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Abstract:

Ruskin Bond's love for flowers, trees, birds, animals, mountains, valleys, rivers, flowers, blue sky, starry night is all pervasive in his stories, essays, poetry and novels. Ruskin Bond, who is known as 'The writer Saint of Garhwal Himalaya' lives in his 'Ivy Cottage' built at the edge of the snowy mountains in Mussoorie, the lap of the mother Nature. Ruskin Bond's stories reveal his deep love for Nature and his awe and wonder to embrace the mystery and divinity of Nature. His stories like Rusty, the boy from the Hills, Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra, Rain in the Mountains, The Cherry Tree, Grandfather's Zoo, Into the Wild and his essays- Adventures in the Bunyan Tree, In the Garden of My Dream, Owls in the Family all describe the vivid and pictorial panorama of Nature in varied forms. The present article reveals Ruskin Bond's intense and profound love for the various objects in Nature depicted in his short stories. The paper also strives to analyse the multidimensional perception of Ruskin Bond's love for Nature from sheer sensual attraction of the scenery to the presence of the Supreme Being in every bit of Nature.

Keywords: Mystery and Divinity, Multidimensional Perception, Vivid Panorama of Nature, Healing Sanctuary, Interconnectedness of Life, Environmental Conservation

Introduction:

The Himalayas' captivating scenery is the source of Ruskin Bond's passion for the natural world. Here, the author found inspiration and a place to play in the region's flowing rivers, verdant forests, and towering mountains. A crucial tool in communicating his passion for the natural world is Ruskin Bond's literary skill. He turns the natural world into a real, breathing entity in the pages of his short stories. Characters are shaped and the story thread is actively shaped by nature, which is more than just a background. A connection that beyond the written word is fostered by Ruskin Bond's outstanding literary prose, which encourages readers to interact with nature on a sensual and emotional level. The purpose of this paper is to examine how Ruskin Bond's depiction of nature transcends simple scenic descriptions and explores the complex interactions between humans and the natural world as well as the significant influence of nature on the lives of the characters.

Themes of Nature in Ruskin Bond's Short Stories:

The literary canvases that depict the beauty and complexity of the natural world are Ruskin Bond's short stories. In his stories, nature is not just a setting; rather, it is a dynamic and essential component that defines the characters' lives and the overall theme of his writings. The following points delineate the major themes of nature that pervade Bond's short stories and illustrate the depth of his relationship with the natural world.

1. Nature as a Healing Sanctuary.

Nature as an oasis of healing and comfort is a recurring motifs in Ruskin Bond's stories. Characters can find solace from life's hardships in the tranquil hills, bubbling brooks, and rustling forests.

In the essay *A Little World of Mud* Bond describes his memories at a small pond which was near his grandfather's house in Dehradun. As Bond had always a deep attraction for birds, trees, flowers animals and so on, he used to go to the pond when he was a very small kid. He would be then one with the whole life and ecology around him. In the beginning, he would go with his grandfather. He watched the croaking frogs and tadpoles for hours. Later he used to go on his own without the support and company of his grandfather. Bond gives a very lively and vivid picture that how one day he went to a pond and found few buffaloes dipped in it and a boy swimming carefreely and singing in sheer delight. Bond describes:

"One day, when I reached the pond, I found it occupied by buffaloes. Their owners, a boy, little older than me, was swimming about in the middle of the pond. He pulled himself up on the back of one of his buffaloes, stretched his slim brown body out on the animals glistening back, and started singing to himself"¹

Ruskin Bond depicts nature as a caring force that provides emotional and spiritual renewal, whether the protagonist is finding serenity by a riverside or in the solitude of the mountains.

2. Interconnectedness of Life.

The stories of Ruskin Bond frequently highlight how all living things are interdependent within the natural world. Animals and plants play a crucial role in shaping the story and are not just incidental features. The poem *Cherry Tree* is also exclusively subjective poem in which Bond traces his memories in his childhood when he shows a seed of cherry tree and then nurses it every day and ultimately sees it loaded with beautiful cherries. Bond reveals his feelings of wonder, mystery and delight of watching the tree growing, blossoming and finally bearing the fruits. The cherry tree is an evidence of his belief and determination that how any deed done with affection, love and faith gets success and bears the sweet fruits. The cherry tree symbolises the victory of a person's dreams; the fulfillment of humans' aspirations. Finally, the poet relaxes under the shade of tree and finds the deep solace of his lifelong tiles. Bond reflects:

"I lay on the grass, at ease,
Looked up through leaves, at the blue
Blind sky, at the finches as they flew
And flitted through the dappled green,
While bees in an ecstasy drank
Of nectar from each bloom, ...
Yes, I! - praised night and stars and trees;
A small tall cherry grown by me."²

The interwoven web of existence is made clear by the delicate balance between many species, the symbiotic interactions in the forest, and the cyclical aspect of life. Ruskin Bond advocates a holistic viewpoint that acknowledges the interconnectedness of all living beings through his stories.

3. Seasons and the Passage of Time.

A metaphor for the cyclical cycle of life, growth, and rejuvenation is seen in the changing of the seasons. By deftly capturing the spirit of every season, Ruskin Bond uses it to reflect the psychological and emotional arcs of his characters. From the calm reflection of winter to the blossoming of spring, which represents fresh starts, the seasons take on the role of essential storytellers, signifying the passage of time and the development of both characters and the natural world.

4. Nature as a Moral Compass.

Ruskin Bond instills a naturalistic moral compass in his stories. Characters' ethical issues frequently get solved when they comprehend the cycles and rhythms of nature. The hills and rivers take on the role of silent teachers, imparting wisdom on resiliency, endurance, and life's cyclical nature. This subject fosters a connection between moral principles and the inherent order found in nature by imparting a sense of wisdom acquired from watching the natural world.

In the story, *The Window* the writer delineates the fanciful world of a small girl, Koki who is always full of wonder and excitement to watch the world outside the window of the writer's room. As the writer was a keen observer of human life, he contemplated on the various aspects of human life and used to define and describe it in his writings. Whenever the writer is exhausted and tired of it sitting and writing, he used to watch the activities across the window for hours and hours. The writer describes:

"At first, I was lonely in my room. But then I discovered the power of my window. I looked out on the banyan tree, on the garden, on the broad path that ran besides the building, and out over the roofs of other houses, over roads and fields, as far as the horizon..."³

5. Environmental Conservation and Awareness.

Ruskin Bond infuses ecological consciousness themes into his stories as an advocate of

conserving the environment. He fosters awareness of the environment's sensitivity to human interference, the need of responsible stewardship, and the fragility of ecosystems through nuanced stories. Through his writings, Ruskin Bond teaches readers about the environment and encourages them to consider their own part in conserving nature. As an advocate for environmental preservation, Ruskin Bond incorporates elements of ecological consciousness into his writings. Through complex narratives, he raises awareness of the environment's susceptibility to human influence, the necessity for responsible stewardship, and the fragility of ecosystems. Ruskin Bond informs readers about environmental issues and implores them to think about their personal role in preserving the natural world through his writings.

6. Nature as a Character:

Ruskin Bond has a tendency to humanize nature, making it seem like it is actively involved in how things happen. The relationship between the natural world and humanity is emphasized in this portrayal. Nature is given life and personality in Ruskin Bond's short stories, demonstrating his narrative skills and ability to go beyond traditional narratives. Characters like nature have an impact on the lives of people in Ruskin Bond's stories, just as human characters have on the plot. It's common for characters to contact with nature to experience metamorphoses, uncover answers, or get deep insights. Reflecting the influence of nature on the human mind, the hills, rivers, and forests serve as accelerators for personal development.

7. The Healing Power of Nature:

In many of Ruskin Bond's stories, the characters find healing and comfort in nature. Nature turns into an oasis for people looking for solace from life's hardships, whether it is the serene hills or a soothing river. The peaceful surroundings in Ruskin Bond's short stories frequently serve as both an appealing setting and an effective source of comfort and healing.

In the essay *In the Garden of My Dream* Bond puts forth a detailed narration of the varied flowers in the yard of the house of his grandfather. Cosmos and marigold were his favourite of all. However, his grandmother didn't like marigold whereas, his grandfather always liked to have the marigold. Bond describes how one day their grandparents had a quarrel on the subject of marigold. Bond recalls:

"My grandparents once went to war with each other over the marigold. Grandfather had grown a few in one corner of the garden. Just as they began flowering, they vanished- Granny had removed them overnight! ... Then by calling them 'French' marigolds, Grandfather managed to reintroduce them to the garden. Granny liked the idea of having something 'French' in her garden. Such is human nature!"⁴

Later Bond goes on describing the wonderful garden with all his varied favourite flowers. He presents a very vivid and lively picture of the flowers in the garden. He puts forth:

"A sun-lover, I like plenty of yellow on the hillsides and in gardens-sunflowers, Californian poppies, winter jasmine, St. John's Wort, buttercups, wild strawberries, mustard in bloom... But if you live in a hot place, you might prefer cooling blues and soft purples—forget - me-nots, bluebells, cornflowers, lavender."⁵

A recurrent subject in Ruskin Bond's stories is the healing power of nature, which speaks to his grasp of the environment's tremendous influence on human spirit and his close relationship with it. Whether it's a lone walk in the woods or a silent meditation by a riverbank, Ruskin Bond's protagonists often enjoy moments of touch with nature. Characters are able to achieve clarity, rejuvenation, and a new sense of purpose through these close relationships with nature. In these situations, nature becomes a source of comfort and companion, offering a space for emotional healing and self-discovery.

8. Ecological Awareness:

In addition to his captivating narrative, Ruskin Bond exhibits a strong ecological consciousness in his short stories. Ruskin Bond explores environmental issues, promotes conservation, and emphasizes the delicate balance between people and the natural world through sensitive tales and nuanced images. The rich and complex ecosystems that surround his narratives are frequently explored in his stories. Whether they are river valleys, dense forests, or the Himalayan

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Mountains, he depicts these ecosystems as being brittle and vulnerable to the effects of human activity. The fragility of these habitats becomes a subtle appeal for comprehension and conservation.

Ruskin Bond gently draws attention to how human activity affects the environment through his characters and stories. In his works, issues like pollution, deforestation, and the invasion of natural areas are addressed and serve as warnings about the far-reaching consequences of unbridled human activity. Bond promotes a sense of responsibility for the natural world and asks readers to consider how they personally affect the environment.

Conclusion:

The profound love of nature and his ability to portray the intricate connections between humans and the natural world are both evident in Ruskin Bond's short stories. The distinctive landscapes of Ruskin Bond's early years, his upbringing, and his own experiences all played a significant role in his strong love of nature. Bond's early years were greatly influenced by the Himalayan region, with its beautiful mountains, deep woods, and clean rivers. His emotional state was profoundly affected by the overwhelming grandeur and variety of the surrounding environment, which helped him to develop a lifelong love and respect for the peace and beauty of nature. Ruskin Bond's appreciation of the natural world is a well-balanced blend of his experiences, moves, cultural diversity, and literary inspirations.

Readers and supporters of the environment alike continue to be moved by this passion, which transcends simple adoration and develops into a profound, contemplative relationship with the natural world. Readers who interact with Bond's works go through the landscapes of his recollections and discover the spiritual and emotional aspects of nature in addition to its physical beauty, which makes his love of it ageless and universal.

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