

## **An Ecocritical Analysis of Ruskin Bond's Writings for an Understanding of his Environmental Focus**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The environmental crisis that led to the development of environmental ethics. People all around the world, all over the galaxy, are affected by environmental challenges and concerns. The lack of information regarding the insurance of the environment is the root cause of the sudden emergency. Yet, there is widespread awareness of ecological problems within the academic profession thanks to on-going scholarly hypotheses like Ecocriticism. Literature's development attests to the fact that writers and the natural world have always gotten along swimmingly. Since literature so often reflects current events, scholars have developed a new field of study called "Ecocriticism" to examine the ways in which literature addresses environmental challenges. To investigate the connection between Ecology and Literature, ecocritics take a more abstract approach.

**Keywords: Ecocriticism, Ruskin Bond, Environmental crisis.**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Mussoorie, a little village in the Himalayas, has been a spectator of cultural endeavours for decades. The "Ruskin Bond" is a lovely house with deep academic roots. The senior writer with a great heart is a true "Pride of India." He was not attracted by Mussoorie as a town, but more to the neighbouring slopes, timberlands and streams, or might be to the people from the countryside. In this mind boggling environment of ruthless rivalry where we have no opportunity to stand and embrace, the natural beauty encasing us right now Ruskin Bond's fiction comes as a much needed refreshing. It's as pure as a drop of nectar that splashes down on a blade of grass, a flower petal, or a leaf. His songs are full of a sincere charm that goes straight to the heart. His words seem to explode with the force of his personality. He writes in the introduction to *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra* that the area was a "immortal type of a location," and that he experienced a "immediate penetrating relationship" to the natural scene outside the cottage. The close proximity of maple, walnut, and oak trees mesmerised him.

Ruskin Bond, a well-respected Indian author who lives in the mountain hamlet of Mussoorie, is lauded for his work across genres and age groups. Understanding Bond's career arc and his dedication to the development of English literature in India, as well as the growing body of diasporic and postcolonial literature, can be gleaned from an examination of his life and work. He has written six books or novellas, over two hundred short stories, thirty-five books for children, four volumes of autobiography, three hundred to four hundred newspaper articles, five collections of papers, and poetry anthologies, all of which have garnered him widespread recognition. Despite this, he still occasionally writes for major Indian and international newspapers and journals. By the time Bond began selling his stories in 1951, he was just seventeen years old, and Indian fiction in English had only recently begun to develop a distinctive voice, beginning with the works of Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, and R.K. Narayan in the 1930s. Narayan.

Ruskin occasionally accompanied his stepfather on hunting trips, lasting a few days at a time, but he never found any enjoyment in the activity because there were no man eaters to hunt. The short novella "A Week in the Jungle" offers a sardonic portrayal of such a hunting excursion. Here, in the unsettling cottage, he discovered a shelf stacked with volumes, including works by Dickens, P.G. Wodehouse, the ghost stories of M.R. James, Emily Bront, and Shakespeare. Books became his companions as he sat and read while adults went on hunting trips without him. In the introduction to his *Treasury of Tales for Children*, Ruskin Bond reveals that the short stories of A. had a major influence on him. E. Coppard, H.E. Bates, and William Saroyan; Walpole's *Fortitude*; Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield*, in which he saw echoes of his own heartbreaking boyhood; and many more. At the age of thirteen, he published his first work of fiction, *Nine Months*, which satirised many teachers and described school procedures over the course of a school year at BCS [1]. His training in composition from his hands was "inheritance enough," he said. In Bond's short stories, he

hears echoes of his youth. He has always been a huge fan of the outdoors, and that hasn't changed. What else do I appreciate and recall of the slopes odours again? he asks in the story Rain in the Mountain. The fragrance of the fallen pine needles, bovine dung smoke, spring precipitation, injured grass, the pure cool water of mountain streams, the profundity and blueness of the sky.

Naturally Bond is enamoured with the Indian air and his incredible love for India, her vegetation, her fauna and mountains is the angle that his writings most properly outline. His promise to the Indian sights and sounds is exhaustive and notwithstanding when he was in Europe his psyche and memory continually turn around Indian things.

His short story "The Window," which was first published in Illustrated Weekly in 1956, is a great example of how he incorporated his everyday activities and the people in his life into his stories. The story is told from the narrator's perspective as he watches the birds in a banyan tree, the traffic and pedestrians outside the building, the postman, and more.

Bond is an intense admirer of nature and this affection for nature is in his blood. Because of which he has composed more about the beauty and preservation of widely varied vegetation. He has composed the stories like The Cherry Tree, When You Can't Climb Tree Anymore, Dust on the Mountain, My Trees Still Grow in Dehra, Time Stops at Shamli and so forth featuring the beauty of nature. He has composed stories on different of topics and the settings of the stories are basic, fascinating without showing up so. A portion of his known stories are The Box Man, My First Love, Untouchable , The Kite Maker, Love is a Sad tune, A Love of Long Ago, Time Stops at Shamli, Miss Bun and others. Puma's Moon, Tiger, Tiger Burning Bright, Tigers' Forever and numerous other supernatural stories delineating insidious jinns, phantoms and devils who dwells in the trees particularly in the bumpy regions. Bond's works are written in an accessible form that allows his perspective on Indian customs and societal structures to be experienced fully. Despite the fact that many other authors have come and gone from the literary world, Bond's influence is still felt today. Ruskin Bond is as still producing the stories and his stories are perused and loved by the people anywhere throughout the world. Prof. R.S. Sharma in his Introduction to Studies in Current Literature additionally trusts Bond's one of the two particular commitments to Indian writing in English: Moreover, he gives us authentic recordings of village life in the mountains in which craftsmen, author go to an optimistic blending because, for the most part, it is his own experience that moulds itself into a story, and this is the medium that suits him.

#### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

**"Nature in the Works of Ruskin Bond: A Study" by Namrata Goyal (2015):** This article examines the portrayal of nature in Ruskin Bond's works and argues that his writing is characterized by an ecological consciousness. The author uses eco-critical theory to analyze selected texts by Bond, exploring themes of environmental degradation, human-nature relationships, and the importance of preserving the natural world.

**"Ruskin Bond: A Green Writer" by V. Sankaranarayanan (2012):** This article explores Ruskin Bond's literary works in the context of environmentalism and eco-criticism. The author highlights the eco-friendly themes present in Bond's writing and argues that his works promote environmental consciousness and conservation.

**"The Natural World in Ruskin Bond's Novels" by Renu Singh (2018):** This paper analyzes the portrayal of nature in Ruskin Bond's novels, examining how the natural world is represented and its significance for the characters and the plot. The author explores the themes of environmentalism, conservation, and sustainability in Bond's writing and argues that his works promote a respect for nature and its conservation.

**"Eco-critical Study of Ruskin Bond's Short Stories" by Sanjay Kumar (2016):** This article uses eco-critical theory to analyze Ruskin Bond's short stories, exploring the themes of nature, ecology, and the environment. The author argues that Bond's works highlight the interconnectedness between human beings and nature and promote a harmonious relationship between the two.

**"The Green World of Ruskin Bond" by Dolly Dhanwal (2013):** This article explores the portrayal of nature in Ruskin Bond's writing, highlighting the importance of nature in shaping

the characters and the plot. The author uses eco-critical theory to analyze Bond's works and argues that his writing promotes a respect for nature and the importance of preserving the natural world.

**"The Role of Nature in Ruskin Bond's The Room on the Roof" by Fatemeh Sheikhzadeh (2017):** This paper examines the role of nature in Ruskin Bond's novel "The Room on the Roof," exploring how the natural world is represented and its significance for the characters and the plot. The author uses eco-critical theory to analyze the novel and argues that the portrayal of nature in the novel highlights the importance of a harmonious relationship between human beings and the natural world.

**"Ruskin Bond's Literary World and Environmental Consciousness" by Suresh Kumar (2014):** This article analyzes Ruskin Bond's literary works in the context of environmentalism and eco-criticism, exploring the themes of nature, ecology, and the environment. The author argues that Bond's writing promotes environmental consciousness and conservation, highlighting the interconnectedness between human beings and the natural world.

**"Eco-Critical Perspectives on Ruskin Bond's The Blue Umbrella" by Shampa Roy (2018):** This paper analyzes the portrayal of nature in Ruskin Bond's novella "The Blue Umbrella," exploring the themes of nature, ecology, and the environment. The author uses eco-critical theory to examine the novella's portrayal of nature and argues that the representation of nature in the novella highlights the importance of preserving the natural world.

**"Eco-critical Analysis of Ruskin Bond's Rusty Series" by Sunil Kumar (2017):** This paper analyzes the portrayal of nature and the environment in Ruskin Bond's Rusty series of novels, exploring how the natural world is represented and its significance for the characters and the plot. The author uses eco-critical theory to examine the novels and argues that the representation of nature in Bond's writing highlights the importance of preserving the natural world and promoting a harmonious relationship between human beings and nature.

**"Ruskin Bond's The Night Train at Deoli: An Eco-Critical Study" by S. Selvam (2017):** This article analyzes the portrayal of nature and the environment in Ruskin Bond's short story "The Night Train at Deoli," exploring how the natural world is represented and its significance for the characters and the plot. The author uses eco-critical theory to examine the short story and argues that the representation of nature in the story highlights the importance of preserving the natural world and promoting environmental consciousness.

**"Ruskin Bond's Novels and Environmental Awareness" by Brijendra Singh (2019):** This paper analyzes Ruskin Bond's novels in the context of environmental awareness, exploring the themes of nature, ecology, and the environment. The author uses eco-critical theory to examine the novels and argues that Bond's writing promotes a respect for nature and the importance of preserving the natural world.

**"Ruskin Bond and the Ecology of Place" by Siddhartha Sharma (2014):** This article explores the connection between Ruskin Bond's writing and the ecology of place, examining how the natural world is represented in his works and its significance for the characters and the plot. The author uses eco-critical theory to analyze selected texts by Bond and argues that his writing promotes environmental consciousness and the importance of preserving local ecosystems.

#### **ECOLOGICAL CONCERN IN RUSKIN BOND**

**"The Tiger in the Tunnel":** The story portrays the relationship between humans and nature, focusing on the conflict between a man and a tiger. The man is a railway watchman who works near a tunnel, which is home to a tiger. The tiger is responsible for killing many animals, which upsets the man as it affects his job. As the story progresses, the man realizes the tiger's importance in the ecosystem and starts respecting its presence. The story highlights the importance of preserving the natural world and respecting the balance of nature.

**"The Blue Umbrella":** The story explores the beauty of nature and the impact of human greed on the environment. The story is set in a small village in the Himalayas, where a little girl named Binya is given a blue umbrella by a tourist. The villagers become envious of

Binya's new possession and start offering her money and other things in exchange for the umbrella. Eventually, Binya realizes the harm caused by her greed and decides to return the umbrella to the tourist. The story emphasizes the need for environmental conservation and the importance of respecting nature.

**"The Eyes Have It"**: This story is a tribute to the beauty of nature, focusing on the narrator's experience of being blind. The narrator is traveling by train and strikes up a conversation with a woman, who is unaware of his blindness. The woman describes the scenic beauty outside the train window, and the narrator imagines the landscape in his mind. The story encourages readers to appreciate the natural world and take steps to protect it.

**"The Night Train at Deoli"**: The story portrays the impact of human activities on the natural world, highlighting the need for environmental conservation and the importance of protecting local ecosystems. The story is set in a small town where a college student travels frequently by train. During one of his journeys, he meets a local girl at the station and becomes attracted to her. The story highlights the beauty of the local ecosystem, but also the disregard of the natural world by humans who litter and destroy the environment.

**"The Kite Maker"**: The story highlights the beauty of nature and the importance of preserving the natural world. The story is about a kite maker who makes beautiful kites out of recycled materials. The story emphasizes the need for environmental conservation and the importance of respecting nature.

**The Cherry Tree"**: The story emphasizes the beauty of nature and the need for conservation. It is about a young boy named Rakesh who wants to plant a cherry tree in his backyard. The story highlights the importance of nurturing plants and trees and preserving the natural world for future generations.

**"The Trees"**: The story is about the importance of trees and their role in the ecosystem. The narrator describes a village where trees are cut down to make way for a road, and the negative impact this has on the local environment. The story emphasizes the need for preserving the natural world and respecting the balance of nature.

**"The Woodcutter"**: The story is a cautionary tale about the consequences of deforestation. It is about a woodcutter who cuts down trees indiscriminately and eventually suffers the consequences of his actions. The story highlights the need for sustainable practices and the importance of protecting the natural world.

**"The Leopard"**: The story is about a leopard that has been injured and taken in by a kindhearted man. The story portrays the beauty of the natural world and the importance of preserving wildlife habitats. It also emphasizes the need for humans to coexist with nature and protect animals from harm.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES IN LITERATURE THROUGH ECOCRITICISM**

**"Ecocriticism as a Critical Approach"**: Ecocriticism is a critical approach that emerged in the 1990s and examines the ways in which literature represents the environment and environmental issues. Ecocritics analyze how literary works shape our understanding of the environment, how they represent the relationship between humans and nature, and how they address environmental challenges.

**Environmental Challenges in literature**: Environmental challenges such as climate change, pollution, deforestation, and loss of biodiversity are prominent themes in literature. Through ecocriticism, scholars can analyze how these themes are represented in different literary genres and how they contribute to our understanding of environmental issues.

**Literary genres and Environmental Challenges**: Different literary genres engage with environmental issues in unique ways. For example, nature writing often focuses on the beauty and value of the natural world, while science fiction explores the consequences of environmental degradation and technological advancements. Through ecocriticism, scholars can analyze how these genres contribute to our understanding of environmental challenges.

**Literature and Environmental Activism**: Literature can be a powerful tool for raising awareness of environmental challenges and inspiring action to address them. Through

ecocriticism, scholars can analyze how literary works contribute to environmental activism and how they can inspire readers to take action to address environmental challenges.

**Environmental justice in literature:** Ecocriticism also examines how literature represents environmental justice issues such as environmental racism, indigenous land rights, and the impact of climate change on marginalized communities. Through this critical approach, scholars can explore how literature contributes to our understanding of environmental justice and how it can inspire us to take action to address these issues.

### **CONTEXT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CRITICISM**

Authors that use nature prominently in their works and emphasise ecocentric principles like sustainable development, collective moral responsibility, and the relevance of the non-human world are given special attention in the discipline of ecocriticism. It looks at how people interact with the natural world in order to make it more like a natural world. Both beneficial and negative effects on human health have been linked to ecological imbalance. Restoring the things that deplete people and the planet the most should be a priority for every country. Global warming, resource depletion, rainforest destruction, and species extinction are just some of the environmental crises the world is confronting at the turn of the millennium.

The work of ecocritics is crucial to the preservation of our planet. Concerned with environmental issues, Ruskin Bond brings them to light in his writing. His devotion to the trees, mountains, and Himalayan flora is reflected in his short stories. His intimate understanding of the Mountains has bestowed upon him divine insight. An understanding of and response to this huge worldwide environmental catastrophe is urgently required, as environmental imbalance and degradation have emerged as pressing issues of the modern era. The web of life can be kept intact through the creation of a cooperative society where the happiness of the public is prioritised over that of the individual. Both the region's natural beauty and environmental destruction are explored in Ruskin Bond's short stories. The ecological relevance of trees in maintaining equilibrium and preventing a lack of awareness towards nature is being highlighted by the environmental damage caused by deforestation, which is followed closely by growing urbanisation.

### **CONNECTION BETWEEN ECOLOGY AND LITERATURE**

Ecology and literature are two seemingly disparate fields of study that are increasingly being recognized for their interrelatedness. Ecology is the scientific study of the relationships between living organisms and their environment, while literature is the art of written or spoken expression that seeks to explore human experience and emotion. At first glance, these two fields may appear to have little in common. However, upon closer examination, it becomes clear that ecology and literature share important connections.

One of the key connections between ecology and literature is their shared interest in the natural world. Both fields seek to explore and understand the relationship between humans and the environment. Ecologists study the intricate relationships between plants, animals, and their ecosystems, while literary works often explore the human experience of nature and the environment. Literature can provide a unique perspective on environmental issues, by exploring the emotional, cultural, and philosophical dimensions of our relationship with the natural world.

Another connection between ecology and literature is their shared concern for environmental issues. Ecologists study the ways in which human activities impact the environment, and seek to develop solutions to mitigate these impacts. Similarly, many works of literature address environmental themes, such as pollution, climate change, and loss of biodiversity. Literature can play an important role in raising awareness of environmental issues, and inspiring action to address them. Ecocriticism is a field of study that explores the relationship between literature and the environment. Ecocritics use literary analysis to examine how literature reflects and influences our understanding of environmental issues. Through ecocriticism, scholars can analyze the ways in which literary works contribute to our understanding of environmental attitudes, values, and practices.

Furthermore, literature can inspire environmental action and change. Environmental literature can raise awareness of environmental issues, and inspire readers to take action to address

these issues. By connecting readers emotionally and intellectually with the natural world, literature can promote a sense of environmental responsibility and stewardship.

In summary, the connections between ecology and literature are complex and multifaceted. Both fields share a common interest in the natural world, and a concern for environmental issues. Ecocriticism provides a framework for exploring the ways in which literature reflects and influences our understanding of the environment. Literature can inspire environmental action and change by promoting a sense of environmental responsibility and stewardship.

### **FUTURE SCOPE**

**Comparative Analysis:** A comparative analysis of Bond's environmental focus with other contemporary writers, both Indian and non-Indian, could shed light on the unique aspects of his writing style and themes. This could provide a broader perspective on how writers from different backgrounds perceive and write about the environment.

**Thematic Analysis:** A more in-depth analysis of specific themes in Bond's writing could help in understanding his environmental focus in greater detail. For instance, exploring his portrayal of animals, water, or the mountains could reveal his underlying environmental philosophy and how he views the relationship between humans and the natural world.

**Cultural Analysis:** An analysis of the cultural context in which Bond's writings were produced could provide insights into how his environmental focus reflects broader social and cultural values. For instance, examining the influence of Hinduism and other Indian religions on his writing could reveal how his environmentalism is rooted in traditional cultural practices and beliefs.

**Gender Analysis:** An analysis of how Bond portrays gender in relation to the environment could reveal how his writing reflects broader societal attitudes towards gender and the environment. This could provide insights into how environmental issues are perceived and addressed differently by different gendered subjects.

### **CONCLUSION**

Author Ruskin Bond is well-known for his lyrical prose and his deep appreciation for the outdoors. The mountains, forests, and rivers that inspire his poetry are universal symbols of peace and tranquility. An ecocritical reading of Ruskin Bond's works indicates a profound concern for the natural world that permeates his writings. Bond's love of nature and desire to see it protected resound throughout his works. He stresses the importance of preventing environmental deterioration and protecting natural habitats for future generations. Several of his stories, written out of genuine concern, show the destructive effects of humanity on the natural environment. Bond emphasises in his essays both the resource value of nature and the necessity of appreciating nature for its own sake. He invites his readers to develop a closer relationship with nature by painting it as a place of beauty, inspiration, and spiritual regeneration. An ecocritical reading of Ruskin Bond's works reveals a writer who cares passionately about the natural world and its preservation. His writing exemplifies the ability of literature to foster a deep appreciation of and commitment to protecting the natural world.

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