



THE PORTRAYAL OF CHARACTERS IN 'THE BLUE UMBRELLA': A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TEXT AND FILM

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Abstract

It is an arduous task to embrace film's visual language while preserving characters' integrity when transforming literary works into cinema. "The Blue Umbrella" by Ruskin Bond offers a detailed array of characters whose nuance and intricacy greatly enhance the story. However, because literature and film are inherently different from one another, the authenticity to these characters may change when adapted into a cinematic medium. This paper analyzes the evolution of characters in Ruskin Bond's novella "The Blue Umbrella" and its cinematic adaptation, helmed by renowned Indian filmmaker Vishal Bhardwaj. It explores the development of the main characters in each medium, highlighting the similarities and differences in their portrayal between the two mediums. This piece delves into these complexities to gain a deeper insight into the impact of media on character development and the storytelling approach. The study is split into two sections: the first section looks at how Binya and Ram Bharosa are portrayed in the novella, and the second section looks at how they are portrayed in the movie.

Keywords: The Blue Umbrella, Ruskin Bond, Vishal Bhardwaj, Literature and Film, Character analysis

Introduction

Ruskin Bond, frequently regarded as the 'Indian Wordsworth,' is esteemed for his poignant narrative style and profound affinity with the natural world. His work, "The Blue Umbrella," first released in 1980, exemplifies

Bond's capacity to encapsulate the quintessence of rural Indian life, as seen through the perspective of a young girl named Binya. The story unfolds against the idyllic backdrop of the Garhwal hills, focusing on Binya's cherished possession—a blue umbrella—and its significant role in her life's transformation. In

2005, the acclaimed Indian director Vishal Bhardwaj brought the novella to the silver screen, thereby extending Bond's captivating narrative to a broader audience. Even though the movie mostly adheres to the original novel, adaptations are necessary, especially in how the main characters are portrayed. This paper compares and contrasts how Biniya and Nandu are portrayed in the novella and the movie, taking into account the impact these representations have on the subject matter and general plot.

Character Analysis in novella "The Blue Umbrella"

Ruskin Bond's mastery in storytelling is evident in the way he portrayed the characters in "The Blue Umbrella." The core of the narrative is around the main character, Binya, a young girl from a rural. Binya's purity, fascination, and ultimate maturity as she makes her way through the difficulties of life are all painstakingly crafted by Bond. The supporting cast, which includes mysterious traveller, Biju and old shopkeeper Ram Bharosa, enhances Binya's adventure and gives the story more nuance and complexity. Here we will analyse the main characters Binya and Ram Bharosa in novella and Binya and Nandakishore in the movie.

Binya:

When readers first meet Binya, she is a young, naive girl living in a tiny village surrounded by the towering Himalayan mountains. Her love for the animals and people in her immediate surroundings, together with her attraction with nature's beauties, demonstrate her modesty and purity of heart from the beginning. Because of her natural interest, she frequently explores the meadows and woodlands surrounding her hamlet.

A characteristic that sets Binya apart is her bond with the blue umbrella in question. The umbrella a nice traveller gave her becomes more than a material item; it represents her goals, objectives, and newly discovered feeling

of self-worth. Given her lowly beginnings and ambition to make a name for herself in her society, Binya's connection to the umbrella provides a glimpse into her need for approval and recognition.

Furthermore, Binya's kindness and understanding are evident in her dealing with the fellow individuals, especially in her bond with the neighbourhood grocer, Ram Bharosa. Binya shows her humanistic side by treating Ram Bharosa with love and respect despite their different economic backgrounds.

Over the course of the story, Binya's character is subjected to a profound change, largely due to the incidents associated with the blue umbrella. At the outset, her bond with the umbrella is circumscribed by superficial reasons, such as its visual attractiveness and the favourable reactions it elicits from her fellow villagers. Nonetheless, as the umbrella assumes a position of envy and covetousness within the village community, Binya is compelled to grapple with the more insidious facets of human behaviour.

A pivotal moment in Binya's journey is the cheeky guys stealing the umbrella. She is forced to face her emotions of betrayal, grief, and rage, upending her previously idealized perspective. Binya gains important insights about toughness, forgiving others, and the fleeting nature of worldly goods as a result of this experience. Also, Binya's way of dealing with Nandu, who was one of the kids who stole the umbrella, gives her a chance to learn and make things right. Instead of getting revenge, Binya goes for kindness and getting where Nandu is coming from, and ends up making a surprising friendship with him. This shows how forgiving she is and points out how grown-up she really is.

By the story's end, Binya becomes a tougher and kinder person, breaking free from the grip of wanting stuff and what society thinks she should be. The blue umbrella, which used to

show how much she wanted others to like her, now stands for her inner power, honesty, and the lasting strength of being connected to others.

Ram Bharosa

One of the main characters and an important part of the novella is Ram Bharosa. Bond meticulously crafts his characterisation to illustrate the intricacies of human nature, especially how greed and jealousy may result in moral failure but also how salvation is achievable.

Ram Bharosa is depicted as a humble store owner in a secluded village nestled in the mountains of Garhwal. His moniker, meaning "Ram, the reliable," hints at his character as a man of strong principles, trusted and held in high regard by the locals. Yet, as the narrative progresses, it is evident that his ethical standards are compromised, highlighting the contradiction in his name.

Ram Bharosa is introduced as an apparently satisfied guy at the start of the novella. He has a little store where he sells food and home goods, as well as sometimes some toffees for the local kids. He is shown as a cunning businessman who knows how to optimize his earnings without coming out as blatantly avaricious. At first, he gets along well with the people, especially Binya, the main character. He puts up a front of friendliness, frequently offering tiny snacks to the kids and joking about.

Ram Bharosa's character takes a dramatic turn when he encounters with Binya's stunning blue umbrella. This umbrella, which appears to be just another item, turns into a representation of covetousness and avarice. Ram Bharosa becomes fixated on the umbrella, enchanted by its vivid blue hue and its role as the focal point of the village. This jealousy gradually taints his mind, exposing a more sinister aspect of his character.

Ram Bharosa appears to be a guy of integrity at first, but his greed overcomes his morality. He is frantic to have the umbrella because he thinks it would give him the prominence and respect that Binya has. He plots dishonestly against Binya as a result of this fixation, which represents a dramatic fall in his moral fibre and turns him from a well-respected shopkeeper.

He initially makes an attempt to purchase the umbrella from Binya, making an offer that he thinks a youngster would find too good to refuse. Ram Bharosa turns to even more immoral actions when Binya declines to sell it, putting the umbrella above cash. He hires a boy named Rajaram to take Binya's umbrella. This theft demonstrates the extent of his moral decline and stands in sharp contrast to the dependability his name implies. His acts cause him to lose the respect of the locals as well as his own integrity, which causes him to become alone.

Following the theft's discovery, Ram Bharosa is held accountable for his deeds. The people who had before held him in high regard started to shun him. People stop coming to his shop, which hurts his company, and his public image is damaged. Ram Bharosa uses this moment of seclusion and humiliation to contemplate. Understanding the seriousness of his error and the harm he has inflicted Ram Bharosa goes through a change. He tries to make things right by giving back the umbrella to Binya, a move that shows his recognition of his error and his wish to correct it. This action is more than just about giving back the taken item; it's about restoring his tarnished reputation and respect.

The way that Ruskin Bond portrayed Ram Bharosa is an analysis of human duality. He is not wholly nice or wholly bad. His persona serves as a metaphor for how easily common people might give in to temptation. Instead of portraying him as a villain, Bond shows him to

be a flawed person who gives in to vulnerability but eventually longs for atonement.

Characters in the film "The Blue Umbrella"

Binya - played by Shreya Sharma:

The character of Binya is portrayed artistically by Shreya Sharma, who focuses more on the inherent beauty and vitality of a little child living in the highlands. Her character seems to be a little older, likely in early teens, possibly 11 or 12 years old—than Binya in the novella. Her link to the rural area is strengthened in the film version by the emphasis on her traditional attire and the surrounding landscape. She is presented the same way as the book has. Binya has lovely eyes, rosy cheeks, black hair wrapped in a pig veil, and a white complexion. She donned a necklace and some gorgeous glass bangles. In the novella Binya is depicted wearing a leopard's claw. However, in the cinematic adaptation, this accessory is portrayed as a bear's claw.

Shreya Sharma's depiction of Binya enriches the character's depth. Although she keeps her childlike wonder and inquisitiveness, the movie Binya presents her as more animated and vibrant, perfectly suited for the cinematic format. Her exchanges with other locals and her clear sense of pride in the umbrella stand out more in the movie. Additionally, the movie delves into her emotional spectrum more thoroughly, capturing instances of rebellion, sorrow, and ultimately, empathy. Shreya's portrayal of Binya is more assertive and self-assured, enhancing the impact of her decision to forgive Ram Bharosa.

The movie delves deeper into Binya's connections with other characters, enriching the complexity and movement within her relationships. Her relationship with her brother Bijju is portrayed with greater warmth and guardianship. Her exchanges with Ram Bharosa are depicted with more layers, as the movie intricately examines their changing relationship. Binya's resistance when Ram Bharosa attempts

to claim the umbrella, her clear distress upon discovering his deeds, and her ultimate reconciliation are all depicted with a level of nuance that enhances the character's complexity.

Nandakishore Khatri (Ram Bharosa) - played by Pankaj Kapur:

In contrast to the novel, which commences with Binya, the protagonist of the story, the film introduces us to Nandakishore Khatri, who is recognized as the Ram Bharosa of the book which Pankaj Kapur played.

Pankaj Kapur's depiction of Ram Bharosa is intricate and complex. He reveals the character's inner turmoil through gentle gestures and facial cues. Kapur's acting skillfully communicates Bharosa's evolution from an initially harmless merchant to someone driven by jealousy, and ultimately to a remorseful individual in search of forgiveness. His knack for eliciting feelings of pity and contempt for Bharosa contributes to making the character one of the film's most unforgettable elements.

In the movie, Nandu has many layers. Nandu is shown as a proud and deeply insecure guy, even if he shares Ram Bharosa's materialistic inclinations. His desire for the umbrella stems from a need for respect and social affirmation in addition to avarice. Nandu's fragility is emphasized in Kapur's portrayal, which makes the character more empathetic and his final demise more heartbreaking.

The movie explores Nandu's past life, explaining why he's so fixated on the umbrella—it's his quest for acceptance and acknowledgment among the people in the village. The movie's depiction of Nandakishore blurs the distinction between the bad guy and the hero, providing a deeper understanding of the character.

Conclusion:

A comparative study of the primary characters in Vishal Bhardwaj's movie adaptation of Ruskin Bond's novella *The Blue Umbrella* and the novel by Bond uncovers notable disparities in their representation, which impact the story's narrative and thematic focus. Binya and Nandakishore are portrayed in Bond's book as more simple, stereotypical figures, but the film adaptation gives them more nuance and takes into account many creative and cultural interpretations. In the movie, Binya's role is depicted as someone who is more confident and perceptive, whereas Nandakishore is shown as a more understanding person, whose imperfections stem from profound emotional conflicts. These shifts underscore the different methods used by books and movies in narrating stories, with the former focusing on straightforwardness and ethical principles, and the latter welcoming intricacy and uncertainty. In conclusion, the two iterations of "The Blue Umbrella" present profound examinations of human nature and societal dynamics. While the film offers a contemporary and intricate viewpoint on the enduring motifs of innocence, greed, and redemption, the book provides a more traditional and detailed exploration of these themes.

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