigners have lived here without ‘Mr. Harrison mindset’.

According to Mr. Harrison, after he saw Rusty bathed in colors and clothes torn and stained with paint, the only English thing about him was his parents. It is the first instance where we see the anger of Harrison and rage and aggressiveness of Rusty in the zenith. Instead of bearing the cane beats silently, he protested by attacking back. It is the first instance where we see the self assertion and confidence in Rusty. That night he goes out of that house forever and breaks a number of suffocating rules and restrictions that bound him.

He never gave his decision a second thought. He was confined and frightened at the darkness around him, loneliness and the vast empty space. The loneliness made him realize that he is unhappy. He had no place to go, to sleep or to stay. His guardian’s house was not a home and there were not any friends or acquaintances nearby that time. “Madness and freedom and violence were new to him: loneliness was familiar, something he understood” (51). This shows his identity crisis. He felt afraid at his new reality, but also affirmed again and again to him that he is not going back to the old life. But at times of utter helplessness and self pity, he doubts his decision. In the cold night, he slept hardly and survived that he could find comfort and solace from his best friends. His real Indian life begins the next day. Tormented by hunger and pain, he walked through the street watching the morning life of people: children bathing, women collecting water in pots . . . His legs took him outside the ‘chatt shop’ and he saw his hope – Somi – who becomes his support and shelter thereafter.

Somi’s extended hand of welcome was a great relief for Rusty. After being freely exposed to the Indian life, he is also confronted by a task to take responsibility of himself, to look after himself. Everything Rusty encounters hereafter plays a great role in the formation of his character. They gave him daily lessons on how to live. His friends, especially Somi and Ranbir embody his zest for life, and the warmth in Somi’s hospitality is also very remarkable in Rusty’s life. Ruskin Bond was influenced a lot by his Indian friends:



An informal game was in progress, the players being Hindi – speaking or rather Hindustani speaking boys from Pultan Bazaar and other market areas, and one of them called out: ‘ . . . Aap khelega? ‘ I accepted the invitation and joined in the game, and soon I was a regular fixture in that little group . . . sometimes joining them the chatt or gol - gappa stall near the clock tower. And suddenly, my world had expanded a little (Lone Fox Dancing 102).

Somi even finds for Rusty a job as a private English tutor for Kishen Kapoor and Rusty comes to stay in the roof of the Kapoors’ house, the reward of his job along with food he was provided with. The room on the roof is very significant. It is not just a room but an independent space for him where there is enough freedom and comfort for him. It was a real room for him. He was starting to live the real Indian life which he always cherished in the mind. He gets very much bonded to the Kapoor family. Rusty falls in love with Meena, Kishen’s mother. He always feels that Kishen is a brother for him. His personal relationships get more length and width and also get very deep. These ties are crucial in attaching him to Indian life in that stage:

Somi was Rusty’s best friend in the same way that Ranbir was a friend, and their friendship was on a high emotional plane. But Kishen was a brother more than a friend. He loved Rusty, but without knowing or thinking or saying it, and that is the love of a brother (Bond 114).

With the conditions so favorable, Rusty could go on smoothly with his real Indian life without any conflicts. But one day, he gets shocked when Mr. and Mrs. Kapoor sets out for a journey to Delhi and meets with an accident which killed Meena much to the sorrow of Kishen and Rusty. He thinks about the meaning of life. Without even a solid identity to claim, he feels that his life is meaningless. It is the first time Rusty takes his feelings into a deeper level of thinking. Soon after the death of Mrs. Kapoor, Rusty’s loneliness gets deep. Suri and Ranbir had gone to Missouri and sooner, Kishen – though unwillingly- would leave him to go to his aunt. He starts to feel that everything he loved, and everyone who loved him was going away from him.

Loneliness and identity conflict wakes up in his mind again. He can’t understand or distinguish clearly the emotions and feelings of himself. Rusty always knew that there is a



restless and suffocating part inside him whose questions have never been answered satisfactorily. But in favorable conditions, he couldn't notice it but irrespective of the decisions he made or the inclinations he showed to one culture, he was restless again. He wanted to live in India but he was hardly able to find any external support. The pre-fixed notion of majority of British settlers in India including his guardian was that India is not their land and that England is where they belonged to. An excerpt from Ruskin bonds autobiography shows it.

A Christian from Pondicherry, Dr Heppolette was upright, honest and hardworking . . . but he was set in his thinking and his prejudice against the country of his birth. He did not think much of India or Indians . . . Both he and my aunt led a privileged existence in British India, and had left because of the loss of privilege . . . I felt that his attitude was unfair and said so . . . (*Lone Fox Dancing* 150)

This was the attitude of many British settlers in India. Dr Heppolette's attitudes irritated Bond as much as Mr. Harrison's problem troubled Rusty. Standing within a whole community with an independent, different and opposing viewpoint, Rusty assured himself that he is an Indian and put it into practice too. Even though in dressing and language he was not able to completely merge with our culture, he is and Indian in heart.

Above all these condition and tumults came the departure of his friends. If the life until then was so compromised and adjusted the real trouble began then. His loneliness made him take a decision to leave for England so that he could be able to lead a normal life devoid of tensions. He couldn't accept the thought of living in England because he knew that his real home is not there.

One day Somi came and told Rusty that he was going to Amritsar for a few months. That was a sudden blow. None of his friends had to counter any forces or troubles by going from one place to another. Neither had his guardian or Missionaries wife had to feel the pain Rusty felt. He was truly alone. This loneliness made him look back to some thing to clutch on. He thought of going to England for a shelter; for comfort; for rest. He was not clutching on to Indian culture and was not willing to fly away freely to the western culture, in the core of his heart. He feels that he is a half caste and it is as good as not belonging anywhere.



In chapter 11 of the novel, Bond portrays Rusty as being quickly disturbed when a question regarding his different appearance and attire is asked by his friends. They know that Rusty is fair but they also said to Rusty that he doesn't look like an Englishman. Rusty becomes quite irritated. "I never saw my parents. And I don't care what they were and I don't care what I am, and I am not very interested . . ." (Bond 100)

All these troubled him a lot. He was going on smoothly in the third stage so far smoothly in a life that acknowledges both of the cultures. Many a lifestyle and outlook of both cultures mix up, with a considerable bias or slant towards Indian culture. But whenever he was standing a part of himself was under constant pain. He had to choose one or the other to achieve himself from the pain that gripped him so highly.

"I cannot live in this same small room all my life, with a family of lizards living in other people's homes and never having one of my own. I have to break away. I want to be either somebody or nobody. I don't want to be anybody" (157).

But all the same, he was in a dilemma. His decisions lacked a fixity and firmness. He feels that by going to England he would be making an escape from India, and that thought shuddered him. "Everyone Rusty knew well had left, and there remained no one he knew well enough to love or hate."(148). He realized that he was alone and that alone, he was not the master of himself.

Thus, one day while sitting in his room, he saw some lizards. He spoke to himself quite often, and sometimes he spoke to lizards. But then, he chose just to observe them.

"He was afraid of the lizards, afraid and at the same time fascinated. When they changed their colours from brown to red to green, in keeping with their immediate surroundings they fascinated him. But when they lost their grip on the ceiling and fell to the ground with a soft, wet, boneless smack, they repelled him. One night he reasoned, one of them would certainly fall on the face..." (149).

The lizard is symbolic of many things. Like them, he also found difficulty in shifting from one cultural sphere to the other, from one house to another. But in all these times, he had a ceiling, the support of his friends and the self confidence and easiness he had when he was with



them. This balancing has to have an end and if he lost the grip, he was sure to fell down a light and smash himself. Like a light insect, he was caught in a cobweb, not touching either sides of the wall. According to Homi K. Bhabha's theory, Rusty was dwelling in a third space-a hybrid space-but the conflict between intermingling cultures lead him to go beyond' or further from this intermediary position.

Famous theorist Amar Acheraiou in *Questioning Hybridity, Postcolonialism and Globalization* challenges Bhabha's theory of hybridity. He said that Bhabha overlooks the fact that many of the 'hybrids', the 'hybridity' or 'third space' often proves the space of the impossible rather than a site of cultural and racial emancipation. This aspect of the hybridity theory paves the way forward for observing and inferring from the course of events that takes place in the life of Rusty further. According to Amar Acheraiou's point, Rusty was suffering from the tug of war between two cultures inside his psyche:

"He had cut away from his roots; he had been replanted, had sprung to life, new life. But it was too quick a growth, rootless, and he had withered. And now he had run away again" (166).

He took a decision to leave to England and he wanted to say goodbye to Kishen. Before that, he chose to walk through the bazaar and maidan once again.

Mainahs and mango trees would be missed by Rusty, but they would not miss him. In the bazaar he walked with heavy heart. From the chaat shop emergrd the familiar smell of spices and crackle of frying fat. And the children bumped him, and the cows blocked the road; and though he knew they always did these things, it was only now that he noticed them. They all seemed to be holding him, pulling him back. But he could not returned, he was afraid of what lay ahead, he dreaded the unknown . . . (161)

Rusty also had a face to face meeting with the sweeper boy whom Rusty hurt for no particular reason he felt ashamed and angry with himself for trying to ignore the sweeper boy at that first site. He was a poor boy who had never harmed him and who couldn't have been friendlier. Neither was Rusty a Sahib no longer nor was the sweeper boy his servant. He was not an Indian, had no caste and he had no right to call the boy an untouchable. He couldn't assert



himself freely to either of the categories. He had no one to ask advice, no one to speak to, and no one who would listen genuinely to him and no one to guide him. In such a traumatic condition, he left to Haridwar to meet Kishen.

Rusty gets the information from Mr. Kapoor who married again shortly after Meena's death that Kishen ran away from them and now lives as a pickpocket on the banks of sacred river Ganges. Rusty was not at all surprised or shocked. He just wanted to meet him. They met again at the river bank and Rusty unravels his plans to Kishen. "You can't go away, he said. 'I can't go back'. 'Why not?'. 'No money, no job, no friends'" (178)

Ruskin Bond wrote this novel in England. It was his first visit to England and he too felt a kind of pain and loss at the time of departure: "As the day for my departure approached, I began to panic at the thought of leaving, and an old feeling of loneliness returned. Leaving my family wasn't the hardest part; it was the friends I had made that enchanted summer I would miss the most". (*Lone Fox Dancing*, 136).

It was not the cultural ties, value systems or material pleasures that attracted him to England. Nothing attracted him to England. It was the only place he knows about, other than Dehradun and New Delhi. A ray of hope that he wouldn't be rejected lingered in his mind. We can't call once place of refuge a home always. It was an escape from the third space of enunciation. Somi puts a solution in front of Rusty:

"Oh, we will find someone for you to give English lessons. Not one, but many. And I will start a chaat shop'. 'When do we go?' said Rusty and England and fame and riches were all forgotten, and would soon be dreams again" (Bond 179).

Right at the moment he got a glimpse of solution in front of him, all his hopes of fleeing away to England was forgotten. England can be taken as a psychological asylum where Rusty chose to hide from reality; from the chords binding and suffocating him. Soon he gets back to his normal mind set:

I wonder, thought Rusty, will they notice my absence in Dehra? After all, I have only been away a day, though it seems an age . . . the room on the roof will still be vacant when I return, no one but me could be crazy enough to live in such a room . . . I will go



back to the room as though nothing had happened, and no one will notice that anything has.” (*Lone Fox Dancing*, 180).

He started to feel the warmth of the night, the air around him, the sun rays reflecting in the temple leading to beautiful shades of colors . . . as if he have never seen them before. The cultural mingling and cross cultural relations may lead to a dilemmatic condition or a new realm– a third space of enunciation which takes place at the verge of liminality. But it is not a wheel from which we have no escape. One has to open the eyes. Rusty could have remained in that condition unless he was hit by an external force in the form of Kishen. This proves that Rusty has been in a third space existence towards the half of the story and then confronting the problem of hybrid dilemma, he found a solid sphere outside the third sphere of no fixed identity.

While travelling in a boat at Haridwar, an old lady asked Rusty who he was and also said that she have never seen blue eyes and golden hair around the Ganges ever in her life. Rusty replied that he is nothing and also said that he is everything. Rusty felt secluded from the mankind-refugees of the world. He has no home and he is proud of that too. The immature mind of Rusty in the beginning have transformed into mature mind. The whole universe is a home to him now. It was the tie with Kishen that brought him back. His return was thus justified. It was not the notion of culture or value systems that brought him back:

‘Home’- that was the magnet. Not the home of my mother and stepfather, but the larger home that was India, where I could even feel free to be a failure. The Land of Regrets, someone had called India; but for me it was a land of acceptances. For I hadn’t I, a mixed-up colonial castaway, an accident of history, found acceptance in the streets and in the tea shops and the wayside haunts of Dehra? I wasn’t looking for a palace or a hilltop retreat. All I really wanted was my little room back again. (*Lone Fox Dancing*, 171)

He loved the intimacy of human contact, the freedom to touch someone without being misunderstood, being among strangers without feeling like an outsider, everything sentimental and emotion about his home-his life India. It is hereby evident that Rusty was caught up between two spheres – a third space existence – a hybrid condition according to Homi K. Bhabha. But the



part of this theory which was left unsaid – as pointed out by Amar Acheraiou – about the third space as a space of impossible can be justified towards the last part of the novel. But an escape or freedom of soul is possible from that condition. Many a British people who have loved India from the core of the heart are still being labeled as ‘foreign’ imperialists. Rusty was also confused in the beginning but the moment he realized that real freedom and happiness is from within, he easily spread out his wings and flew freely at the new found space of emancipation. That’s why he was able to write these lines:

“This land is mine
Although I do not own it
This land is mine
Because I grew upon it
This dust, this grass
This tender leaf
And weathered bark
All in my heart are finely blended
Until my time on earth is ended”

(Hip-Hop Nature Boy and Other Poems 19)

Conclusion:

“Enlightenment is going from being somebody to becoming nobody. This is the first step. We walk around being somebody. I like this, I don’t like this, I love that. In the first step, strong feelings of hatred or strong feelings of cravings get loosened up in you. You become like a child. The second step to enlightenment is from being nobody to being everybody”. (Ravi Shankar 136)

Rusty escapes from his hybrid dilemma to this wider understanding and happily and doubtlessly asserts that he is a real Indian. Being an Indian does not depend upon one’s place of birth. Famous British-born Indian architect ‘Laurie Baker’, France born dancer and actress ‘Paris



Laxmi' who settled in Kerala, Margaret Elizabeth Noble who came to India as a disciple of Swami Vivekananda and was renamed as Sister Niveditha etc are the people who were not Indians by birth but real Indians in heart and had an incomparable love for our country. They are real Indians in mind and spirit, in words and deeds. Rusty is also such a boy. He wants to live in India as an Indian, not a foreigner. All the eminent personalities mentioned above have never ever allowed them to be confused with the clash of their culture of habit and culture of the heart; conscience. This place of freedom and emancipation from the conflict of the hybrid third space is left unconsidered in Homi K Bhabha's theory of Hybridity.

This project proves that 'Rusty', protagonist of the novel *The Room on the Roof* was leading a life in the third space and that there is the possibility of a feeling of inescapable existence, desperateness and lack of self assertion within that space and that trouble within two cultures can be effectively solved. This dimension of the theory of Hybridity is left undiscussed by is where one can get motherly love, affection and care. Our motherland of cultural diversity is always welcoming children who are in search of their mother and home.

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