

Ruskin Bonds Short Stories as a Blue Print for Balanced Environmental Restoration

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Abstract

Concentrating on Ruskin Bond's selected short stories, this research paper sheds light on the writer's thoughts about environmental issues that human beings generate for the sake of 'growth.' Ruskin Bond speaks about where he lives and gathers his thoughts on the deterioration of the local natural environment. His literature exposes humanity and the self to the chaos caused by the material world. For the author, it is the man who examines all natural entities on the basis of their importance and usefulness for human society, disregarding and ignoring the function and significance of the entity concerned in the broader ecosystem framework and its continued existence. The study of the stories of Bond should instil the very concept of maintaining the originality of nature among the readers and practitioners of the mechanisms of creation in the contemporary world. The research is not of a complaining nature, but seeks to investigate the inherent landscape in the nature of man and its effect on various processes of modernist creation.

Keywords: environment time , nature, trees, landscape,

Since the ancient times, the idea of 'Nature' has always been the epicentre of the culture and religion of man, which in Greek creation myths and the functioning of their respective civilizations is quite vividly visible. Ancient India's literature reveal their worries about ecological balance, protection of the environment and seasonal phases. The subjects related to the protection of the environment have also been prominent since earlier times in the authors ' fictional and non-fictional epistles. There are also many authors in this modern age who take ' Nature' across different genres as part of their texts. Whether it's prose, poetry, or drama, literature often provides human messages. But a short story is considered a good genre for spreading messages in this fast pace of life, in which a man is more inclined towards technological and advanced world. A fictional story does not absorb the time of a reader, and it also fulfils the serious purpose of an author, because he must present all the prevailing virtues and vices of society before his readers. Ruskin Bond, a prolific author of short stories, also has the same intention.

Ruskin Bond is a global icon that has portrayed life in his stories and combined experiences with environmental impacts. His creative works are celebrating the environment, especially hills and mountains, in which he lives. In an interview, Bond says, "I live in a nice place and among nice people. I get inspiration from a lot of things around me nature, hills, people and even insects". Nature fuels his artistic vigor and refreshes it. The natural environment community imbibes the virtues of nature such as innocence, simplicity and purity. The characters of Bond live very close to nature. Notwithstanding his well known peers, who are especially concerned with social political turmoil, through his stories he addresses the issue of ecology and climate in the most obvious way. His reports have been the subject of the problem of deforestation and environmental pollution and the loss of lands and fields. Bond continuously scribbles about the environmental pollution threat. In the name of progress and development, the planned destruction of trees on mountain slopes is the story line of his narratives.

Exactly the sort natural world Bond produces in his films involves all of the earth's living organisms and is therefore non-anthropocentric. Ruskin Bond was inherently linked to the very idea of preserving the inventiveness of nature. Not only does he offer his readers a didactic lesson, but he also strengthens them to the fact that animals, birds and insects are as valuable and deserving as humans. Through their nature, these individuals are quiet, harmless and extremely sensitive to their environment.

Bond shares his opinion that their existence makes all human beings unimaginative and simple. Yet society's diet inculcates good or bad principles. Bond practices the 'Humanity' ideology. Bond not only covers human beings 'excellently-wishing things in this religion, but he also takes plants and animals with the same intensity. Bond has more affection with other plants and animals than humans because the path of discipline created by Nature is always followed by other living and non-living entities. It is the only man who manipulates the entire planet earth in order to satisfy his own needs. Ruskin Bond is the author who venerates Nature's beauty and asserts in his literary works the emphasis of all animals and plants.

Ruskin Bond's narratives seem to portray the idea of the problem of land ownership by men, and the consequences of that: war, rape, and tyranny. Throughout Ruskin Bond's novels, the problems of contrasting the patriarchal and imperialist society's hegemonic association with that of the Himalayan mountains, flora, and fauna are portrayed with a sense of nostalgic sensitivity. In the novel, *Good Day to You, Uncle*, Ruskin Bond introduces the scenario of those woodlands that are now about to be extinct due to man's actions in a short time. The vulnerable human being will colonize all those wild areas from which he will be able to collect all the valuable things from natural resources without being aware of the very act of oppression and conquest of the assumed defenceless state of nature and other resources.

To grow or civilize himself, he does all these things. Man has oppressed the planet earth's other people, who are less dominant than him, to the point that they have no right now to live in those places where they can live properly. Bond tells the plight of those inhabitants of the forest who are vulnerable to all the resources available on this planet because of man's

controlling nature. Human beings want to use the maximum strength and energy of all the resources on this planet earth. In a patriarchal structure, as the male party shows its dominance over the weaker parts such as women, weaker economic class, presumed lower races, assumed lower castes, respectively. Likewise, human beings with all their facilities have suppressed other inhabitants who are weak before their power and strength, including inhabitants of the forest and cattle in particular. These forest animals and birds often find their new residential area, but they are not aware of the attack on the human being.

The narrative, *Where have all the Trees Gone*, meets the deeds of those organizations that destroy the natural entities for their development's sake. He also sees these trees as his own family, with whom he also psychologically associates. Throughout this way, Bond claims that man's patriarchal existence is responsible for destroying all those natural objects that are silent and vulnerable and made powerless against man's authoritative figure. As these organizations often cut down trees or forests to build roads, dams, and buildings in the name of growth, Bond shows the sorrow of the situation as he thinks of all the birds to which those forests had been home and now they have nothing to go and are therefore less protected in the world of concrete walls and buildings. He mentions that the forest birds are “in search of some other *stretch* of surviving forest” (Bond 2008). This very term ‘stretch of surviving forest’ illustrates the weak and helpless state of all these natural beings in front of man that the woods are being constantly destroyed and that there is no longer any room for their survival or that their survival depends entirely on the mercy of the man who is in the authoritative and determining role of their destiny.

In the novel, *Dust on the Mountain*, Bond talks about the issues that human beings generate for their selfish purposes in the hilly areas. At first, Bond shows the problem of those powerful institutions or individuals who are a continuously accountable apparatus to follow these oppressive and exploitative policies. For example, Bisnu's mother encounters the fire problem and collects the reminiscent of the wonderful post before the spread of the area's production and goes on to state that “there are fires everywhere” (Bond 2008). When the entire family sits outside and sadly and ineffectually notices that in the wildfires thousands of the Himalayan trees are dying.

Ruskin Bond introduces in this tale the scenario of wood loggers coming with contracts and mostly belonging to the rich background. When Bisnu goes to the city to look for a job, the old man in the bus nostalgically says that “there were trees here once” (Bond 2008).

Romi is caught up in a situation in which he finds himself surrounded by major flames and fire in the forest in the novel, *Flames in the Forest*. He is shocked to see the terrible condition of the forest-resident birds and animals. This enormous forest fire will be a reason for the destruction of the forest's precious flora and fauna. Romi exhorts that , “not only pheasants but smaller birds too were screaming across the and the air was filled with their cries” (Bond 2008). All these potential risks and horrendous environments are created by man's actions or otherwise, man's indifference to the well-being of the ecosystem and its different representatives. Therefore, it is presumed that it is solely the will of human beings

whether they want to take care of the woods and their denizens that could help them achieve evolutionary benefits or simply dismiss whatever happens wrong or right in the dark forests. On the part of human beings who have no power to determine and manipulate any living or non-living creatures on this world, this is clearly quite unjust. When it is not necessary for them to do any good to other such individuals, they should not, at least, impede and inhibit their own forms of existence and simply allow them to be on their own because it is human beings who need dependency on other natural resources to satisfy their needs, and not the nature that is self-sufficient and continually evolving through its own cycles.

Ruskin Bond depicts the actions of those living beings who always try to chase the planet earth's other living and non-living entities without taking care of their independent function. In the story, *Good Day to You Uncle* Bond narrates that sometime ago “Ganga had provided food and shelter for some thirty or forty tigers.... and now there remained only one old tiger in the jungle” (Bond 2008). The word "anthropocentrism" is a philosophy that puts human beings at the centre of all action and time. Human being sees himself as the king on this planet earth and everything can be pacified by him. This trend tends to teach the younger generation that humans are more capable than any other planet Earth citizen. Ramu, tells his friend in the story *Good Day to You Uncle*, “Perhaps we are a little better, in some ways. To be able to laugh and to be merciful are the only things that make man better than the beast” (Bond 2008). Such kinds of ideas also strengthen the belief that everything can be conquered by individuals. They take it as their own place where they can do anything when visitors come to any wild place. Bond himself remains content in his narratives and preferred the company of even those bugs that are for a brief time on this earth. It generates a quality in all to understand the importance on this planet earth of each and every living and non-living being. Since human beings have the right to live with all the privileges here on this world, the same is also the right of those living on the same planet. Man, therefore, can not be a hindrance in the way of the autonomous functioning of different organisms and forests willingly or unwillingly, because that would certainly mean the dividing power among the residents of the same planet. *Good Days to You, Uncle*, the father of Ramu says in the story “A man needs the land as much as a tiger needs the jungle” (Bond 2008). All of the earth's living occupants have the same right to live in their places of concern. With the exception of humans, the other primates of this planet earth are more obliged to man. Among this novel, Bond explains that in the jungle there were nearly thirty or forty tigers earlier, but the poachers and tourists decreased their numbers to serve their needs, and now there is only one tiger left in the forest. The poachers are searching for that one tiger as well. But to the villagers, the tiger is more sincere. For the villagers and their domestic animals, he thinks about the perfect. He killed a buffalo at once, but knew the reaction of the villagers.

As an author, Ruskin Bond promotes the activism path. For a number of years, Bond has been working in the natural environment. He has been living since his childhood in the lap of the Himalayas. A quite great time spent in the context of nature makes him more concerned with the voiceless non-human world and has created in him a sense of respect for the environmental problems that are not found in an observer from a third party. Bond is active as a credible defender of his position of concern for the environment. He has the

wisdom of plants, animals, the valley topography in which he resides, and the non-human entities of his place of concern, which also means his legitimacy as an environmental proponent. Bond supports all non-human beings that can not communicate in human language and face objectification in the hands of unconscious people. This activism would assist in the broader natural process in which the entire ecosystem and the natural world's living and non-living beings rely upon one another.

Connection implies the constructive ways in which man can establish a permanent and intimate relationship with the natural world, and such a connection can grow and maintain between them that will free man from ulterior motives and nature in exchange, as it has always been, will provide sufficient food and culture.

Ruskin Bond is an author who sees the right of non-human creatures to function swiftly as human beings on the planet earth in an order. Bond proposes ways to coexist with the world of creation. He gives an understanding of those non-human beings that seek to sustain the chain of life. To save the natural entities, Bond does not want to spread any didactic lesson. He only emphasizes the fact that non-human entities are as worthy and important as human beings are. Bond creates a sense of his reader's interaction with all-natural world entities. According to Aggarwal (2010), Bond does not believe in environmental publicity.

Bond does not want to prevent the interaction between man and nature. Bond is in favor of exploration in the hilly areas of the Himalayas where man can understand and communicate with his inner self and achieve intrinsic happiness. He also points out that tourism will also sound the prosperity of the hilly areas. But he is aware of the environmental issues that arise because of the lavish hotels for urban management tourists and the garbage they generate. Bond states that the thoughtless practices of tourists and contractors who are there for mining and 'development' need to be reviewed. This outreach enriches the principles by which people will recognize the importance of wild places. Ruskin Bond promotes nature as a whole through his compassion for a single tree in -touch not a single bough! In youth it sheltered me, And I'll protect it now. (2008)

Ruskin Bond is concerned about the natural environment in which he lives and supporters for its conservation, yet he does not attempt to attract the reader by depicting the beauty of nature or in any way romanticizing the landscape. Bond also says the number of tourists in the Himalayan Mountains is increasing. He also observes the increasing number of Hindu pilgrimages in the hilly areas which fly not always with religious urge but with materialistic view. Bond says there were a few pilgrimages earlier and the wild places remained untouched. And yet now, vacationers are increasingly intruding such places. At one stage, Bond requires it in a constructive manner because such interactions could lead to the development of a specific kind of connection and bond between the human and non-human world and eventually develop a conscious awareness. Yet Bond doesn't want to draw his readers to the wild places like Bass, either.

Therefore, it is rather clear from Ruskin Bond's fictional literature that the reader is not merely equipped with the romantic idea of country nature or hilly scenery or the portrayal of playing animals and birds; rather, the aware reader of literacy deduces a powerful and strong meaning within the message. They have to support the natural environment and various non-human beings in it that are voiceless and are exposed by man to multiple conscience-beneficial results. The novels don't just complain about the scenario; furthermore, they enrich the readers' minds and hearts with such ideas, beliefs, and values that will make them an active part in preserving nature and acknowledging its dignity and worth that has always been there but ignored all of the period.

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