



# Echoes of Nature: Ruskin Bond's Deep Affection for the Natural World in The Room on the Roof

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## ABSTRACT

In today's fast-paced and materialistic world, the cherished memories of our childhood days have faded away. Our minds are occupied by technology, and we have become engrossed in the job market, much like a tree overshadowing the woods. As a result, we are unable to spare a little time and appreciate nature's charm around us. Ironically, some people compensate for this disconnection by using nature wallpapers on their computers, attempting to bring a semblance of nature into their virtual lives. However, amidst this disconnection from nature, our planet, Mother Earth, is facing severe ecological imbalances. The alarming consequences of deforestation, pollution, and other injustices inflicted upon nature have become apparent. Fortunately, a few environmentalists are ready to lead a revolution, fighting against these destructive practices. Notably, even literary writers have joined the cause, recognizing the importance of raising awareness about environmental concerns through their works. Literature, being a mirror of society, holds significant power in conveying the urgency and importance of environmental awareness. Through their writings, authors inspire readers to rediscover their love for nature and recognize the pressing issues of our time. They create narratives that reflect the current state of our environment, serving as a call to action for individuals from all walks of life. Ruskin Bond, one of the most prominent literary figures, holds a deep admiration for nature in his writings. Through his words, he invites readers to rekindle their love for the natural world and cultivate a sense of appreciation for its beauty. The works of Bond can be scrutinized through the lens of ecologists as well as common people. He provides a gateway for people to understand the importance of ecology, encouraging them to take part in preserving and nurturing our environment.

**KEYWORDS:** Nature, Ruskin Bond, Literature and Nature, Humans and Nature, Realism

## INTRODUCTION

Ruskin Bond, a renowned Indian writer known for his deep connection with nature, vividly portrays the harmony between the natural world and humanity in his works. Born in Kasauli on May 19, 1934. Bond's writings reflect his scholarly exploration of the habitat and emphasize moral, emotional, and ethical bonds between

individuals and their surroundings. Throughout his works, Bond emphasizes the importance of cultivating a love for nature, encompassing hills, mountains, trees, and living beings. In essence, he explores the concept of ecology, focusing on the relationships between plants, animals, and people, and highlights human responsibilities towards the environment.

The settings of Bond's works, particularly the hills of Mussoorie and Dehradun, serve as a backdrop that mirrors his unwavering dedication to the power of nature. One of Bond's first literary ventures, *The Room on the Roof*, published in 1956, exemplifies his relationship with the natural world. This novella not only gained critical acclaim but also earned Bond the prestigious John Llewellyn Rhys Memorial Prize in 1957, which recognizes outstanding achievements by young writers in Britain. Through his writings, Bond transports readers to tranquil landscapes, captivating their hearts with awe-inspiring scenes and employing vivid imagery that leaves them spellbound. His keen observations of nature permeate his works, underscoring his deep connection with the natural world. Bond derives immense enjoyment from traveling through landscapes, cherishing every moment spent in the embrace of nature. As a passionate devotee of Mother Nature, he infuses his writings with a profound appreciation for the environment. In the story, Bond commences the novel with a vivid description of nature:

The light spring rain rode on the wind, into the trees, down the road; it brought an exhilarating freshness to the air, a smell of earth, a scent of flowers; it brought a smile to the eyes of the boy on the road. The long road wound round the hills rose and fell and twisted down to Dehra; the road came from the mountains and passed through the jungle and valley and, after passing through Dehra, ended somewhere in the bazaar. (Bond 1)

Feathered friend and wildflowers inspire Bond, refreshing his creative thinking. The sound of drops of rain falling on the ground, birdsong, babbling stream, rustling leaves, and gentle breezes grant him blissful moments in nature's embrace. In the story when Rusty and Somi ride their bicycles in their first meeting, Bond describes how “the cycle moved smoothly over the wet road, making a soft, swishing sound” (4). Bond's figures, often drawn from Indian society, closely interact with nature. They observe the morning dew, the melodious twittering of birds, the sunrise, the shifting clouds, and the enchanting aromas of the natural world, allowing them to momentarily forget their troubles.

Within the story, Rusty serves as the embodiment of Bond's own excitement and emotions immersed in the natural surroundings. Passionate descriptions of scenery provide insight into Rusty's state of mind. When Rusty's guardian, Mr. Harrison, plans to leave for Delhi, Rusty yearns for a sense of freedom. He longs to “explore, get lost, and wander afar; even if it were only to find new places, to dream in” (14). In challenging situations, Rusty finds solace in the soothing thoughts of nature. After being beaten by Mr. Harrison for venturing to the bazaar without permission, Rusty's attention is captivated by the bustling sounds and noise of the marketplace.

Ruskin Bond's adoration for nature is evident throughout his novel. He beautifully describes the different climates of the day and their impact on the characters' mindsets. The cold morning described by Bond is sharp and fresh, with a quietness that is disrupted by the sun moving over the hills, lifting the mist from the valley, and

clearing the bloodshot from the sky. The floor is damp with rain, symbolizing the tears and emotions of the characters:

It is a cold morning, sharp and fresh. It was quiet until the sun come shooting over the hills, lifting the mist from the valley and clearing the bloodshot from the sky. The ground was wet with dew. (Bond 1,6)

As the day progresses, Bond portrays the warm and lazy afternoon, which is unusually calm for spring. The characters yearn to admire nature but often neglect or forget it amidst their mundane routines. This juxtaposition highlights the disconnect between humans and the natural world, emphasizing the characters' longing for a deeper connection with nature:

The afternoon was warm and lazy, unusually so for spring; very quiet, as though, resisting in the interval between the spring and the coming summer. (Bond 29)

Ruskin Bond strives to create a harmonious connection between humans and the environment. He believes by admiring and worshiping nature, individuals can enrich their harmony with the natural world. Bond's central characters often exhibit a deep affection for countryside life and hold nature in high regard. Through numerous categories of literature such as short stories, poems, novels, and novellas, Bond depicts the intertwined lives and experiences of humans and nature. His works encompass a range of emotions and perspectives, showcasing the enjoyable, hostile, ugly, and graceful aspects of life (D and S).

In the story, even when the beloved is nearby, the protagonist Rusty never fails to appreciate the charm of the landscape from the room window. His gaze out into the natural world signifies his connection to something larger than himself. Through the window, Rusty and Meena observe the Flame of the Forest, its red-hot flowers standing out against the blue sky. The sight of pink bougainvillea creeping into the villa further solidifies Rusty's decision to keep the window open, symbolizing his openness to the world and his unwillingness to shut out the beauty of nature.

Ruskin Bond's writings reflect his deep admiration for nature and his belief in the inherent goodness of humanity. He paints a vivid picture of the natural world and its impact on human experiences, encouraging readers to appreciate and cherish the splendors of the environment. Bond's works serve as a reminder of the importance of nurturing our connection with nature and finding solace, inspiration, and joy in its embrace (D and S).

Ruskin Bond's works consistently emphasize the dynamic relationship between children and nature. Bond's adoration for nature stems from his imaginative connection with the natural world. He keenly observes and notes the various elements of nature, both animate and inanimate, visible and hidden, which captivates his readers with their vivid realism. His portrayal of nature flows like a fine fountain, offering a sense of freedom from the monotonous routines and daily struggles of life.

Bond's description of the squirrel's actions, as it brushes its nose and runs up a banyan tree, illustrates his attention to detail and his ability to transport readers into the natural environment. Rusty, the protagonist, becomes immersed in the lazy drone of bees, the squeaking of squirrels, and the constant chatter of birds. While these

descriptions may depict familiar sights and sounds, Bond elevates them with his exquisite language, making them even more enchanting than the actual experience. His writing style resembles that of a travelogue, inviting readers to escape into the beauty of his descriptions. Against the backdrop of nature, Bond creates believable characters whose lives and everyday problems are intricately connected to their environment. The distress and worries of Rusty, for example, are often depicted through the setting of the scene. Despite his admiration for nature, Rusty experiences loneliness and destitution, yet he maintains an optimistic outlook for the future.

Bond suggests that if people develop a love for nature, their mundane daily lives can transform into evergreen plants, continuously blooming with flowers. He describes the blossoming of dawn through Rusty's perspective, as objects gradually take shape in the darkness, and the lifting of the veil reveals a streaked crimson sky over the treetops. This gradual transition signifies the potential for clarity and distinction in life, similar to how nature becomes ready for the sun's warm light to permeate through the window (Bond, 90). Bond encourages readers to open the windows of their perception and embrace the joys and ecstasies of nature.

Through his writings, Ruskin Bond inspires a deep appreciation for the natural world. He portrays the inseparable bond between humans, particularly children, and nature, highlighting its ability to bring solace, beauty, and optimism into their lives. Bond's vivid descriptions and lyrical prose transport readers into a realm where the wonders of nature become sources of inspiration and transformation.

## CONCLUSION

Ruskin Bond's writings beautifully reflect his adoration for nature and his belief in the inherent goodness of humanity. Through his works, he establishes a harmonious relationship between man and nature, emphasizing the importance of cultivating a love for the environment. Bond's descriptions of the natural world are vivid and captivating, transporting readers into serene landscapes and immersing them in the sights, sounds, and scents of nature. His characters, like Rusty in "The Room on the Roof," find solace, inspiration, and joy in their connection with the natural world. Bond's writings serve as a reminder of the beauty and significance of nature, encouraging readers to appreciate and cherish the wonders of the environment. By infusing his works with a profound appreciation for nature, Bond fosters a deeper understanding of the human responsibility toward preserving and nurturing the natural world. Through his passionate and descriptive prose, he invites readers to open their hearts and minds to the splendors of nature and find solace, inspiration, and a sense of belonging within its embrace.

## WORKS CITED

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