

Deep Ecology: A Concept towards Nature Preservation in the Short Stories of Ruskin Bond

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Abstract – Ruskin Bond is always concerned about nature and its smallest creatures. His minute description about nature always depicts the multifaceted hazards done to nature due to the greed of humanity. He breathes the fresh rejuvenating air of Himalayas to whom he is pledged to defend and protect. Every single piece of writing composed by him reflects his deep love and consideration for Mother Nature. Hardly are there such writers who go so much deep in their dealing of ecology and presents the description of rare species and insects. He values every smallest insect and moth in the great plan of God. Nothing escapes from the microscopic eyes of Bond. The spectacular Himalayas haunted him in England and he rushed back to them to drink the sweet water from lonely rivulets, to roam in the pastures green, to sit amid grooves and to smell the revitalizing fragrance of flowers. Trees and plants are not the background in his stories but the characters itself.

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The phrase 'Deep Ecology' came into existence in 1972 with the writings of Norwegian Philosopher Arne Naess and he along with American Environmentalist George Sessions propounded this concept. Deep Ecology is an environmental philosophy that promotes the inherent worth of all living beings regardless of their utility to human needs. Deep ecology concerns about the interdependent relationship between humans and non-human life forms and the attitude of man towards nature and other creatures. Deep ecology celebrates the richness and diversity of all living forms regardless to the outlook to humans. This theory believes in the notion that non-human life forms also have an equal merit and right to lead their life. In no situation, humans have any point to reduce the affluence and bounty of natural world. The wilderness must be preserved and the human population must be in control so that the natural resources could be saved and used rationally. Deep ecology fosters nature sensitization and simple living. It's an empathetic approach that boosts up nature welfare sensibility outside documents and laws that claims to work for the well-being of animals and other creatures.

Ruskin Bond is a champion of nature and all his works acknowledge the different aspects of nature. The type of descriptions we find in the writings of Ruskin Bond is very rare to see elsewhere. Bond is always concerned about the unknown and unidentified. He always tries to give a colour of peculiarity to every

unfamiliar and common objects of nature. Ruskin Bond regards nature as a biological and breathing entity. Bond is a celebrator of nature and depicts it in mosaic forms. His writings defend the cause of nature. In ecological writings, he created a revolution by his nature celebrating compositions. VLVN Narendra Kumar also expresses the similar views in his article "Environmental Issues in the Shorter Fiction of Ruskin Bond":

"Ruskin Bond holds the view that all the living things and their earthly environment, no less than the humans, possess importance, value and even more rights. On the Contrary these two entities are interconnected and also mutually constitutive" (264)

The story "Mountains in My Blood" is best epitome of the deep ecological thoughts of Bond. While he was there in London, he was always haunted by the great Himalayas with its lonely path that had the woods of rhododendron and oak on the hill named 'Cloud Ends'. In the valley, there is a diversity of different type of vegetation such as wild sorrel dandelions, wild begonia, convolves and many more. Bond is very concerned about ecological diversity that is disappearing very quickly from the nature. Bond's love for these objects reflects in his words:

"There things I remembered - there are the smell of pine nettles, the silk of oak-leaves and the red of

maple, the call of the Himalayas cuckoo, and the mist, like a wet face-cloth, pressing against the hills". (Rain in the Mountains, 93)

The lonely brooks and rivulets are very dear to him and he continuously search for them in the wild nature. He tries hard for the preservation of these natural assets. Without their company, he feels lonely. The story "A Mountain Stream" describes the love of Bond for a rivulet that he finds at the bottom of a small lush green hill where a path was encircled by several kinds of blossoms like wild roses, primroses and rhododendron. So many birds have already been declared endangered by the government. The spotted fork tail too symbolizes these types of creatures; Bond is very concerned about the fate of these raptors. He had great resemblance with these lonely warbles as they epitomize his own personality.

It's very regretting that so many people speak much about nature conservation and preservation but in reality only a few efforts can be seen. They don't have the real proximity with nature. They are the dilettante. Contrary to them, Bond's depiction of nature is very minute and real. Bond says:

"It was always worthwhile tramping through the forest to feast my eyes on the foliage that sprang up in tropical probation, soft, spongy moss, and great stage fern on the trunk of trees. (Rain in the Mountains, 96)

We should always stick to the fact that nature is a living organism and humans are one part of it, not a whole. Other creatures such as trees, plants, birds, animals, and insects too have the right to live happily on the earth. Unfortunately we look at everything in binary oppositions as men versus nature. This oppositional view gives rise to the conflict between culture and nature and leads to the dominance and exploitation of it.

The story "Death of the Trees" exhorts us by the compelling situation of trees, how they have been cut down on the name modernization. On the name of development and progress, a huge damage has been done to nature and its parts have been destroyed pitilessly. Bond regrets about the majestic trees that have been demolished by the contractors. The growth of the trees, Bond compares, with son of Rakesh who symbolises his belief of equality in nature and men. As a small child transforms into a grown up man likewise a small plant too turns into a full bloomed tree. How painful it is to watch a young creature to go. Bond regrets

"Already they felled most of the trees. The walnut was one of the first to go. A tree, I had lived with for over ten years, watching it grow just as I had watched Prem's little son Rakesh, grow up". (Our Tress Still Grow in Dehra, 93)

The heartfelt description of the felling of deodar and oak epitomizes the great concern of Bond for his loving friends. The story is a moving account of

forest's abuse and destruction. Earlier we used to have shadowy and greenery enlaced roads that have been turned into dusty and treeless. We used to come across a lot of mango, Peepal, Banyan and many more huge trees that have been disappeared now. So many government and non-government projects are going on that are gulping many big forest areas and unfortunately that has not been replaced by new forests covers.

"My Father's Trees in Dehra" exemplifies the spirit of deep ecology. It is not the time to give only the instructions and to write down certain points on the pages. Bond always epitomizes the selfless love for nature. He is always dedicated for nature service. In this story, along with his father, he planted many of tamarind, coral and laburnum saplings on the dried riverbed and turned it into a green lush bank of the river. Bond was skeptical about his efforts because the saplings might have been destroyed either by flood or rain that began just after the planting of it. There was no limit of his happiness, when he saw the splendid bloom of marvelous trees that have transformed the rocky area into a green paradise and has given shelter to so many birds and animals and catered to their food needs too. Bond says:

"As I look across the dry water course, my eye is caught by the spectacular red plumes of coral blossom. In contrast with the dry, rocky riverbed, the little island is a green Oasis". (My Tall Green Friends, 47)

The story "All creatures Great and Small" celebrates the rights of animals. Grandfather has a menagerie that occupied strange assortment of different type of creatures such as a hornbill, a python, a monkey and a tortoise. Grandfather loved the monkey so much as he carried her with him to Meerut many times. Though aunt Mable was very apprehensive of those animals still the grandfather defended the stay of animals in the home. To give protection of several animals and birds, they have been given mythological and religious status. They have been associated with different gods and goddesses as peacock with goddess Saraswati, Tiger with Goddess Durga, Cow with lord Krishna, Ox and Snake with lord Shiva etc. This association with mythology helps in preserving and saving wild lives. The village boy Ramu had a great knowledge about the mythological status of so many creatures. Bond writes,

"Many birds are sacred, said Ramu, he told me that both bluejay and god Shiva were called Nilkanth. Shiva had a blue throat, like the bard, because out of compassion for the human race, he had swallowed a deadly poison in his throat". (Our Tree Still Grow in Dehra, 37)

Thanks to people like Ramu who tells such stories to People and writer like Ruskin Bond who spread the message of pity and care in the world. Bond commemorate each and every part of trees.

Everything from the blade of a grass to mountains and rivers becomes the part of his writing. He leaves nothing which is considered to be insignificant or unimportant by the Mass. He is very much conscious to the single leaf of nature. Like Wordsworth, he spiritualizes nature in such stories as "My Tall Green Friends" and "Mother Hill Tree". Like Coleridge he supernaturalizes nature in stories such as "The Angry River". Like Shelley intellectualizes nature as "Binya Passes By" and "Dragon in the Tunnel." And like Keats, he sensualizes nature in stories like "The Glaciers".

His characters are very much conscious to the birds and animals and he believes that other non-human lives must live their lives as humans do. The grandfather greets the rights of animals as

"We must acknowledge their rights. Everywhere, the birds and animals are finding it more difficult to survive it, because we are trying to destroy them and their forest. They have to keep moving as the trees disappear." (All Creatures Great and Small, 38)

The title represents the view point of Bond about non-human life forms. Bond is very alert to the welfare of animals and plants. His stories opens layer after layer to different difficulties, maltreatment, abuses and torments meted out to them.

Ruskin Bond always concerns about the deep ecology of nature and its post effects on human life and existence. As Mrs. L. Srividya and Dr. V. Umadevi writes in her article "Man-Nature Relationship in Ruskin Bond's Sequel novels."

"The Important message that Ruskin Bond conveys through his works is the need to understand ecological principles (interdependency, partnership, flexibility and diversity – the consequence of which is sustainability) on the basis of which a harmonious relationship can be stabilized with the physical world of nature." (21)

We need to take great inspirations from Ruskin Bond to understand the feelings of trees and animals. We should work on the dictum 'No tree eats its own fruit'. It's our individual responsibility to plant as many trees as possible. The multiplication of vegetation will bring the real prosperity and happiness to the world. Now is the time for the principle 'Walk the talk.' Everyone has to understand his/her responsibility seriously otherwise we are moving towards catastrophe.

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