



Nature's Bond in Ruskin Bond's *Angry River*

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ABSTRACT

Literature is a medium to present a person's thoughts and perspectives to the world. Ruskin Bond, known as "Indian Wordsworth", is a naturalist who brings nature into all his works and writes passionately about all its constituents. Bond is a renowned writer. He still lives in isolation from the bustle and hustle of large cities, ploughing his lonely furrow. Sense of beauty, liberty and harmony are the core values of Ruskin Bond's world. His readers are spellbound not by botanical details given by Bond rather the warm touch of life that stimulates a sense of relationship or a bond which binds not only the writer but also the reader. Sita, the protagonist of the novel *Angry River* witnesses a flood and overcomes it with hope and realises that human beings are a part of the river and the river is a part of mother nature and one cannot live without mother nature. If human beings take care of nature, nature will take care of human beings.

Keywords : Nature, Human beings, Myth and Symbols.

In Ruskin Bond's *Angry River*, In the middle of a big river, was a small island. Sita and her grandparents lived there in a house made up of mud. In the middle of the island stood a Peepul tree which is as old as the island and has the power to withstand any catastrophe. Sita's grandmother falls ill and so, her grandparents leave for Shahganj for treatment. Sita is all alone in the island taking care of the farm, goats and hens. She communicates with her only friend Mumta which is a rag doll made of bits of clothing. One day the island witnesses a heavy flood. Sita climbs up the Peepul tree as per her grandmother's instruction. The flood takes everything. The Peepul tree being as old as the island is about to fall. At the right time a boy named Krishan comes with a boat and rescues Sita. Sita is upset that the river is angry. But Krishan convinces and gives hope by saying that human beings and nature are interdependent. Once the cruel river subsides, Sita returns to the island along with her grandfather without her two favourites, her grandmother and her doll Mumta. Sita starts to rebuild the house again with great passion with the help of her grandfather. She plants mango seeds in the place of the Peepul tree.

The island symbolises solitude or loneliness, where Sita, the protagonist, and her grandparents live a difficult life. The novel brings out the truth that each individual is like an island, till one is swept away in the current of life and starts interacting with other individuals. The island may provide an opportunity for calm contemplation. But for proper development, one needs society. Sita, though happily living with her grandparents, has no vision of life beyond the island. It is when the flood sweeps away the embankments and the island is submerged into water, Sita is introduced to the real world of life and relationships.

The huge Peepul tree becomes a symbol of generosity and magnanimity. The heavy flood uproots the tree, which is as old as the island. According to mythology, the Peepul tree is the most sacred. Peepul tree's heart shaped leaves symbolise the physique of Lord Krishna.

There are a few non living things that act as symbols in *Angry River*. The rag doll of Sita whom she calls Mumta is her only friend on the lonely island.

"Since there were no other children on the island, Sita shared her secrets with the rag doll, whose name was Mumta" (p16).

Mumta symbolises friendship, companionship and motherliness too. Sita communicates with the doll in a heart to heart talk something like a

friend at other times like a mother. Sita shares everything with Mumta and feels comfortable in her presence.

The river in *Angry River*, is a part of nature and indirectly informs that every individual is a part of nature, a part of the Supreme power.

“Krishna, friend of birds and animals. Indra, who made the thunder and lightning. Hanuman, the monkey-god who helped the young prince Rama in his war with the king of Ceylon.” (p25)

The problems of modern times are emphasised and highlighted in a religious context. Mythological stories and the characters gave strength and a sense of hope to Sita. Krishan symbolises a saviour figure who saves Sita from the deluge. Krishan who rescues Sita from the flood consoles and convinces her by saying that human beings are a part of the river and the river is a part of mother nature and human beings cannot live without mother nature. Krishan symbolises Lord Krishna. Dream is one of the techniques used by Bond to accentuate human psychology. He has used this technique in *Angry River* to bring out the inner struggles of characters. Sita dreams that the boy and Lord Krishna are one. This dream of Sita symbolises her desire to live a happy and satisfied life.

Ruskin Bond sought emotional support and security in the cradle of the hilly region. He could feel the kindness of the Himalayan hills and trees of Dehra and Mussoorie. Bond felt the essential mountain sap and spirit flowing in his blood, and received strength. Bond felt that these hills, that is nature itself, is not merely a source of beauty to gaze at, but perhaps, spiritual beauty through which one may learn the old values, honesty, faith and love for maintaining everlasting relationships.

Bond being a religious person believed in the presence of supreme power and universal connection between Nature and Human beings.

“Live close to nature and you’ll never feel lonely. Don’t drive those sparrows out of your veranda; they won’t hack into your computer.” (Ruskin Bond)

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