

Romanticism in Ruskin Bond

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INTRODUCTION

Ruskin Bond (born 19 May 1934) is an Indian author of British descent. He lives with his adopted family in Landour, Mussoorie, India. The Indian Council for Child Education has recognised his role in the growth of children's literature in India. He was awarded the Sahitya Academy Award in 1992 for *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra*, his novel in English. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 1999 and the Padma Bhushan in 2014.

The literature of Ruskin Bond is a harmonious combination of the tales of innocence and the ceremonies of experience. It is an attempt to rouse the world to the delight of the 'Unseen Player', to set the reader in tune with the dance of life itself. The noblest aim of art and literature has been to realize and communicate the essential joy and immortality of the truth. Bond like a true artist and an ascetic, sees the vision, of the paradise in the sunlight and the green of the earth, in the beauty of the human face and the wealth of human life, even in objects that are seemingly insignificant. Like Bruno, one of the great Italian Romantics, and also as given in Bhagwada Gita Bond seems to believe that 'all reality is one in substance, one in cause, one in origin, and God and this reality are one. As an artist he has been striving consistently through his writings to unravel this mystery about God, nature, human beings and the world. By attempting to perceive and suggest unity in diversity, mind in matter and matter in mind. Bond has tried as a philosopher to find the syntheses in which opposites and contradictions meet, mingle and merge to rise to the highest knowledge of universal unity which is the intellectual equivalent of the love of God. Nature, life, sense, innocence, love and secret of the divine power seem to be the key words to his credo as a writer.

Ruskin Bond is a prolific writer who has written more than 130 books/collections of memoirs, novellas, short stories, essays and poems. Keeping in mind the vast area of Ruskin Bond's writings and need for comprehensive research on ecocritical aspects of his writings, the present research is conceived. However, the research is delimited to the study of short stories. But still it is an impossible task owing to the fact that Bond has published more than 350 short stories, so the researcher was left with the task to choose around fifty short stories from different collections and base the study on these stories.

Love is an emotion that has predominated the world literature since time immemorial and isn't it true that this feeling is the only driving force for us, the humans? It is there in the present modern literature and it was there in the old literature. Love knows no boundaries and can never be confined to any human made chains. It is free and a person in love touches the pinnacle of eternal joy which otherwise stays unknown to him. Love can be interpreted in a diverse way, but the basic underlying thing never changes. Writers through ages have brought the passion, the beauty and its effects on people and on themselves through the words. It has been seen that love, no matter of what kind, has a hold on to the human beings and other creatures on the planet. It is never governed by reason; it is a feeling that can only be felt. Shakespeare has rightfully put it in the words "Love is blind" and surely it is because it can never be explained by reason. Artists whether a painter, musician, dancer or a writer has always been able to interpret it more beautifully and through their art they have made people around them feel the feeling which moves everybody to greatness. Therefore, when one plunges deep into the works of Petrarch one gets drowned in the depth of love which he creates through his words. On the other hand, there are gentle feelings of love in Shakespeare, whereas impetuous prose of Dickenson or deep expression of yearning and experiencing love in the Metaphysical and Romantic poets like John Donne, Shelley, and Byron etc. From the very beginning of literature one can witness the profound imprints of love in every form and piece of writing. Love is a feeling which is not restricted to only literature but has also become a matter of interest in different fields of studies such as Psychology and Sociology. There are different kinds of love which we all experience. The meaning of love is subjective and varies person to person. But this is for sure that it makes us feel the most alive. It could be with anyone and anything, it creates magic and fulfils the basic need of humans of being more than oneself. Love has various shades. It could be



unrequited, requited, lustful, immoral, moral, religious, national or for world in general.

The idea of romantic love known in Western Literature is said to be inspired by courtly love which was portrayed by Chevaliers or Knights in the middle ages. This kind of love is neither physical nor marital. It is an unrequited love with women who were from high status societies whom the knights used to serve. The courtly love was the principal theme found in literature of that time. The marriages of the age were more formal than a business meeting. In the middle ages, a chevalier was needed to raise the living standard of the downtrodden or poor people of a particular state. He was depicted as the humblest and most loyal towards his duties. There is this book called “De amore” popular by the name “The Art of Courtly Love” was written in the 12th century. In this work one can see a clear difference between physical and romantic love. It is a known fact that romantic love which was in rage in late nineteenth century in England was majorly inspired by French culture. Romantic love is completely opposite to platonic love which is not about physical or sexual relations.

Ruskin bond writes about the innocent love which brings in the life comfort and not any kind of compromise or sacrifice. It never demands any commitment or promises. It stays and flourishes in the minds and hearts of the characters. He knows that the strong emotions aroused by love are as deep as ocean. The known thing about love and its expressions is, they never die. This trait is much present in his writings. In a nutshell it can be said that his works reflect the universal, never dying aspect of love. In his stories two individuals get attracted towards each other, they fell in love but never reach to a lasting relationship. Still their love lives which gets transformed to a selfless bond. They are separated because of many reasons but the love between them knows no bounds. With time it never seems to fade rather the glory of it increases manifold day by day. The characters seem to be blessed and happy to have at least the memories with them, if not each other. This reflects his own thoughts on love and how he has been cherishing the love that never ceases to be even when he no longer is with his beloved.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

For the purpose of this paper, the terms Indo-Anglian and Indian writing in English are used interchangeably to refer to any Indian literature written in English and includes both Indians and non-Indians who write about India. The more inclusive definition of Indian writing in English is used because of the difficult nature of defining a person's identity based on language, nationality, or ethnicity.

1.2 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Bond has analysed various classes of women but from a purely subjective point of view. While ventilating his prejudice against certain women, he expresses his admiration for most of them. His own unfortunate experiences in life could not embitter his outlook on women mainly because of his compassionate nature, his cheerful disposition and his ability to take a sane and balanced view of things. There is an element of pathos in most of his female characters. He has portrayed them with such sympathy and tenderness that one cannot but infer that he has wilfully endowed them with qualities that he failed to find in women in his own life.

1.3 SCOPE OF STUDY

Bond loves writing and does so more for his own pleasure than for any other reason. He acknowledges that it has cost him materially, but he does not seem to mind for the most part. At other times, he does. This is very evident in his autobiography. He writes "Sometimes I live with a deepening sense of failure. After forty years of writing, very little money, and not much recognition outside of India. But I have sung my songs and told my tales." While Bond is not a historian and does not write about social or political issues, his works still have merit in history. They paint a very real portrait of small town India and life there. This is particularly important because as modernization and westernization continue to effect India, many aspects of Indian life are bound to change. We can still usefully debate the meaning of the former along the lines I have suggested, and trace its anticipation in earlier periods and its persistence into later periods, that is, periods other than that of its first full flowering. This volume, by and large, confines itself to this "classic" period of Romanticism, but I have not tried to impose any definition of Romanticism as a system or even

suggest that contributors should have one of their own. Some contributors may tend toward Lovejoyan skepticism, others toward Wellekian optimism, but I think I can trace through most of these excellent essays some striking family resemblances in the midst of a rich and colorful variety.

1.4 LIMITAION/DELIMITATION

1. The conventional treatment of love themes in not dealt by Bond in most of his stories
2. A psychological truth is always there in his treatment of love that is sufficiently deep and to a grasp of man's nature that is large and extended enough to satisfy the needs of our minds
3. In certain cases he desires to make a searching analysis of the characters specially females.
4. The pain of separation is necessarily put in his love-stories.

1.5 HYPOTHESIS

Bond highlights the softness of romance and intense feelings of his characters. To reinforce the gloom and loneliness of Rusty, Bond introduces a device in the story in the form of Meena Kapoor's tragic death. She is wrenched away from Rusty by a lethal car crash while the Kapoor's traveling down to Delhi from Dehra in quest of a job.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Geeta Rani (2018) In today's fast paced era of technological innovation and scientific intentions and discovery, dwelling upon the paranormal activities that results into horror sensation and scary feelings appears a bit unusual kind of task as to whether people in general are readily available to accommodate their open minds full of latest updates of world's smartest gadgets with those supernatural, mysterious and eerie kind of elements. It all seems credible when we come across Ruskin Bond's sharing his own experience of seeing the apparition of his late father Aubrey Bond. Bond's selected stories replete with elements of terror have undoubtedly been successful in drawing his peruses from that beautiful ambience of oak and pine and cedar to the mysterious woods witnessing the frightening environment full of creepy horrifying surroundings. Bond has given a realistic touch to the description of the scenario making the readers awestruck and his quality of

making unbelievable a believable one made him the Connoisseur of the mysterious and macabre. Ruskin Bond has won the hearts of millions of readers with his countless charming short stories and introspective novels. From biographical tales about acting as a grandfather to children, to tales of unrequited love, the cross-cultural dimensions of Indian society, and the power and beauty of nature, Bond's more than forty novels and short story collections have made him an internationally acclaimed author. In *Ruskin Bond's World*, Indian scholar Gulnaz Fatma, Ph.D. sheds light on one of her country's greatest and most beloved storytellers, tracing the influences in his stories from a childhood in colonial India through his time spent in Britain and his life today among India's hills and mountains. She explores the biographical as well as the imaginary elements of his fiction and explores in detail the themes of nature, children, love, and animals in his novels and short stories.

Shweta Sharma (2018) the love stories written by Ruskin Bond are always narrated in the first person; and mostly the hero or protagonist is not named, who is shown falling in love with a young innocent girl. It is a mutual relationship between two completely unrelated and unmatched couples. The male lead characters in Ruskin Bond's love stories are always depicted as genuine and honest and the female partners are shown as young, immature, erratic and ones who are bound by the restraints of the society. His stories are mostly tragic and therefore you can find in the introduction of his love stories: "Another appeal of tragic love story is that it leaves the doomed lovers forever young.

DR. PRACHI DIXIT (2017) *Death is inevitable and the most frightening fear of all the fears of an, this powerful emotion gives birth to a host of diverse superstitions; one of them is life after death. Almost all the religions adopted the doctrines of survival after death. Many works of literature present various views on life after death or existence of supernatural elements. J.G Frazer's The Golden Bough is full of wealth of colorful myths and enigma of the life beyond. Ruskin Bond the brightest star of children literature and nature lover decorates his treasure of literature with delicate themes like nature, love, Indian ness or children. Unlike his contemporaries he believes the main function of literature is to relieve or refresh the souls of readers in the world full of cruelty and harshness. This Indian author of British descent achieved the [Padma Shri](#) in 1999 and [Padma Bhushan](#) in 2014.*

Jayasree A, (2017) "I am not a religious person but if I were to say I have a religion then I would say I am a nature worshipper." Ruskin Bond Ruskin Bond, a prolific writer, is known for his short stories, novellas and poems and is widely popular especially in Children's Literature Circles. His stories can be likened to an ecological narrative designed to spread awareness about the bitter consequences of human actions that damage the planet's basic life support system. He has received the Sahitya Akademi Award for English writing in India for 'Our Trees Still grow in Dehra' in 1992. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 1999 and Padma Bhushan in 2014. Ruskin Bond's stories breathe his great love and sincere concern for nature which is all encompassing and all pervasive. The prismatic portrayal of nature in Bond's stories enraptures the soul. He draws our sense towards the natural brilliance manifest all around us by presenting a painstakingly drawn out record of the natural life around him. The amazingly captured landscapes with its myriad forms of life inked by Bond's imagination and his inimitable style come with a strong lesson on the need to protect and preserve nature. My paper proposes to study Bond's short story entitled "Tenacity of Mountain Water" that explores the interlinked web of life through a simple narrative. Weaving the threads of eco consciousness through the narrative, he marvels at how a tiny rivulet of water becomes a beautiful roaring cascade nourishing and beautifying the entire landscape. The story offers the informed reader a chance to investigate the underlying ecological values and also revisit the human perception of natural resources.

Amrapali Chawla (2014) Nature and literature have always shared an intimate and amicable relationship as is evidenced in the works of poets and other writers down the ages across the globe. Today this close relationship between the natural and social world is being analyzed and emphasized in every sphere under the name of 'Bionomics' or 'Ecological Studies'. It is the study of environmental systems. "Environmental" usually means relating to the natural, versus human-made world; the "systems" means that ecology is, by its very nature, not interested in just the components of nature individually but especially in how the parts interact. But, as we can look around, that the whole globe is in the clutches of serious ecological crisis. Rapid environmental changes cause mass habitat extinctions known as Holocene extinction. One estimate is that <1% -3% of the species that have existed on Earth are extinct. History has proved that the changes in environment have been so acute that sometimes it has wiped the whole civilization from the face of the earth. Therefore, if we

wish to pass on a safe and healthy world to posterity then protection of environment is the issue of immediate concern. Literature could not remain unaffected from this depletion and my paper is related not only to this burning issue of ecological crisis but also focuses on the eco-conscious efforts put in by various Indian English writers back in history till date and how the concern for nature changes in Indian literature from reverence to destruction. A detailed study of the writings of Ruskin Bond, a contemporary Indian English writer, brings forth his great concern and reverence towards Nature and therefore his works have been of primary concern in this paper.

Mr. Yatharth N. Vaidya (2012) the present research paper proposes to study the renowned Indian writer, Ruskin Bond, in terms of his dearly love towards nature. No other Indian writer has expressed his/her love for nature/country in a better way than Ruskin Bond. To put it in his own words, the researcher puts the quote of Ruskin Bond as he himself has said, "I am as Indian as the dust of plains or the grass of a mountain meadow." (Bond, VII – IX). The paper also distinguishes Bond's presentation of Nature from other Indian Writers. The researcher has taken into account select fiction of Ruskin Bond to ponder his love for nature. The researcher proposes to study the social, cultural, economic and geographical image of North India in the novels and short stories of Ruskin Bond. The researcher proposes to examine in what way Ruskin Bond has been able to do justice to the emotional development of his characters in such a setting. Ruskin Bond's case is not of dual inheritance but of double inheritance. Bond grew up in changing India and his loyalty always remained with and still remains with India. After the Independence most of the Britishers migrated to their native country but very few who were very old to migrate or who did not have financial support, stayed in India.

Patrika Handique (2015) Patriarchy is delineated as that kind of society where the supreme authority is vested in the hands of males. Due to such social system, a type of hierarchy and hegemony is maintained between the two biological sexes. But, it is maintained that such a system is not a biological but social construction. In patriarchy, females are perceived through the lens of being mere sexual object with no feelings. They have to undergo a lot of misery and exploitation in different fields and phases. This paper is an attempt to analyze Ruskin Bond's attempt to portray such a patriarchal system, that which he certainly observes through the eyes of criticism. If explored

minutely, one can find traces of feminine suffering depicted inhabited.

Dr. Diya Panjwani (2020) there are reminiscences of British Imperial history when white man migrated to new lands. Life in India gave Britishers a challenge due to extreme weather condition. As a result, they made hills as their luxury homes. After ‘the order of the day’, when British Raj came to an end, the white man lost their shikar, fashionable teas, polo and horse riding. After enjoying from diamonds to grain, poor whites migrated back to England. Living lavish lives of sahibs, they naturally looked back in anger at what they had lost. This time they struggled to make their identity in their own homeland. British Raj gave birth to another community called Anglo Indians, people who were racially mixed and people of British descent who chose to stay in India. Ruskin Bond’s family was one of them. He was in his teens when his father died serving the Raj as a pilot officer in the Royal Air Force. In the cohesive era of doubts and political unrest, Bond got solace in the lap of nature. When he left for England, he realized that he is rooted in the soil of India. Not only did he reject to settle in England, but also to earn money by writing about India’s poverty and politics. His ‘self’ is visible in his works where he declared India as his home. He confesses ‘Race did not make me an Indian. But history did. And in the long run, it’s history that counts’.

Dr Gulnaz Fatma (2013) Ruskin Bond has won the hearts of millions of readers with his countless charming short stories and introspective novels. From biographical tales about acting as a grandfather to children, to tales of unrequited love, the cross-cultural dimensions of Indian society, and the power and beauty of nature, Bond's more than forty novels and short story collections have made him an internationally acclaimed author. In *Ruskin Bond's World*, Indian scholar Gulnaz Fatma, Ph.D. sheds light on one of her country's greatest and most beloved storytellers, tracing the influences in his stories from a childhood in colonial India through his time spent in Britain and his life today among India's hills and mountains. She explores the biographical as well as the imaginary elements of his fiction and explores in detail the themes of nature, children, love, and animals in his novels and short stories. Throughout these pages is revealed Bond's love for humanity in all its variety, from honorable rogues to proud beggars, heartbroken lovers, and wise old men and women. "Gulnaz has successfully traced major themes in Bond's prolific work under the lenses of her careful examination, proving he is the product of his environment...a sincere study of Ruskin Bond." --Stephen Gill,

Ph.D., author and poet laureate of Ansted University "I welcome this long overdue study of one of India's literary shining lights. Ruskin Bond's *World* opens the door to a deeper understanding of one author's imagination and deepest wisdom.

Dr. Archana Singh (2016) Man is wildly misusing natural resources, and the exhaustion of these resources is a matter of deep concern. After exuberantly and lavishly misusing the natural resources environmentalists and scientists showed the apprehension about the exhaustion of fresh air and water in the entire globe. It is the time to understand and realize that all beings are crucial to retain the beauty and health of the earth. Man being considered the most powerful social animal, must not turn into terrorist to usurp the territory of other beings to fulfil his greed. Ruskin Bond's stories echoes his concern towards the devastating environment which is the result of the ignorance of man, and his approach to lead a luxurious life. Bond's stories are an imaginative and honest revelations of his sensitivity towards nature. In the name of development man plays a mean and wicked game with the creatures and has started invading their homes by cutting mountains and roads. Bond reiterates in almost every story of him about the moral duty of man towards nature and above all his stories inculcate a sense of duty and responsibility towards the nature.

2.1 Research Gap

Love, romance, separation, loneliness, happiness, enmity and friendship are represented in his writings. Nature provides him with materials and content for his writings as well as creative vigour. The picturesque and scenic environment of old Dehradun and Mussoorie serve as background to most of his short stories. Animals and plants get ample space in his writings. Several books have been written on Ruskin Bond analyzing different aspects of his writings. These books analyze his writings from a general perspective. In some of the critical writings on him, nature and the environment find mention, but the primary interest is characterization, style, major themes and autobiographical aspects.



3. OBJECTIVES

1. To study his major works and the way of life he adopted to live as a man to become a writer
2. To analyze the reflection of love in the work of Ruskin Bond
3. To analyze the theme and writing style of Ruskin bond
4. to study his major works and the way of life he adopted to live as a man to become a writer
5. To analyze the Ruskin love for Nature in his works

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research methodology in the present investigation will be exploratory, interpretative, evaluative and analytical. Diverse themes in the selected books are contemplated. All through the research work while showing the citations and references MLA Handbook's seventh addition is to be utilized.

Primary Data

The primary data will be collected with the assistance of the selected books. It will be additionally collected with the assistance of dialog with policy makers, administrators, journalist and adolescents.

Secondary Data

The secondary data will be collected from numerous resources like visiting to various Libraries, Books, Research Journals, Internet, Magazine, and Literary Columns in Newspapers, George Bernard Shaw Official Website and Speeches.



5. EXPECTED OUTCOME

Ruskin Bond, the most acclaimed short story writer was born and brought up in the foothills of Dehradun, had the privilege to play in the lap of nature. The pleasure and the love he gets from the nature and the animals are very well woven and expressed in his stories. He also expressed his apprehension about exhaustion of greenery through his works. Bond in his work shows that nature has a great healing power. The nearer one goes to nature the greater the fascination is. If a person is in love with nature he can never be a pessimist because of nature's fecundity. His stories show his unquenchable love for nature, trees, the mountains and the flora and fauna of the Himalayas. Thus, this paper reveals that Ruskin Bond who is known to be much absorbed with themes like love, nature and childhood, also deals with such a sensitive issue of female discrimination and oppression. He goes on to criticize the social conditioning and the prevalent abusive ideas regarding females. He realistically draws the contemporary patriarchal society, underneath which his feministic outlook can be observed definitely. He, through the representation of patriarchy, goes on to speak for the cause of women.

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