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Nature with A Voice: Anthropomorphism and Ecological Consciousness in Ruskin Bond's the Angry River

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ABSTRACT

Children's books are a great way to teach kids about morals, how to behave in different cultures, and the world around them. Cultural beliefs that see rivers, animals, and landscapes as living things make nature a big part of Indian children's books. Writers use anthropomorphism to help kids understand how cultural and ecological forces work. This gives them a creative way to interact with these things. In his short story *The Angry River*, Ruskin Bond shows that nature is more than just a backdrop; it can change how people live their lives. The river in this story has human traits like "angry," "restless," and "vengeful." This is a big part of the story. Bond gives the river human emotions and free will, which makes it a character that interacts with and changes the lives of the main characters. Bond shows how people and nature need each other by giving nature human traits. He wants kids to see nature as a living thing that needs to be respected and lived with, not as dead matter. The research says that Bond's use of anthropomorphism in "*The Angry River*" makes the river both a source of trauma and a teacher of harmony and resilience. This makes children's literature more aware of ecological and moral issues. It talks a lot about how important it is for kids to use symbols to help them understand the big things that happen in their lives.

KEYWORDS: Children's Literature, Anthropomorphism, Ecological Consciousness, Coexistence, Resilience.

INTRODUCTION

Most children's books have simple language, fun stories, and pictures to help kids pay attention and understand. It's not just for fun; children's books have a big impact on how kids think, feel, act, and learn about right and wrong. It helps them learn new words, be more creative, and learn about other cultures and ways of life. Its characters and stories also give kids role models, comfort, and inspiration. Kids can learn more about their feelings and how to handle disagreements and find solutions by teaching them these things. It also makes them more aware of family, friends, community, and diversity.

Ruskin Bond is one of the most well-known writers of fiction and children's books in India. He was born on May 19, 1934, in Kasauli, Himachal Pradesh. He spent his childhood in India and England before moving to Mussoorie. Some of the themes are nature, childhood, and getting along with other people. His stories are both imaginative and aware of problems in the world and in different cultures. He has won a lot of awards, such as the Sahitya Akademi Award (1992), the Padma Bhushan, and the Padma Shri. Bond's writing is important because it shows innocence, harmony with nature, and the complexity of human emotions in a way that both kids and adults can understand.

Ruskin Bond's novella *The Angry River* is about Sita, a young girl who is stuck in a flood that destroys her island home. The novella has a simple plot, but it has a lot of themes about being strong as a child, being aware of the environment, and respecting the culture of the environment. This piece is different from Bond's other work because it shows the river as "angry," "rising," and "swallowing" the land. Anthropomorphism, or giving human traits to things that aren't human, has always been a big part of children's books (Nikolajeva, *Children's Literature Comes of Age*, 1996). *The Angry River* uses anthropomorphism, which is usually used for talking animals or moving things, to make the river a character in the story. This essay contends that Bond utilizes anthropomorphism to personify the river, thereby emphasizing its dynamic existence, assisting young readers in emotionally navigating peril, and cultivating a connection with cultural traditions that personify rivers to advance ecological values.

Anthropomorphism and Ecological Consciousness

The title itself sets the tone that the river is not merely overflowing but is depicted as emotional and vengeful. As Bond describes, "The river was rising all the time... it was angry now, angry and destructive, tearing away at the banks." Here, verbs like "angry" and "tearing" establish the river's agency. Later, when the flood reaches its peak, Bond writes: "The river swallowed up the huts, the trees, the fields. It roared like a wild beast, rushing upon

everything in its path." The use of predatory imagery, "swallowed," "roared," "rushing", renders the river almost animalistic, turning it into a character that actively challenges human survival. Because of this personification, the river is elevated to the state of an enemy who is neither good nor evil, but a force that must be respected. In this way, anthropomorphism blurs the distinction between environment and character while dramatizing the power of nature.

Anthropomorphism makes it hard to tell the difference between a character and the environment, and it makes nature seem stronger. One of the main goals of children's books is to help kids deal with stress, fear, and danger by making scary things easier to understand. Young readers may not understand if you only use descriptive or scientific words to talk about natural disasters like floods. In *The Angry River*, Ruskin Bond gives the river emotions, which helps them deal with danger in ways that are easy to understand and relate to. According to Perry Nodelman (1992), anthropomorphism serves as a psychological conduit, providing children a means to confront fear symbolically. By making the river "in a rage" and "wanting to sweep her away too," Bond helps kids see danger as a person with goals instead of something they can't understand.

The river's "anger" in Bond's novella gives kids a way to let out their fear, which makes it less scary and easier to deal with in the story. Instead of fighting, young kids should learn to deal with fear and danger. Sita climbs the peepal tree, stays calm, and finally agrees to be saved instead of fighting the river. Her tenacity shows young readers that sometimes you have to be patient, accept things you can't change, and ask for help from others to stay alive. By calling danger a "angry river," Bond gives readers a way to show how scared they are and a way to stay alive, which is an emotional lesson built into the story

CONCLUSION

Because of all the changes in society, culture, and technology that affect how children's brains grow and develop, children's literature is more important than ever. Kids need books that do more than just entertain them. They need books that help them grow emotionally, socially, and morally. This is because of the rise of digital distractions, fast-paced lives, and early exposure to the world's problems.

Ruskin Bond's "The Angry River" is an example of how anthropomorphism in children's books can turn natural events into important characters in the story. By calling the river "angry," "swallowing," and "in a rage," Bond makes it seem like a person that kids can relate to, be scared of, and learn from. By giving animals human traits, this makes it easier for young readers to understand danger, which helps them deal with stressful situations. Sita is a role model for people who are going through their own problems because she survives by adapting, being patient, and believing in human solidarity instead of fighting back.

The novella also talks about Indian cultural traditions that value being aware of the environment by giving rivers life. Bond's portrayal of the river as both dangerous and helpful fits with his story of how people and nature can live together in peace. Anthropomorphism is a literary and ecological tool that helps kids learn that the natural world is moral, alive, and sensitive. The Angry River ultimately demonstrates how anthropomorphism in children's literature can effectively merge education and creativity, assisting young readers in managing anxiety, honoring cultural traditions, and enhancing environmental awareness.

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