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विद्येविना मति गेली, मतीविना नीति गेली
नीतिविना गति गेली, गतिविना वित्त गेले
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Love for Trees as Reflected in Bond's Short Stories

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Abstract

Ruskin Bond is a great lover of Nature and because of this incessant love of him; he is called 'Wordsworth in Prose'. His short stories are replete with the varied and vivid descriptions of Nature in the form of birds, animals, valleys, rivers, sky, clouds, starry nights and so on. He is born and brought up in the Himalayan region. The description of Nature's bounty in Shimla, Mussoorie and Dehradun is obvious in his stories. Because of such ardent love for Nature in the Garhwal region, he is called the 'Saint of Garhwal'. This love for Nature in him is all-pervasive and profound but among all this, his love for trees is something special which is seen in the number of short stories. He seems always lured toward the blossoms, fruits and the coexistence of birds, animals and humans on and under the tree. Bond's stories, the cherry tree, the coral tree, when the trees walked, adventures in a banyan tree, my father's trees in Dehra, all reveal Bond's deep attraction and affinity for trees. This research article explores the five stories of Ruskin Bond which exclusively reveal the writer's love for trees and thereby he conveys the message of ecology, environment and coexistence which is the urgent need of the hour in the crisis as ozone depletion, global warming and environmental imbalance.

Keywords: love for Nature, trees,

ecological crisis, environmental imbalance.

The Cherry Tree is perhaps the most popular story among children. The cherry tree needs a cold climate and so they are found in abundance in Northern India particularly in the Himalayan region from Himachal Pradesh to Uttaranchal. The cherry tree is a story of a six years boy Rakesh; his loving relationship with his grandfather and his unbound wonder and curiosity in growing a cherry tree in his house yard. Rakesh lived with his grandfather on the outskirts of Mussoorie. One day he bought cherry fruits while returning from his school. After eating the last one, he kept the seed of it on his palm and studied it curiously:

"Are cherry seeds lucky? asked Rakesh.

Of course

Then I'll keep it,

'Nothing is lucky if you put it away. If you want luck, You must put it to some use.

What can I do with a seed?

Plant it."¹

Rakesh planted the seed, watered it every day and observed it keenly. His Joy had no bond when he saw it growing, first into a sapling and then a tree. It was about 2 feet high when a goat entered the garden and eats all the leaves. Only the main stems and two thin branches remained but the cherry trees are tough. Towards the end of the rainy season, new leaves appeared on the tree. On another occasion, grass-cutting women unknowingly cut the tree in two. Despite all these, the cherry tree fought the conditions and grew rapidly. In 2 years the tree grew four feet high. The following year the tree was taller than Rakesh and there were blossoms. That summer there were small cherries on the tree. In summer's scorching heat, Rakesh's grandfather used to rest under the cherry tree and gets cool in the shadow. Rakesh was very much amazed to see the full-grown cherry tree with blossoms and various birds on it. It was a special tree because the writer himself had planted it. Ultimately, Rakesh

expresses his gratitude to God:

"Just one small seed, said Rakesh, and he touched the smooth bark of the tree that had grown. He ran his hand along the trunk of the tree and put his finger to the tip of a leaf. 'I wonder, he whispered. "Is this what it feels to be God"²

Ruskin Bond's other story *When the Trees Walked* depicts vivid memories of the deep love of the writer's grandfather for Nature, the environment and ecology. The writer also reveals how love and care for trees help them to grow rapidly. One morning, when the writer was sitting with his grandfather on the verandah steps, he saw the tendril of a creeping vine had crossed the steps and was touching his grandfather's feet. The writer imagines that the creeper is expressing its gratitude towards the writer's grandfather for the love and care he took in growing the trees. The writer's grandfather was very much fond of trees. His bungalow was on the outskirts of Dehradun where he had planted trees all rounds. Lime, mango, orange and guava; also eucalyptus, jacaranda and Persian lilacs .grandfather wasn't content with growing trees in his compound only. During the rains, he would walk into the jungle beyond the river bed, armed with cutting and saplings which he would plant in the forest. When the writer asked who would go there to see the trees, his grandfather replied very thoughtfully:

"See we're not planting them simply to improve the view, replied Grandfather. We're planting them for the forest and for the animals and birds who live here and need more food and shelter."³

The writer and his grandfather found a small rocky island in a dry river bed. One day they set out with the number of tamarinds, laburnum and coral tree saplings and cuttings and spent the whole day planting them on the island. In the course of time, his grandparents died and the writer also went to England. Many years later, when the writer came back to India and visited Dehradun he walked out of town

towards the river bed. He was immediately caught by the spectacular red blooms of the coral blossoms. The island was transformed into a small green Paradise. The trees they had planted long ago had multiplied. They were walking again in one small corner of the world. Grandfather's dream had come true.

The story *The Coral Tree* is a highly symbolic story which reflects multilayered meanings associated with human life. The writer is sad as his loving grandfather had died and there was no one to take care of him. He was feeling extremely lonely. it was the day when he was to set out for England for his further career. he had already told the agent to sell his grandparents bungalow.

It was morning. The writer got up in a pensive mood. Suddenly he saw a little girl standing on the verandah porch. She was a small dark girl; her eyes were big and pigtailed tied up in bright red ribbon and she was fresh and clean like the rain and the red earth. She wanted some flowers from the coral tree which was in the yard of the writer's house. it was a very hard time for the writer as the nostalgic feeling for the house was forbidding him to go away whereas the life force and aspirations in him were pushing him to travel into the vast world open before him. When the writer asked the girl whether she would like to go to England the girl replied ambitiously:

"I want to go everywhereShe said, 'To America and Africa and Japan and Honolulu."⁴

The writer also reacts to her that he is too going everywhere and no one can stop him. in this way, the little girl is symbolized as a life force and an inner urge which always motivates the individual to go everywhere in the world and be communicated to the various people, cultures and civilizations. The writer preaches that life is omnipresent with all her force, spirit and beauty only there's the need to break the shackles of nostalgia and pursue the ambition and aspirations in every nook and corner of the

world. The pigtail of the girl is symbolized as bondages of nostalgia and attachments with family, friends, language, region, etc. But when the girl waves her hand to the writer while leaving him for England, her pigtail falls which suggests that life is unbound.

The story *Adventures in a Banyan Tree* is again an account of the childhood memories of the writer. There was a big banyan tree in the yard of the writer's grandfather's bungalow. The spreading branches of the banyan tree which curved to the ground and took again forming a maze of arches gave the writer endless pleasure. the tree was older than the house, older than grandfather, as old as the town of Dehradun.

Writer's first friend was a small grey squirrel. it ran all over the banyan tree. it became so familiar to the writer that it took food from the writer's hand. in the spring, when the banyan tree was full of small red figs, birds of all kinds would flock into its branches, the red-bottomed bulbul, parrots and crows squabbling with each other all the time. During the fig season, the banyan tree was the noisiest place on the road.

One day, the writer saw a fierce fight between a mongoose and a cobra under the banyan tree while the writer sat directly above them in the banyan tree. Ruskin bond describes the fight in the most vivid way.

"It was an April afternoon. And the warm brizes of approaching summer had sent everyone, including grandfather, indoors I was feeling drowsy myself and was wondering If I should go to the pond behind the house for a swim, I saw a huge black cobra... three feet long, was a superb fighter, clever and aggressive. But the Cobra was skillful... and the sacks behind his long sharp fangs were full of deadly venom"⁵

My father's trees in Dehra is a nostalgic account of his father's deep love for trees. His father was a great lover of trees. Most of the fruit trees around the house were planted by the writer's father. But he was not content with

planting trees in the garden only. on the rainy days, Ruskin and his father would walk beyond the river bed armed with cuttings and saplings and then they would amble through the jungle planting flowering shrubs between the Sal and Shisham trees. His father would say:

"If people keep cutting trees instead of planting them, there'll soon be no forests left at all, and the world will be just one vast desert"⁶

The prospect of a world without trees became a sort of nightmare for the writer and he assisted his father in his tree planting with great enthusiasm. His father went away soon after that tree planting to resume his services in British Air Force. Three months later in Calcutta, he died. After many years, the writer visits the town of Dehradun. he wanders in the river bed and the jungle and especially on the rocky island where his father had planted saplings and cuttings. to the writer's surprise, the little island had become like a green oasis in contrast to the dry rocky river bed. the writer found that other trees and wild plants and grasses had also sprung up under the protection of the trees they planted. The trees had multiplied. They were moving in that small forgotten corner of the world; his father's dreams were coming true, and the trees were moving again.

In this way, the shorts stories of the Ruskin bond are replete with the vivid description of trees and Nature in her abundance. His love for Nature and especially trees is profound and Omnipresent in his stories. His stories depict the hills, valleys, rivers, birds, flowers, animals and of course trees in abundance. This pantheistic element is everywhere and obvious in his stories. Ruskin Bond feels the presence of God in trees; the manifestation of Supreme Power. He gives a great message of coexistence and ecology to his readers through his stories. With his stories, Ruskin Bond creates love, compassion and affinity of humans for the Nature around us. Ruskin Bond appears as a worshipper and an ardent devotee of Nature in

his stories and so he is our Wordsworth in Prose.

09

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ANITA DESAI AS A SHORT STORY WRITER

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Abstract

The contribution of women writers to the development of the novel has been of great significance. Though they have contributed less to the short story, it has got its own important place in Indian English Literature. For women, the art of telling or writing short stories is not new. They have inherited the art from their female ancestors.

Anita Desai , a major woman novelist of the present decade ,has published a collection of short stories, her stories mainly deal with the Indian sensibility focusing on the painful and pitiful aspects of woman's life.

Keywords: Allegorical, Morality, Suspense, Sympathy, Pictorial quality.

The short story a minor genre of fictional prose is defined in relation to novel as 'briefer than a novel'. It is also related to other three important genres of non fictional prose, the drama, the narrative poetry and the epic.

The setting, action and dialogue are common to story, novel and drama. The stories in poetry are in a broader sense narrative poetry. The epic is also called "a story book of entertainment". Short story being short in length may be read and enjoyed by anybody, anywhere at any time.

The origin of the short story may be traced to ancient times. In the Holy Bible, the Apocrypha, the Hymns of Rigveda , the Upanishads, the Panchathantra , the Buddhist