CHAPTER-3

Nature in Adults’ Novels

Ruskin Bond’s altruism, love and reverence for mankind for life make him one of the greatest humanists of our time. He invokes the least known locale in his cameo that reverberates with humble hill folk inhabiting his world of the mountains. He raises their experience and their unassuming life to the sublime. His art combines humanity with humour, amusement with sympathy and irony with kindness. Bond’s adherence to the world of flora and fauna and of hills and dales is a result of his commitment to the place he was born in and settled afterwards. Detailed descriptions of ravines, slopes valleys, brooks and forests with great geographical accuracy are due to his natural familiarity with the region. Celestial beauty of Garhwal Himalayan landscapes flows in his numerous stories. His fiction seems a magic casement opening on a beautiful vast stretch of nature. This chapter includes three novellas of adults *Delhi Is Not Far, Love is a Sad Song* and *The Sensualist* where the characters are not adolescents but adults. These stories revolve around the adult characters and their purpose to accomplish in the ideal environment of nature.

Bond steals into our thoughts and captures our hearts with his effortlessly charming story in the novella *Delhi Is Not Far*. ‘Ruskin Bond’ the name conjures up misty hills, lush green valleys, gurgling brooks and long languid stroll through the forests small – town and of course the Pipalnagar in this novel. One reading of *Delhi Is Not Far* is not enough to quench one’s thirst. Bond’s intensity of living and the breadth of his experience are easily perceptible throughout each of his books that are Bond’s style. This novel is a sequel to his earlier two novellas *The Room on the Roof* and *Vagrants in the valley*. The narration is much like in the form of a diary where the past, the present and future criss-cross effortlessly. It is a slow but charming story of an imaginary town called Pipalnagar.
Bond draws the divine radiance and scenic beauty of the great hills on his fictional canvas with consummate artistry. Mountains are his sole passion and through his hero, he articulates his first love towards nature. The protagonist Arun in *Delhi Is Not Far* is overpowered by the magnetic charm of the hills. A man cannot be complete until living in hills is the theme of this novel. Bond is an ardent lover of nature. He breathes through her and writes for her. It is an ever lasting love affair, which knows no satiety, as it goes on renewing itself time and again through transient scenes and colours. Far from the sickening view of socio political humbug, his literary journey trails on a different path in search of a winter garden, a hidden pool, a wayside teashop, monsoon rain, trees, moon, sound and sight of nature in hills and mountains. Bond’s earnestness to harmonize his own self with them brings him closer. Nature provides him endless impressions which he moulds in the form of this moving story. *Delhi Is Not Far* is the celebration of nature in its fullest form. Being in perfect harmony with nature, Bond is replete with goodly emotions and feelings. He believes that nature is a pure bubbling life force.

Bandana Bal Chandnani remarks that Bond’s novella *Delhi Is Not Far* celebrates the unsung sagas of the common masses, their unfulfilled dreams, their complacency, their fear and their unnoticed life (*Structures of Authenticity in Ruskin Bond’s Fiction*. 36). Bond’s interest in impoverished people of small-town-India comes to the fore in Pipalnagar, a world burgeneoned by the simple folk and their ordinary life, where each day is like another. There is not exactly despair but resignation, indifference to intercourse of life and to both living and dying. Nothing momentous happenings occur here. The narrator of the story Arun lives in a tiny room. He shares it with lizards, mosquitoes, thieving rat and beggar. One day he stumbles across a homeless boy, Suraj. Being enchanted by the beauty of Suraj’s long limbs, hesitant smile and eyes full of secrets, Arun offers to share his room with Suraj. Arun befriends Kamla, a delicate twenty-three-year old prostitute. The trio Arun, Suraj and Kamla
adopt one another. With a miniaturist’s skill, the author paints the town folk of Pipalnagar around the unlikely family.

Kamla, the young prostitute knows that she cannot escape from her plight. She has learnt to live with her drunkard husband. The novella ends without anyone realizing his or her dream. But these common folk of Pipalanagar would go on living. Even with unfulfilled dreams they are not angst-ridden individuals. They will delight in life and share the suffering of one another and celebrate ordinary joys together in this novel Delhi Is Not Far. Meena Khorana appreciates Bond’s story that it is drenched with deeper aspects of life, which spring from the life of humble and modest people and their positive aura.

Delhi Is Not Far is a memorable story about small lives, with all the hallmarks of classic Ruskin Bond prose; nostalgia, charm, underplayed humour and quiet wisdom in the major blend of Nature. In dull, dusty Pipalnagar, each day is like another and there is not exactly despair but resignation. Even the dreams here are small. Deep Chand the barber dreams that he will open a more upto-date salon where he might give the Prime Minister a haircut. Pitamber will trade his cycle-rickshaw for the less demanding scooter-rickshaw; Aziz will be happy with a junk-shop in Chandni Chowk. None, of course will make that journey to Delhi. Adrift among them, the narrator, Arun, a struggling writer of detective novels in Urdu, waits for an inspiration to write a blockbuster. Meanwhile, in the quiet and the serene atmosphere of hills he seeks reassurance in love, finds it in unusual places; with the young prostitute Kamla, wise beyond her age, and the orphan Suraj, homeless and an epileptic, yet surprisingly optimistic about the future. The story revolves around the lives of these people. Bond opens the first leaf of the fiction with the line:

“My balcony is my window of the world” (Bond, Delhi Is Not Far.1).

Window is an object in point. Window is like a small screen opens a wide spectrum of the world outside. Bond personally feels that a window gives life and meaning to the room. It
gives a view to the resident. Without a view, a room is hardly a living place, merely a place of transit. He says that the quality of his life is enhanced if any window looks out on something, little more inspiring than a factory wall or someone’s backyard. Window is the medium which has been the great source of inspiration hence he always keeps his window opened. The narrator Arun loves to have a window for the fresh air and the view of the world outside. Though the window may be an insignificant object, the perception is the motivation for the thought and the action of the characters. In Bond’s short story “The Window” two little friends discover immense powers of window. Two boys have the similar experience of the narrator Arun about the window. The window is more fun than anything else. It gives them the power of detachment. They are deeply interested in the life around us, but they are not involved in it. It is like a cinema. The boy says that he takes him to the window and shows him the world, he turns and smiles and both become friends. The window bridges the relationship. It invites harmony of the world and the beings. They recount that the window is the screen and the world is the picture. It is the magic of this screen, which binds them in the bond of friendship. Their emotional ebbs and flows are regulated by them. In the summer day, the harsh, cruel sunlight fills the courtyard, making the windows patches of darkness. The length and the breadth of the room are twelve and seven respectively. English, Hindi and Urdu paperbacks have occupied the shelf in the wall. It contents range from old, rejected manuscripts to photographs, newspaper cuttings and all which goes with the floating existence of a bachelor. He does not live alone, sometime a beggar, or the boys form the tea-shop during cold or rainy weather. Besides them, there are lizards, large rats, mosquitoes and bugs make the nights most uncomfortable for Arun.

Repeatedly, the change of season from summer to monsoon plays a vital role in altering the mood of the characters. The monotony or the dusty summer vanishes in the arrival of the monsoon. It is an escape from the harsh and cruel sun beams naturally.
Monsoon is a gift from nature to purify herself and human being. The monsoon has always been Bond’s favorite time of the year. Arun is also keenly alive to the monsoon than any other season.

“Everyone is waiting for the cool, quenching relief of the monsoon” (Bond. *Delhi Is Not Far* 6).

To relish the joy of the senses, Arun lies flat on his back or on his belly, dreaming of things and happenings in Delhi. According to Bond ‘a man without a dream is like a bird without wings’. Dreaming of his future, dreaming of his purpose in life to be writer, Arun lies in his room. Bond insists his notion in his poem “Dare to Dream” (Bond, *Book of Verse*. 122). In Bond’s *Book of Verse* in “Dare to Dream” Bond insists on the originality of writing. He simply utters that sing your song but do not take another’s song from her or him. The originality is a true foundation for one’s work of art and the castle built on it will be strong. He suggests the writers to hold fast to all their dreams to make their creations perfect (122).

Before building castle in the air, first one must give them foundations is the instruction put forth by Bond. The touch of his body on the cool surface of the floor performs the miracle of dreaming. The touch awakens his inner mind. It stimulates his body and the soul. In this way he unites himself with the earth. It establishes an understanding between the two unknown entities instantly. Arun, the narrator of this story comes to the barber shop of Deep Chand who is a short, thick set man. He is very attractive to women. Arun is given a better massage. Deep Chand has started thumbing Arun’s skull with his hard, communicative fingers, tugging at the root of his hair and squeezing his temples with the palm of his hands and he makes a mental inventory of people like Seth Govind Ram who is his landlord. The narrator owes him sixty rupees rent for six months. Govind Ram’s bank and a paunch are the conspicuous landmarks in Pipalnagar. He possesses a mistress too. Arun is friendly with the boy Aziz who is a Muslim boy of eighteen and lives in a small room behind the junk shop.
He is an optimistic soul. Pipalnagar has many candidates for the Home but it’s a place of last resort.

Bond in his introduction to *Delhi Is Not Far* (x-xi) opines that Pipalnagar is an amalgam of small towns he had seen and lived in like Roorkee, Shamli, Meerut, Saharanpur and Chhutmalpur. There are still unsophisticated places, uninviting and unromantic on first acquaintance. Bond’s Suraj and Kamla are still there striving to break out of their little cage. This fiction is an example of struggling youngsters who hope to attain their aim without the help of others, without uprooting themselves from their own native place to have their identity and freedom. Bond proves through this fiction that this realization is required in every new writers and readers who thinks falsely that their aim can be attained only in foreign lands. One must possess the strength and power of the mountains, trees, plants to withstand, to sustain and to endure life as it is.

Bond pictures the activities of children in Pipalnagar. While the older children attend the High school, the younger ones are in and out all day with stones, marbles and small coins in their pockets. Bond pens in this story about Tagore’s views on children that every child comes with the message that God is not yet discouraged of man. Arun observes the lives of beggars, chawkidars, housewives, vendors and children. He conveys his understanding of the little world of children, their divine links and innocence through these celebrated lines of Tagore. At noon, a band of children rush down the empty, silent street, shouting and waving their satchels. Despite the hot sun, on the soft sand near the river bed, boys wrestle or play leap frog, kabaddi and gulli-danda. Pitamber is a young village once where all the boys are long limbed and sun-browned. There is a sense of vitality and confidence in Pitamber’s village (Bond, *Delhi Is Not Far*. 15-16). Bond writes about the familiar atmosphere and Indian life for native children. In *Rain in the Mountains*, he expresses his interest on children that he has the temper of a child and a tendency to be mischievous. Therefore he narrates
minute details of the activities of children now and then in this novel. In *Rain in the Mountains* (251), Bond reveals his tendency of a child in him. He still retains a childlike trust in grown-ups. He thinks that he has remained young because he has always had children around him. Not just the children in his own family like Raki, Muki and Dolly but other children too. The child in him peeps out when he watches them play and grow. Arun reflects Bond’s observation of children in this novel *Delhi Is Not Far*. Bond captivates his young readers by the charm and freshness of his narration of his kind.

As Devindar in *Vagrants in the Valley*, Arun has got Suraj in *Delhi Is Not Far*. Suraj was a youth about eighteen and he appears to be in throes of a violent fit and he is a co-sharer of Arun in Pipalnagar. He is a student in Pipalnagar College waiting for his results and a living eked out by selling combs and buttons and little vials of perfume. Through him, the narrator Arun gets an opportunity to see and to feel the world of death and disease, love and hate on his pulses. Arun also likes Suraj’s company as he dispels some of his loneliness. Suraj likes Arun as he is full of stories and he encourages his ambitions and gives him confidence. Arun shelters Suraj in his home at times of rain. Bond drips the first rain of the monsoon that a big yellow moon plays hide and seek with the clouds and it begins to drizzle. (Bond, *Delhi Is Not Far*.24). Monsoon is a relief and a rest from the hot, sweating and scorching sun. Rain is a powerful symbol Bond handles it according to the situation emotionally. It means life and re-birth. Walking through rain when one is sad or pensive can help clear one’s mind and help sorrows be washed away. Bond’s characters cannot escape from this nature experience.

During the day Suraj sleeps in the shade of a peepul or banyan tree as these trees are known for its hospitality. These trees bear some significance related to the story. The peepul is a good tree to sit beneath on hot days. Its heart shaped leaves are sensitive to the slightest breeze and it is a natural fan. There are peepul trees in every Indian village and it is a
common sight to see a farmer tired at the end of an afternoon’s toil in the fields, being lulled to sleep by the rustling of its leaves. Bond’s characters enjoy the cool breeze and the lullaby of the trees and fall asleep. The cool breeze binds their senses from the worldly toils. In *Book of Nature* (123) Bond shares his experience under the shade of the tree that the banyan tree is a world in itself and it gives him endless pleasure. As it sheltered birds, insects and squirrels, they express their joy at the termination of the hot weather. For Suraj, the tree is a home for the homeless. The banyan is the biggest and the friendliest of all our trees. As Bond insists on friendship and love, it is apt to make banyan tree as a character to strengthen his insights into his real character.

While Suraj rests in the shade of a peepul, Arun lies naked on the stone floor of this room as it is the coolest place. The sense of touch of the cool floor on a hot day is a delight to Arun’s body and mind. The narrator enjoys the sensual touch of the earth. He urges for physical beauty and pleasure. He takes pleasure in the touch of the earth, soft earth, stony earth, grass and mud. The road is so hot and it scorches the most hardened feet. Sometimes it is cold and hard and cruel. Grass is good, especially dew-drenched grass and the feet are strained with juices, and the sap seems to pass into the body. Wet earth is soft and sensuous for him. (Bond, *Delhi Is Not Far*. 25-26). The earth with its cool and tenderness magnetizes the human beings, refreshes them and recharges their creative spirit. Arun yearns for the contact with earth and he is filled with nostalgia for the bright sensory delight.

The narrator has an acquaintance with Kamla a very friendly person of twenty - three. She is more skilled in the art of love making than any of her colleagues. She is the mistress to Seth Govind Ram. Her husband is Ram’s servant. He has never come across a girl so openly and direct as Kamla. She visits Arun and Suraj about once a week when she finds time to spare from her professional duties. The readers of Bond’s stories may come cross the Goonga a dumb with a shaved head in *Vagrants in the Valley*. The same ‘Goonga’ character is
presented in *Delhi Is Not Far*. His presence in the tea shop keeps the customers in fits of laughter. Arun asks the shopkeeper to give Goonga a glass of tea. It shows Bond’s concern for the fellow beings. As a note of thanks Goonga follows him to the maidan. There they can view sky decorated with the full moon and the stars. The bazaar is empty and the maidan is deserted at night, the sky flooded with ‘stars’ and ‘moon’ are symbolic representation of hope and optimistic view of the narrator. Bond’s description may be incomplete without the portrayal of the moon. It is a symbol of hope lurks in the inhabitants of Pipalnagar. It is a replica of the prosperous future they long for. Pitamber, Deep Chand, Ramu and Aziz all have plans for visiting Delhi. Deep Chand dreams of his barber shop, Pitamber plans to own a scooter-rickshaw and Ramu has a hundred and-one different dreams all featured a beautiful women as he is a good-natured lying and he is well known girl teaser. Each has a dream to achieve in its own ways. Old Ganpat Ram is an aristocrat among beggars he has been a man of property with several houses. He shares his story which may be half true. One is about his crooked back which results in laughter.

The narrator visits Pitamber’s village. Pitamber has a wife and three children and a few acres of land on which they grow maize and sugarcane. His village provided Arun with an escape from Pipalnagar. Arun himself has a cycle ride with Suraj. As they are tired of the people they like to explore places where there are no people. They push the cycle off the road and take a path through the paddy-field and maize-field and in the distance they see a tree. They stop there to have lunch they brought with them. Both stretched themselves on the grass, but are aware of a score of different sensations around him. He is sensitive to the ‘sounds’ of nature; he hears a cricket singing in the tree, cooing of pigeons which dwelt in the walls of the old well, the quiet breathing of Suraj, a rustling in the leaves of the tree, the distant hum of an aeroplane (Bond, *Delhi Is Not Far*. 53-55). Arun is highly receptive to the least vibration in nature. Like Arun, Bond too listens to the music of the atmosphere. He is
sensitive to it. The sound made by dry and thirsty earth when it sucks at a sprinkling of water or the sound of a child while drinking thirstily and the water running down its chin and throat, the sound of falling petals, the drift of falling snow and the water seeping through earth are invariably caught by his senses. Bond can distinguish easily between the sweet throated whistling thrush, and the shrill barbet, the bellow voiced doves. Bond calls them sounds of winds because birds walk upon the wings of wind. His love for sounds enables him to enjoy such familiar sounds, which readers less bother about. Bond enjoys being in the romance of sounds especially of unidentified sounds he lists out in his poem “Listen” (Bond, Book of Verse “Listen”. 26) that listen to the night wind in the trees; the summer grass singing; the time that dripping by; dawn dew falling; moon climbing the sky, the pebbles humming, the mist in the trembling leaves and the silent call of nature.

The protagonist Arun in this novel Delhi Is Not Far is surprised at the growing susceptibility of his own sense in the serenity of the hills. The individual sounds of shepherd’s song, the jingle of cow bells, women pounding clothes on a stone slab and the sound of cricket, birds, water, wind and leaves melt in one harmonious sound of nature. Arun attains joy and ecstasy not only by the touch and sound but also the smell of nature which enchants him to woo her. Arun inhales distant rare smells of variegated herbs and other living and non living phenomena along with the tremendous smell of rain which quenches the thirst of long awaiting parched and scorching earth of summer. It is a kind of accomplishment of earth’s aspiration. Bond finds nature in different, new colours and freshness and so enticing that he gets inspired. Likewise Arun gets inspiration from the backdrop of the novel to write his best. Bond quotes several instances of smell of rain in this novel. For instance:

“I smelt the grass and old bricks round the well and the promise of rain” (Bond. Delhi Is Not Far. 56).
As a thirsty traveller who aspires to quench his thirst, Arun drinks the cool clean water gushed out over the stone and along the channel to the fields. They are cycling homewards two miles out of Pipalnagar a lashing wind sweeps the rain across their faces. Leaving the cycle at the hire-shop, Arun comes to his room. This is the moment everyone is waiting for. As the bride waits for the bridegroom, the earth welcomes the rain and with her overwhelming love. She embraces and consumes him within her self. After the rain stopped, Arun is woken at midnight by the ‘moon’ shining full in his face. A ‘full moon’ sheds its lights exclusively on Pipalnagar and peeping and prying into every room, washing the empty streets, silvering the corrugated tin roof. The rain followed by the full moon’s silver light is a declaration of hope and optimistic thought not only in Arun’s mind but also in the minds of the people in Pipalnagar. The seasonal change denotes the change not only in the natural phenomenon but change in the characters too. Bond presents the mood of his character through the natural objects such as, earth, spring, sounds of nature, the smell of rain and the shining full moon. It is a time of freedom for the weary minds of summer. Even the insects enjoy its freedom in the monsoon. Bond focuses his readers even towards insects, they are moving in their cracks and holes. Termites and white ants sleeping during the hot season emerge from their lairs. As if they are moving towards the goal, out of every crack, from under the roots of trees, huge winged ants emerge and there is only one direction in which they can fly, is towards the light. Though this is the first and last flight of their lives, still, they never stop its flight. These clumsy termites become the feast for the frogs and the lizards as if a reward for those days of patient waiting. Bond fantastically draws a parallel between the termites and the people. In the creation of God, each has its own purpose to fulfill in life before their death whether it is great or small. Bond reveals the truth that in the whole hot season the insect world prepares for this flight out of darkness into light but not one of them survives its freedom. Going away from their own place is not the only solution to the
problems, but making that situations possible with the hope and optimistic view, is the lesson Bond derived from this little creature termite for the readers. Bond keeps nature as a tool which pedagogically represents it’s aspects in his works. The simplicity and innocence of Bond’s world is symbolic of life around him.

The lizards wait to eat the little insects, given a peculiar touch to the background. The sight of hideous reptile scuttling on the walls and roofs especially in hot and wet climate of India, enhance the suffocation and irritation in the air. Lizards make the protagonist strangely depressed and dull. The hero doing nothing but watching lizards scurrying about creates a sort of repulsion in the minds of the readers too.

The first night of the monsoon is special for both Suraj and Arun. They call it an auspicious night as Suraj is preparing for his exams and Arun starts to write his book. Pipalnagar is fresh and clean and alive until the rain stops. Rain cleanses the dusty landscape and shows vivid, transparent view of life around it. Hence it changes the mood and the perspective of the hero Arun. The rebirth and the rejuvenation of the earth are dedicated for human. Bond projects it briefly that all are waiting for the monsoon as it creates life on earth, and smite on human faces. Arun describes the rain that it swirls over the trees and the roofs of the town and the parched earth soaks it up, exuding a fragrance that comes only once in a year, the fragrance of the quenched earth, the most exhilarating of all smells. The smell of the quenching earth is intoxicating and he is writhed in ecstasy. The rain fulfills the desire and the longing of the thirsty and parched earth. It reflects that everyone in Pipalnagar looks up for a better life as the earth awaiting rain.

Rain plays a significant role in the characters’ life. Bond predicts the nemesis of the hero by drizzling and heavy rain. When it is a heavy rain, hallows are filled up with water. Suraj and Arun came to one of these places to bathe and swim. They finished their bathing and wrestled on the new monsoon grass. Meanwhile, Suraj stiffened, his thigh jerked against
Arun and his legs began to twitch and Arun recognized that Suraj had a fit and he gripped him more tightly as the fit took possession of him. The heavy rain of the past days is a premonition of something bad that happening at present for Suraj. Arun, his only friend comes to the rescue of recovering Suraj from the fit.

On one rainy night, Pipalnagar has its first earthquake and it lasts for five seconds. Suraj and Arun have tumbled out of the room, the shock is over but the panic prevails. The entire population is out in the street and women have fainted and other are shrieking and running about. The situation becomes worse as the electricity failed and the entire area plunges into darkness. Arun and Suraj decide to go for a walk. The rain has stopped and there is a break in the clouds and pale moon appears. The walk renders him an enjoyment of looking at the pale moon in the sky while inhaling the strong, sweet smell of neem leaves from the trees. Arun seems quiet different from other people. He is not nervous about the trouble. He is cool and calm just as the calm of the sea after storm. Nature showers him the balanced mind towards life. He is able to adapt himself to any situation.

Watching a pair of sarus cranes, Arun says that he will be a sacred bird or a sarus crane in future life and Suraj wants to be a beautiful white bird but not to be shot at. Sarus bird is known for making love and that is its principal occupation. If one bird is killed, the other will haunt the scene for weeks and calling distractedly. They have been known to pine away and die of grief. That’s why they are held affectionate by the people of the village. Arun gives the details of blue jay and squirrel to convey that one should be gentle to animals and birds. It is not so important that we do not kill them but it is important that we respect them. One should acknowledge their right to live on this earth. The reader can notice the environmentalist Bond here. He cares not only for his comrades but for birds and animals. He expresses his empathy towards safe guarding nature and its creature. As human beings are destroying their homes, birds and animals are finding it more difficult to survive. They have
to keep moving as the trees and the green grass keep disappearing. Bond takes up the issue of ecology and environment through his novel and stories in most conspicuous manner. In response to question put by Amita Aggarwal about the lack of social concern in his fiction Bond replies that problems of deforestation and pollution of environment and decay of wild life have been the subjects of his stories and essays. In this way he has touched the social problems (Fictional World of Ruskin Bond. 57).

Bond’s handling of myths of bird and animal in Delhi Is Not Far is an intellectual technique to safeguard the wild life and the forest. Myths are a part of Indian life and Bond has skillfully incorporated them in narration as literary devices. The use of myths as T.S. Eliot points out affords the necessary control to explore his subject and mean to generalization. Myths are meant to transmute personal destiny into the destiny of man kind. Through their aesthetic means of expression, Bond has reflected complex interaction of the self and the world. In this fiction, myth highlights the underline meaning of the plot, the environment and the comprehension of the characters. For example, the hero narrator finds blue jaya. The blue jaya is also called ‘Nilkanth’. It is considered sacred hence it is loved and worshiped by the people. The bird reminds him Lord Shiva, because the blue throat filled with poison that he drank to save the mankind, it seemed blue and would not let it go any further. The narrator wants to be a blue jaya, to be loved and worshiped by people in return he can help them and save them as a redeemer. Likewise, a squirrel reminds him Lord Krishna, who stroked the animal gently and left the marks of his long fingers on its back, hence they have four dark lines down their backs from head to tail. Krishna was very dark skinned and so the lines are the marks of his fingers. The narrator tells the story of Lord Krishna whom he calls the best beloved of all Gods. He condenses the most ambivalent character of Indian myth in a few sentences that young men pray to be as tall and strong as Krishna, young girls dream of a lover as daring as Krishna to carry them off like Rukmani in
a war chariot and the grown up men envy the wisdom and statesmanship with which Krishna managed the affairs of his kingdom.

The myth behind each animal and bird facilitates the people to protect, to save, to feed and to worship them. It is one of the means for mankind to adore them. Bond deals with myth in his fiction to exhibit that he is an Indian and he has a respect for cultural and mythical aspect of India. Mentioning these myths, he has been a part of safeguarding the wild animals and birds and forest. He shows his real concern for them. Bond knows well that myths are conspicuously a part of Indian life. They have contributed a lot in strengthening the humanistic and aesthetic attitude of Indian culture. In the frame of cultural and ethical and aesthetic realism, Bond has described these various mythical stories. He has fabricated them in the plot of his stories as a part of regional realism. The narrator too enriches his vision and understanding through the mythical history of the country. Pipalnagar is dreary, monotonous place for him, emerges as a great source of creative inspiration. There is no change in the town, but the writer has nurtured enough after passing through the endless experiences of life.

Bond enjoys in writing about various flowers like dandelions, buttercups and marigold which grow in the fields around Pipalnagar. As the flowers bloom, the sweet fragrance it spreads, add beauty to the surroundings and the life it lives. Flower is a symbolic representation of the change in the perspective of the hero and the colourful scented life in hills. Bond in his Book of Nature unfolds his reason to love dandelions. In Book of Nature (164) he opines that dandelion is his flower of the month. It asserts its right to be in the wall where practically nothing else will flourish. Another fact is that, the flower opens its petals to the first rays of the sun and closes when the sunlight fades. The dandelion indicates the people who live in Pipalnagar inspite of poverty, sickness and natural calamities they aspire for the settlement in life.
The dandelion can grow without any care or nourishment. It survives and grows strong and upright. The flower represents the stead fastness and strength of the narrator and the people live in Pipalnagar. You can pluck the plant but cannot uproot it as it is so firmly embedded. The little flower represents the sense of belongingness of the characters. On the other hand, it represents life in itself. Every human being has to lead the life like a dandelion in spite of the troubles, problems they come across in their life. They never want to be uprooted. They are strongly rooted in their own soil but want to grow upright without the help of somebody else. Bond accepts that he could not get through life without the company of flowers. They sustain and stimulate. When he steps out for a walk, he looks for wild flowers even the most humble of flowers hiding on the hill side which help him in his work and to remind him that life has its beautiful moments. Looking at the flowers, Arun the narrator reminds the readers to enjoy the beautiful moments of life.

The salient feature of Bond’s treatment of nature is its uniformity. The gentle soul of Bond experiences strange and captivating beauty and sensation in every aspect of nature trivial or significant, grand or tiny, useful or useless, beautiful or ugly. He asserts that every particle of nature has its own value and own role to play in the intricate web of the Almighty’s design. Bond’s celebration of dandelion, marigold and buttercups are examples for that. Bond enjoys the sight and smell of marigold and dandelion while in general the loveliness of rose, the fragrance of jasmine and the serenity of lily occupy most of the space in nature writing. Despite the fact that marigold is the most used flower in worship and decoration it fails to fire the imagination of the writers in India. The marigold is most redolent of India, of the heat and light and colour of India. Hence, Bond bugles his couch for marigold which is fresh, golden, dew-drenched, kissed by morning sun but not for lotus or the water lily. For Bond the huge banyan is as important as the tiny grass.
Suraj plays his flute whenever he is tired of going from house to house to sell his things. The haunting little notes from his flute travel down the road in the afternoon stillness and children are attracted towards it, come and sit beside him to listen to the flute music. In that music children can sense a little sadness of Suraj about his sickness.

As Suraj and the narrator walk over a hill, they meet a funeral procession on the way to the cremation ground. Suraj places his hand on Arun’s arm and asks him to wait till the procession has passed. This is the way Suraj learns to respect the dead and he gives reasons that the body is unimportant but one should honour it out the respect for the man’s mind. At least we should respect a person in death if not a man in life. The Suraj’s view on the death is a depiction of realization of the narrator on life and death. Bond too believes in the immortality and transmigration of soul. The truth that the physical body perishes and mixes with the dust from which it springs, is reflected in his story. Suraj explains that death is a beginning only of an eternity, a rest for a tired and misused body which has to be destroyed before it can be renewed. The realization of life and death comes naturally as a part of experience and instinct for a typical India. According to Bond death opens the gate of renunciation for the soul.

Bond shares many Indian conceptions such as myth and immortality of soul related to nature. At times he is very close to paganism but he is an ardent worshipper of nature and diligently raises the cause of nature through fiction. He strengthens his point by quoting from myths and legends prevalent among common folk. Bond believes in the life of action and of acceptance. The world is not a utopia but a real place where people are learning the art of living in conformity with man and nature. His mental equilibrium is close to that of saint who realizes the truth of life. His characters Suraj, Arun, Kamla are motivated by the universal values of truth, goodness and mutual trust. They are capable of changing their own lives as well as that of others but they try to remain content and happy in all situations.
The realization of mind is depicted through the moon light. As the darkness is vanished by the brightness of moon, Bond’s Arun feels guilty for his drunkenness. At night, Pipalnagar looks clean in the moonlight and the narrator’s thought are different now. The streets are empty and the moon probes the alley ways and there is a silver dustbin and even the slush and the puddles near the bus stop shimmer and glisten. He admits that drunkenness is really a vice, because it degrades a man and humiliates him. (Bond, Delhi Is Not Far. 78-79). Bond believes in grace and dignity of human soul. Man is the prime of God’s creation. Hence he is most dignified and wonderful of all. He hates the humiliation of any type. The revelation of mind and soul is delineated by shining moonlight on Pipalnagar.

In addition to the moon light, the rain comes and takes every one by surprise. The people of Pipalnagar celebrate Lord Krishna’s birthday and the rain comes down as heavily as the day when Krishna was born in Brindaban. Rainy season is a time of refreshment for all creatures and vegetations. Bond unites the myth of the birth of Krishna with the showering rain or the arrival of the monsoon. It declares life and prosperity and joy on earth. Bond reiterates that the Indian myth and nature are intertwined to save, to worship and to adore both alike. Bond feels that God speaks to us through nature. Nature is the best source to establish a communication with god. This grand and beautiful universe with its sparkling natural phenomena is a gift to mankind from God. The ‘rain’ and the ‘moon’ images in this novel reveal the changing phases in the life of the hero and the setting of the story. The rain is used as a symbol of exhilaration and tedious and unification and separation in Bond’s novel. When the protagonist is brooding over the upcoming hardships, the sudden arrival of rain has changed the atmosphere. Nature is a stirring force that quickens every object and creature to act, to respond, and to grow.

Arun explicates his passion to go to hills, where he went in his childhood with his parents. Now he recollects the pine trees, the wind at night and men carrying loads of wood
up and down the steep mountain paths and he utters that he would like to see the hills again. Bond ponders his notion through Arun that a man can be complete until he has lived in the hills. There is something about a mountain that adds a new dimension to life. The change in air and attitude makes one think and feel and act differently. One must go to the hills and be away from the insufferable heat from these drains and smells and noises (Bond, *Delhi Is Not Far*. 83). Suraj also joins him as his exams are only a few weeks off. Arun is sure that the change will help him. He promises Suraj that he will not have a single fit all the time they are in hills. Arun pawns his gold ring for the money they require for outstay. First they travel by train and then they take the bus. Looking at the window, they see the changing landscape. Arun narrates that it was so long since he had seen trees, not singly or in clumps, but forests of trees, thick and dark and broody, commencing at the railway tracks and stretching away to the foot hills. Trees full of birds and monkeys and in the forest clearing view, they saw deer, it’s head raised, scenting the wind.

The mountains are the symbol of eternity, of spiritual enlightenment, of universal belongingness and of harmony with nature. Bond finds them good for writers as they have been a source of inspiration for ages. Arun aspires to be writer and also likes to be in hills for few days to be inspired by the mountains. The writer hero of this novel experiences the great translucent force of the mountains. They pour tranquility and spiritual bliss into innocent hearts. Bond expresses his desire to be in Mountain in one of his verses “Once You Have Lived with Mountains” (*Book of Verse*. 32). In Bond’s *Book of Verse* “Once You Have Lived with Mountain” Bond lists out the tranquil beauty of nature. The mountains are the God’s favourite place and any mankind lived in mountains under the whispering pines, deodars, near stars and a brighter moon, with wood smoke and mist, with a sweet smell of grass, dew lines on spider-spun, sun – kissed butter cup and vine, he or she will return once
more to feel the same in the mountain. Arun is that type ready to go to the hills to renew his spirit.

Bond reflects the same idea of Arun in this poem. He refers that ‘mountains’ are God’s favorite dwelling place. He assures that he will return to touch the trees and grass and claim the wind-swept mountain pass. Arun prepares to enjoy and experience the mountain with Suraj. The change in the atmosphere surely results in the change in the mind of the characters.

Arun narrates his time in hills in a clear simple way that any reader will desire to be in hills after reading it. There are too many hills and streams and trees inviting them on all sides. It seems as if they have been waiting all these years just for their arrival. Each tree has an individuality of its own. If one looks at a tree with a personal eye, it will give him or her something of itself, something deep and personal, its smell, its sap, its depth and wisdom.

Suraj and Arun mingle with the trees, they feel and understand the dignity of the pine, the weariness of the willow and the resignation of the oak. The blossoms have fallen from the plum and apricot trees and the branches are bare touched with the light green of new foliage. The pine needles made the ground soft and slippery. He takes paper and pencil and he writes odd things that come into his head about the hills and the sounds he heard.

Bond welcomes the reader in his words of carpet about the sounds in the hills. There are the inviting notes by nature; a shepherd boy shouting to his mate; a girl singing to her cattle; the jingle of cow bells; a woman pounding clothes on a flat stone; the subtler sounds such as; the singing of crickets, whistling of anonymous birds; the wind soughing in the pine trees. Nature decorates herself as a candle on a fruit cake in the hills. The nearest hill is covered with oak and pine, the next is brown and naked and topped with a white temple like a candle on a fruit cake. The furthest hill was a misty blue. Mountains are feast for the eyes and
minds of the writer. They feed Arun who is hungry in the delight of observing and enjoying different vagaries of life.

The writer Arun has seen in the hills anglicized and elite, imitating Western youth as depicted in films and magazines. Suraj and Arun feel out of place as they feel that they belong to India and firmly rooted there. Bond tenderly hits at the false way of imitating foreigners in their dress and attitude. He is sure that they are not really exhibiting themselves but they are simply caricatures of the West. Arun shares his experience of his first meeting with mountains at the age of six. It does not astonish him. He feels that he has known mountains before. Trees and flowers and rivers are not strange things. He has lived with them too. He sees the familiar in new places and new faces as a child who is old in experience. The rare intimacy binds the two and brings harmony.

He walks in the foot path, winding round the hill to the temple; a forest of silver oaks shimmering in the breeze. He has tasted the cool, sweet water, bubbling out of the mountain side through the rocks and ferns and green grasses which is the sweetest and most delicious water he has ever tasted. He quenches his thirst as a thirsty traveller. This scene depicts Arun’s deep association with nature. Nature stands as his comrade he learns the art of coexisting with nature. He explores nature by foot. Bond lists out the perks of living or visiting hills; loosing weight in the hills through climbing and riding, the good clean air had sweetened their blood and one felt like the Spartan in return. In this fiction Delhi Is Not Far, ‘I find happy in your happiness’ as the saying goes, Bond imposes his sense of joy in and around the readers of his writing.

After returning to Pipalnagar, they feel that they lost weight in the hills. They change themselves to persons of great courage and self-discipline that nature renders them. It injects its quality to those who attain it amiably. Suraj too gains strength and the fear of death depart from his eyes and he passes his examinations. Arun also thanks God for giving him Suraj.
Suraj has got his place among the top successful ones. They have got positive force which they inhale from the mountain breeze. The positive force has an effect on Arun too. He has been called to Delhi for an interview from an editor. When the bus was out of Pipalnagar, the fields open out on all sides. Arun knows that he is free. He is held back only by his own weakness lacking the impulse and the imagination to break away from an existence which has become habitual for years. When Arun vacates his place from Pipalnagar he is free to achieve. As the bus crosses the river Yamuna, Arun the writer, crosses his idle phase and enters into the new arena of writing in the old city of Delhi. Though the editor does not promise him a job there is the offer, there is the chance, an opportunity to escape, to enter the world of the living, to write, to read and to explore. He writes a letter to his friend Suraj about the city life. He suffers a loss of identity in the indifferent crowds. Only when he is near an old tomb or in the garden he becomes conscious of his identity. He tells his editor that he has come to Delhi to do some research for a book he intends to write. He quickly utters the title too ‘Delhi is Still Far’ which is Nizamuddin’s comment on Tughlaq Shah’s marching to Delhi (Bond, Delhi Is Not Far. 98-99). As he is thinking of different sorts of people living in Delhi, he has a sudden desire to travel through his country that he ever tries of it. He becomes the part of all these people and their activities. The fact is that in a village like Pipalnagar everyone knows you intimately, but in a city no one has the slightest interest in you. Bond sums up the city atmosphere.

The city Delhi does not impart him a pleasant experience. He is unnoticed and unobserved unlike Pipalnagar. He suffers a sense of loss and he wants to belong to his place, Pipalnagar. There he is in the arms of nature and there he has got friends of his own and people to know him personally. Nature provides him a sense of belongingness. Nature experiences inject him with hope and confidence to move towards his goal. As the termites and the flower dandelion, he never wants to uproot himself totally from the natural world.
The realization of Arun’s belongingness occurs only when he is ready to depart Pipalnagar. The last and the final moments whisper him the note of his identity. The revelation of his identity is miraculously painted by Bond’s words that in the hills, the mists have lifted and the distant mountains are covered with snow. The earth meets the sky in one broad sweep of the creator’s brush (Bond, Delhi Is Not Far. 111). As the mists have lifted, the ignorance of the writer Arun is erased. He is now conscious of writing about India, where a quiet land of fields and ponds, shaded by ancient trees and ringed with palms, where sacred rivers are touched by temples, where temples are touched by the southern seas. Arun accepts that this is the real land, he should write about. There are many writers who can write about India tomorrow but he can sing of today, of Pipalnagar where he has been lived and loved like Suraj, Kamla and Deep Chand. Arun wants to write about his own place where he wants to live on and on delighting like a pagan in all that is physical. Bond depicts his emotions towards Mountains that a land of thrusting hills, terraced hills wood-covered and windswept. In the Mountains, the gods speak gently to the lonely heart. Hills of green and grey rocks, misty at dawn, hazy at noon, molten at sunset where fierce fresh torrent rush to the valleys below (Bond, Delhi Is Not Far. 111).

Bond feels that God speaks to us through nature. Nature is the best source to establish a communication with God. This grand and beautiful universe with its natural phenomena is a gift to mankind from God. He thanks God for His creation. Admiring Almighty he writes that he would thank God for leaves and grass and the smell of things the smell of mint and myrtle and bruised clover and the touch of things, the touch of grass and air and sky. His thoughts echo Gerard Manley Hopkin’s “Pied Beauty”

“Glory be to God for dappled things
For skies of couple – colour as a brindled cow;
For rose – moles in all stipple upon trout that Swim”

And it is quoted by Bandana Bal Chandnani in *Structures of Authenticity in Ruskin Bond’s Fiction* (123).

Through Bond’s prose, one can visualize the image which he artistically creates. In this respect Bond is communicating with John Keats, particularly, for pictorial effect like him, Bond too portrays the natural world through the series of beautiful crafted pictures. The difference is traceable not in matter but in the manner of projection. Keats is poetical and Bond prosaic. While Keats pictures are executed with few words, Bond does it with elaborate descriptions. Like William Blake, Bond observes the silent miracles of nature and celebrates it in its fullest form and like Wordsworth he extols the divinity of nature and views its world with spiritual reverence. Bond perceives ‘Mother Nature’ as infinite power and he longs to observe her divine splendor in the objects of the world. He, like Wordsworth feels that the nature can impart great lessons which all sages cannot do:

“One impulse from a vernal wood

May teach you more of man,

Of moral evil and of good,

Than all the sages can” (William Wordsworth, “The Tables Turned”).

The palpitating view of forest, of garden and glorified world of trees, mountains, moon light, rain and stream, flowers in Bond’s fiction have brought the young readers close to the natural world. Through the minute details he invokes the young children to have invaluable lessons in ecology. In an age of environmental destruction, Bond’s writing sensitizes towards the need for humanistic understanding of our relationship with the natural world. The mountain experiences of Arun lead to self-confidence, self-realization to mould himself as a writer.
The end of the novel is denoted by the season ‘autumn’. The rains are over. The earth meets the sky in the creators brush. Everything is clear. Arun, Suraj and Kamla, all apprehend the meaning of real life that life is not just an escape from one phase to another but a challenge to stick to it and to go as a dandelion or marigold towards the sun to touch the sky. The prosaic, pedagogical and pictorial language of Bond uniquely paints the exact picture of the authenticity of life for his precious readers.

Ruskin Bond possesses an impeccable understanding of nature. A true devotee of nature, Bond finds ample delight in exploring its myriad vistas. His response to nature is personal and unique. In the second novel of this chapter Love is a Sad Song unfolds Bond’s heart-warming relationship with nature and the stimulating magnificence of the dominant images of the hills and big and small trees of the Himalayas. The remarkable feature of Bond’s presentation of nature in his fiction is its personification. The personification emerges in the scene when nature too reciprocates his love. He has grown oneness with the environment around him. Nature evades the sad moments and makes him forget his lonely past. He feels as if he is in the lap of his lady love. The protagonist Arun of Love is a Sad Song lost his love, the partition or the love failure affects his mind and it drags him to the cliff of solitude ‘nature’ yet another lady love comes to secure him from the ill feeling. ‘Nature’ teaches him to go with the current of stream in order to live the life.

Bond opens his novel Love is a Sad Song with the fantastic revelation of nature in few lines:

“I sit against this grey rock, beneath a sky of pristine blueness, and think of you Sushila. It is November and the grass is turning brown and yellow. Crushed, it still smells sweet. The afternoon sun shimmers on the oak leaves and turns them glittering silver. A cricket sizzles its way through the long grass. The stream murmurs at the
bottom of the hills – that stream where you and I lingered on a golden afternoon May’

(Bond, NTDOS, Love Is a Sad Song. 210).

Nature with all its bounty appears in his writing. In the few lines, Bond captures the rock, the sky, the grass, the sun, oak leaves, cricket, stream in the hill, and the season winter and summer along with the love of Sushila. These opening lines give way for the anticipation of the fiction. The narrator hero recollects his days with his lover Sushila in summer stream. The memories are still alive and it is a kind of attempt to bring the pleasant moments back in his mind. He longs for her presence, but it was impossible as she consents to marry the man, her family chooses for Sushila. Though he has failed in his love, his memories render sweet nostalgia. He never regrets for the failure. The sight of nature refreshes him, the songs of birds inspires him, rustling leaves and the tinkling of rivers becalm his anguished mind, the presence of small bird add sweetness to his life and soothing hues of various phenomena of nature, heal his grief-stricken soul. The lively presence of nature with its serenity over powers him with a sense of completeness and energizes in turn to pursue his art.

The protagonist Arun is highly receptive to the vibrations in nature. His snapshots of nature are marked by evocative imageries such as grey rock, blue sky, brown and yellow grass, and the murmuring stream of the hill. These images stimulate his emotions towards his Sushila who is far away from him now. The environment reminds him the texture of her skin, the coolness of her feet, the sharp tingle of her finger tips and the passion grows sweeter as a stream with the passing of time.

Arun knows the reality that Sushila will not think of him for more than a moment or two. In her home in city, there are men and women and children circling about her in her crowded grandmother’s house. He recollects the days he spent with her. It is almost a year since he had seen her. Sushila is sixteen and Sunil her brother twelve and her uncle Dinesh twenty-three and Arun is almost thirty a fearful and wonderful age. He remembered the day
he met her in Delhi last year. She made him garlands of marigolds of orange and gold, fresh
and clean and kissed by the morning sun. This delineation of the flora is marked by beautiful
visualized imageries which evoke our emotions and sensory impressions that reveal Bond’s
art in perfection. It flows smoothly out of his pen as if he is painting his canvas with vibrant
strokes of joyous and innocent colours.

The love of a girl aged sixteen towards a man nearly twice her age is the main stream
of the story. It is not easy to take very seriously. A teenaged school girl hardly has the
emotional maturity to be able to decide what love is and what is not. Bond’s Sushila is still a
girl, not a woman and her naivété is further mirrored by that of her lover, who is too easily
swayed by his emotions for her. The result is predestined to disappointment at the end.

Arun cherishes his first picnic with Sushila, Sunil and Dinesh. The path to the little
stream took them through oak forest where the flashy blue magpies played follow-my-leader
with their harsh, creaky calls. Skirting an open ridge, the path dipped through oak,
rhododendron and maple, until it reached a little knoll above the stream (Bond, *NTDOS*–Love
*Is a Sad Song* 211). Arun’s feeling for Sushila is almost paternal. But the night after the
picnic she responded to him so readily and tenderly and it was just innocence, she devastated
his heart. He proclaims his love for her. According to Bond, the ideal vision of love is
consummated in the environs of nature. The picnic scene happened in *The Room on the Roof*
between Rusty and Meena in the forest where they share their love. Before the picnic Meena
loves Rusty as if a mother who loves a parentless child. The natural atmosphere invokes
one’s emotion to love one another. Such a love for nature lends a lyrical quality to Bond’s
fiction. The stream, oak forest, blue magpie, rhododendron and maple consummate their love.
Forest, besides being a natural habitat of plants, trees and birds emerge as a secure place for
humans and lovers of nature. It symbolizes an attitude to life that man learns to coexist with
other fellow creatures of nature which brings harmony among them. Man understands that
both human and nature are interdependent and intertwined for the peaceful and loveable life that everyone aspires for.

The trees of the forest sum up nature’s perfection which can be seen in every leaf, flower, seed and creatures great and small. The oak tree symbolizes roughness and sturdiness and its crooked branches spread out with no particular effect. A long tailed blue magpie took alarm over the puff of wind and flew noisily out of an oak tree. Bond in his Book of Nature describes the oak tree that it is rough and gnarled, full of experience it was a good tree for the privacy of birds (125).

In Book of Nature Bond shares his experience of walking among the trees. He acknowledges their presence with the touch of his hand against the oak’s rough and gnarled, the walnut’s smooth and polished texture. This is his place of peace and power. The oak is a resting and a nesting place of blue magpie. A puff of wind came across the valley, awakes it and it flies noisily out of an oak. The oak symbolizes matured writer Arun and the hill people too. Bond depicts that the trees remember him and they bow him gently in the breeze and beckoned him nearer, welcoming him home. The oak is like the philosopher who is careless about his dress and appearance. It has secrets, a hidden wisdom that is the art of survival. Oak serves as a symbol of life and hope, in spite of the struggle and the havoc it faces. It teaches the lesson of stead fastness and sturdiness to lead the life. Similarly, Arun bears his failure in love, accepts the reality of life, never regrets for what has happened, but refresh and renew himself to with stand in life. He learns to live in life, in tough times of their life. Sushila has grown from immaturity to maturity. Hence, the oak tree stands for an art of living. The note of frustration does not last long. The organic unity with nature helps them to survive. Bond has evolved a wonderful similitude between oak and man. Oak is the icon of life. Hill people have imbibed the steadfastness of oak in their life. Like oak, they have great tolerance and
resistance and like its seeds they renew themselves faster amidst constant threats and wants. Never loose hope is the motto of their life.

Bond in Book of Verse “The Trees” (33) records the corresponding love between trees and Bond. They grow accustomed to his presence or possibly they recognized his foot steps.

“They know me well, these trees;
Oak and walnut, spruce and pine
They know my face in the windows
. . .
I listen to their whisperings
Their own mysterious diction
And bow my head before their arms
And ask for benediction” (33).

“The Trees” from Book of Verse reflects Bond’s communion with them and they invite him with their dangling leaves and branches. It is an everlasting love affair between Bond and trees. His characters also represent the same in his novels.

Bond, a devoted lover of nature, recognizes the voice of nature, particularly of trees, pays his obeisance as they are of great source of inspiration for his writing and they redeem his sense of loss and provide him parental care and guardianship. The learning process never ends. We do not stop learning from the natural world. The earth, the seas have still so much to tell human. Nature note book is never closed. Life is another name of struggle and Bond believes in the ultimate victory of man. He coins the image of a ‘walnut’ tree to convey his idea of nature. In Love is a Sad Song, Sushila sat down in the shade of walnut tree and watched his deportee in the water. The walnut tree is the first to lose its leaves. But at the same tree, the fruit ripens, the skin splits, the hard shell of the nut stands revealed.
The walnut is the benevolent force of nature that pervades. Standing on its own was a walnut tree. This was a tree for all seasons. In winter, the branches are bare but they are smooth and straight and round like the arm of a woman in a painting by Jamini Roy. It reminds the writer hero of his lady love. Arun describes Sushila that her limbs as untouched by self consciousness as the limbs of a young and growing tree. In the spring, each branch produces a hard bright spear of new leaf. But in midsummer, the entire tree is in leaf and towards the end of the monsoon the walnuts encase in their green jackets and have reached maturity. Like the walnut tree, Sushila is young and glaring when he first meets her. As the tree in spring, she is full of energy and vigour displays the art of love for the first time and she responds to his love calmly. The innocence and the immaturity of the midsummer result in maturity of the monsoon. As the season changed, it alters the course of action and the mentality of the characters. Looking closely at the nut, it is shaped rather like the human brain denoting wisdom. Walnut’s trunks are smooth and polished like that of a woman. While Sushila is matured enough to decide her life, she has grown from a girl to a woman as that of walnuts.

Maple is yet another tree which changes its colours according to the seasons to beautify the surroundings. Just as Maple, Sushila alters herself according to the situation and never regrets for her love towards the narrator. The reader can reminisce the line love is not love, which alters when its alteration finds. On the part of Sushila, it is not a real love. It is just an infatuation.

Arun’s first picnic with Sushila, Sunil and Dinesh through the oak, maple, rhododendron, hearing the magpie and reaching the stream are the depiction of nature in different perceptions in relation to life. Bond predicts the plot of his novel through these natural aspects. Besides these, water stream, monsoon rain and mountain contribute to the main stream of the story. The natural atmosphere causes some changes; renovations and
revelations in the minds of Arun and Sushila. It facilitates to comprehend the human beings. The stream captivates the hero. The sound of stream and water pattering somewhere in the forest and glades drags his steps towards its source. Water symbolizes sensual pleasure. Arun and Sushila visited the stream again a day or two. Using the rocks as stepping stones, they wandered downstream and they reached a pool and a small water fall and a cool dark cave. A spray of water was caught by a shaft of sunlight and at intervals it reflected the colours of the rainbow. The personification emerges to reciprocate his love. Being caught in the sunlight of ‘Sushila’ a spray of water ‘Arun’ feels and enjoys her company as a rainbow. The setting is a sample for Bond’s visual and aural evocation of nature.

The water and the gurgling stream magnetize the lovers and invite them to plunge into it. The small water fall serves as a curtain of white silver wall for their private love affairs. Their bodies started glistening under the crystal clean water. After that they stretch themselves out and allow the sun to sink deep into their bodies. Their lying on the green grass to let them dry in the sun symbolizes man’s occasional return to the elements. In Fictional World of Ruskin Bond, Amita Aggarwal imparts:

“Man’s belongingness with the essential elements is the specific feature in Bond’s work” (137).

Bond’s characters experience the beauty and pleasure of being in water, in sun light and also in moon light. The hero of Love is a Sad Song allows the sun to sink deep into his body after bathing in the stream which unveils his belongingness with the elements. The sun beams spread gaiety and sense of security. In the company of nature, Bond’s heroes never felt alone. Nature is their comrade and they rely on it in times of happiness and sorrow. Arun develops his love in this picnic spot. It is not an exaggeration to state that ‘Nature’ is a friend, philosopher and guide as it guides the way of life and the way to life. Only thing nature
requires is the silent and sensitive heart to listen to her. Arun learns and listens through nature and he tries to impart it to the readers too.

Bond celebrates the colours of the rainbow which seem to jump out of the sky to take on a life all their own. Being near her feet, the colours of rainbow in water come to life through Bond’s enchanted words. The colours of the rainbow due to the reflection of sunlight on water instill the diverse moods and tones of the lovers in solitude. The colour signifies life, innocence and belongingness of the characters towards the natural environment. Bond’s symphony of words stuns the senses with deceptive simplicity.

Bond’s prose flows like rhythmic stream. The effect of prose flowing rhythmically with emotional ebbs and flows is unsurpassable. Being in a heavenly atmosphere of nature, one cannot resist one self from describing the beauty of his ladylove. The protagonist of Love Is a Sad Song exceeds from prose to poetic fervor. P. K. Sing has aptly said:

“Bond’s prose is uncontaminated simple, bare and lyrical, matching well with the generous emotions of his characters and reflecting vividly the poetic faculty of the artist” (The Creative Contours of Ruskin Bond. 13).

Note the vivid description of Sushila lying sweetly in the sunshine of the early morn:

“And in the morning, when the sun shine filled the room, I watched you while you slept your slim body in repose, your face tranquil, your thin dark hands like sleeping butterflies” (Bond, NTDOS Love Is a Sad Song. 214).

The soft and alliterating tone of his prose harmonize with the mood of the story. Bond’s lyrical prose romanticizes the atmosphere. It depicts the change in the mood and the emotions of the narrator. He uses metaphors and similes to beautify his lady love. The narrator admires her that she laid folded up like a kitten, her limbs are as untouched by self-consciousness as the limbs of a young and growing tree. And during the warmth of the day a bead of sweat rested on her brow like a small pearl. Bond plays with his poetic language to
elicit the emotional love of the protagonist towards his lover, Sushila. He uses metaphors; sleeping butterflies, limbs of a young and growing tree, fairy princes, similes like a kitten, like a small pearl to refer Sushila (Bond, *NTDOS Love Is a Sad Song*, 216-217).

The narrator tries to remember her when she was a child about nine or ten. At the arrival of the monsoon she ran out into the rain with the other children, naked, exulting in the swish of the cool rain. As she grew older, in her thirteen her eyes become more expressive, her hair longer and glossier and her gestures more graceful. When she comes to him in the hills, Arun finds that she had been transformed into fairy princess of devastating charm. While she is reclining in his arms, Dinesh comes unexpectedly and knows the love affair. Arun tells him that he wants to marry her. He knows that he would have to wait till she finishes her school, within two or three years. The waiting will be long and difficult business for Arun. Dinesh replies that Arun is quite mad, falling in love with the girl half of his age. Arun is stern in his love for her. He admits that he wants to look after her and love her and he can do it by marrying her. Dinesh asks him to wait patiently that the orthodox family of her would not appreciate Arun’s outlook. He suggests that Arun may marry her for love but it will have to look like an arranged marriage. There are only few days left for Sushila to return to the plains, Delhi. He wondered how long he would have to wait until he could call her, his own.

The first time, the hero narrator was with Sushila in the stream. In a warm day, both went down to the stream, together for the first time. They took the steep path down to stream, hand in hand, scrambled over the rocks until they reached the pool and the water fall. Bond has packed this novella with various instances of the lover’s togetherness in loneliness. Nature renders privacy to their desire to love. Arun is also aware of the fact that he could visit Sushila in Delhi but they would not be able to enjoy the same freedom and intimacy of the hills in the plains. The hero in love feeds on the diet of poetry. Sushila is a great source of
poetic inspiration for the writer, lover. The lover coins beautiful personifications and alliterations in praise of her:

“I kept remembering little things the soft hair hiding your ears, the movement of your hands, the cool touch of your feet, the tender look in your eyes and the sudden stab of mischief” (Bond, *NTDOS Love is a Sad Song*, 221).

The hero’s intimacy with her lover is depicted in the natural atmosphere. Lovers are caressed by sunlight and added to that a soft breeze comesdown the valley. Amita Aggarwal ponders her view:

“Bond’s poetic expressions add a characteristic feature to the tale of romance” (*The Fictional World of Ruskin Bond*, 152).

The narrator Arun, the night after the picnic whispers his love to her as he is kissing her eyes and forehead, her small round mouth, and the lobes of her ears and her long smooth throat following one action of her acceptance of him. Just like the protagonist and Sushila in *Love is a Sad Song*, in Bond’s “The Girl from Copenhagen”, Ula and her lover experience the warmth and texture of each other’s bodies with such fullness that they feel as though it is not just one passing night, but all nights of a life time, all eternity. In spite of such fullness of experience, the girl goes away without making any commitment and the boy too basks in the lingering fragrance of honey suckle every night. Another instance, the boy feels the kiss of Ula fresh and clean, like the earth after spring rain. He finds great joy in their loving and afterwards they fall asleep in each other’s arms like two children who have been playing in the open all day (Bond, “The Girl from Copenhagen” *The Complete Stories and Novels*, 501).

Bond’s stories present a wonderful blend of love and sensual delights. He feels that spiritual love wades through physical love. He loves body as a beautiful shining cover of soul. Bond’s humanism finds in it is celebration of two innocent souls bound together. Nature performs as a tool for the innocent love to stimulate the passion between the lovers. The
natural atmosphere and the poetic expressions of Bond add beauty and delineate romantic touch to his novella. The lovers meeting in the forest, near the stream, pool and water fall awakes the long suppressed desire of love. Old passionate memories grow sweeter and sweeter with the passing of time.

After vocation Sushila left for Delhi with Sunil and Dinesh. Arun left alone with the brooding mountains. Bond narrates the subtlest form of torture of separation of lady love. The protagonist could pass a few weeks without her but how can he pass a year or two of her absence. Even if he leaves the hill and takes a flat in Delhi, what use it would be, looking at and speaking to her but never able to touch is the burdening queries of the hero. Though the house is empty without her he keeps finding little things to remind him of her- a handkerchief, a bangle, a length of ribbon. These things make him feel as if she had gone forever. In her absence, the murmur of the stream has become an angry rumble (Bond, *NTDOS Love Is a Sad Song*. 221).

Arun has got letter from Dinesh that he is going to join an Art School in Delhi and he asks Arun to return to Delhi and he can share a flat with him. Though Arun dreads the possibility of leaving the hills, living in city is as depressing as Delhi, love makes any place hospitable. He took bus to Delhi. Arun leaving the hills is revealed by the first monsoon showers:

“The first monsoon showers has freshened the fields, and everything looked much greener than usual. The maize was just shooting up, and the mangoes were ripening fast” (Bond, *NTDOS Love is a Sad Song*. 222).

The expectation and the anxiety of Arun visiting Sushila are depicted in the first monsoon. He does not expect the chance of meeting her too earlier. He leaps at heart, feels fresh and green in his mind as the fields. The maize shoots up and the mangoes have ripened
before its season. Similarly, the monsoon showers sends of his loneliness and provides him a chance to meet his dear Sushila.

The monsoon with its magic touch brings life and greenness to rock and earth. From the withered tree, insect musicians are roused to their greatest activity. The shrilling of the grasshoppers is added to the staccato notes of the crickets that provide a melody of sounds. The mist affords certain privacy. Nature serves as a backstage with scenic changes, with an excellent music of the birds, with the greenery of plants and with the dancing leaves of the trees celebrates the meeting of the protagonist and Sushila. Bandana Bal Chandnani is of the opinion:

“The rain is used as a symbol of exhilaration and tedium and unification and separation throughout the novel” (Structures of Authenticity in Ruskin Bond’s Fiction.117).

In this novel, during monsoon, Arun has a chance to meet Sushila. The rain serves as a symbol of unification. The meeting is a last meeting between the writer hero and Sushila. There it stands as a symbol of separation. During the separation the drizzle reflects the tedium of the writer Arun. The first shower of the monsoon is exhilarative for the lovers.

Bond plainly depicts his hatred for urban life in this novel. Like Bond, Arun prefers the quite life of the hills to the hustle-bustle and pollution of the towns and cities. He feels that the majority of those who live in the cities miss out the mystique and freedom that nature lends. The narrator hero shares his experience in Delhi:

“Coming down from the hills for the first time in over a year, I found the noise, chaos, dust and dirt a little unsettling” (Bond, NTDOS Love is a Sad Song. 222).

In addition to the noise and dirt, he felt it very hot and he was sweating or it was raining, he is drenched. The writer who belongs to the hills cannot bear the heat and the dust of the city. Though he wants to visit Sushila, his mind is preoccupied with the mountain life
and the privacy it renders. The narrator utters that the mountains are far, and in a place like Delhi and with a family like hers, private moments would be few and far between. The joined family system of Sushila consists of larger number of family members. Amidst them, Arun and Sushila lack the moment of privacy to share their long awaiting love. The moment of togetherness is a precious gift, is presented by nature when they are in hills. Bond strikes the contrast of being in the hills and in the town in this novel. The disappointment happened to the narrator is evident to prove Bond’s total and complete distrust for town life. At night, hearing the roar of the traffic, he thinks of the hills. Arun rents a flat for him. He cannot stay there even for two days because of the noisy road. He came to stay with Dinesh where Sushila is living in the same house but unable to have a real contact with her was an exquisite form of self inflicted torture for Arun. In self-pity, he realized that he could not show his familiarity with her in front of others and it is a sign of failure. He accepts that it is especially of failure in love. He became morose and wallowed in self-pity. He started to leave and there was a constant drip and drizzle and drumming on the roof. It seemed that at any moment it might start raining. The monsoon in *Love is a Sad Song* precedes the lovers last meeting in Delhi. Bond associates rain with sorrow or love sickness, so when the monsoon breaks, it usually brings separation from the beloved. Bond drastically embosses the feeling of separation and loneliness in one of his poems “Rain in the Hills” (*Book of Verse*. 24).

“In the hushed silence of the house

When I am quite alone and my friend, who was here,

Has gone, it is very lonely, very quite,

As I sit in a liquid silence, a silence within,

Surrounded by the rhythm of rain

The steady drift

Of water on leaves, on lemons, on roof,
Drumming on drenched dahlias and windowpanes,
While the mist holds the house in a dark caress
As I pause near a window, the rain stops
And starts again
And the trees, no longer green but grey,
Menace me with their loneliness” (24).

As the poet feels lonely without his lover, the nature itself experiences such loneliness along with the poet. The day he spent with her, was ever green in his mind, it turns him down the memory lane. The rain foretells that there will be a separation of the lovers. The rainy season provides an ample chance to realize and understand the reality. Bond handles rain in this novel as an instrument to mark the sudden change or turn in the story. Rain directs the protagonist to have an anchor and the living force, confident and hope in life. Rain is life. The pouring rain indicates failure in love, may be ambivalent of nature. But, in disguise, it is a benevolent in nature which supplies a chance to the lovers to realize what love is and what is not. The hero and Sushila indulged in self-realization and they never regret for their love. Both emerge more aware of life’s complexities, chartered by the process of change. Arun remained in the hills for another two months alone. The murmur of the stream at the bottom of the hill is the only companion now. Whenever he went away he was conscious of something missing and he was lonely without the sound of running water.

The sights and sounds of nature are omnipresent in Love is a Sad Song. Some of the best sounds are made by water. The water of a mountain stream is always in a hurry, bubbling over rocks and chattering and tumbling over itself in its anxiety to reach the bottom of the hills. Bond fantastically captures this sound of water flowing gently to show the writer hero’s longing to meet to his lover. The joy of meeting and the sorrow of parting are reflected in his words designing around nature. As if a stream reaches at the bottom of the hill, the
protagonist wants to do something that would bring everything nearer to a conclusion. Merely to stand and wait is intolerable. He needs someone to know about his intentions and to help him to get away from the uncertain of the situation.

The monsoon is over, and the winter begins. To drive the cold and shivering Arun made fire using oak and thorn branches. The sun had gone down. Arun’s intense situation and agony of losing his love is expressed by the dusk ing sun and the beginning of winter where the day is short and the night is long. The winter season is a replica of gloominess and slow and dull phase of life. The change in the season reflects the change in the mood of Bond’s characters. During monsoon, he is parted from his lover and he longs to see and to have a union with her. It was forbidden by the circumstances. Living in the hills alleviates his pain of loneliness. Still, he does not erase his thought of her. He visits the stream again to have the nostalgic moments. The water flows gently, its music subdued, soft chamber music after the monsoon orchestration. Cowbells tinkled on the hill side and an eagle soared high above. Bond records phenomena of nature in action. It is the mild aspects of nature that capture Bond’s attention. Bond’s appealing and sensuous images make the description forceful and effective. Illuminating recurring images such as the flow of water, tinkling of the cowbells and the eagle flew above the sky, the orchestration of birds and insects, murmuring sounds of brooks, the mountain path dipped through oak, rhododendron and maple enlighten the understanding of the reader and denote the rich poetic sensibility to his writing. They are subtle and appropriate and emanate itself with the need of situation. The use of wide and speculative imageries is an invaluable resource of Bond’s language.

Bond also recaptures the sound produced by the stream, cowbells and the flowing of water. It is especially Bond’s young readers who get fascinated by the euphonious sound imageries. The writer Arun is magnetized by the ‘whistling-thrush’.
All the bird-calls are pleasing to the ear. In *Love is a Sad Song*, the narrator hears the whistling-thrush. Its song is crescendo of sweet notes and variations that ring clearly across the ravine. He could not see the bird. Its call emerged from the forest like some dark sweet secret, saying ‘It isn’t time that’s passing by, my friend. It is you and I’ (Bond, *NTDOS Love is a Sad Song* 235). Bond captures the whistling thrush in his *Book of Nature* (193). Bond pictures the whistling-thrush that it was a deep, glistening and purple and his shoulders flecked with white. He had sturdy black legs and a strong yellow beak, a dapper fellow. Their duels notes were love calls because it was not long before the pair was making forays into the rocky ledges of ravine, looking for a suitable nesting site. It magnetizes its partner with its charm and elegance. Arun thinks of the days he had spend with Sushila hearing the whistling thrush. It stands for the longing to love and to be loved.

The whistling-thrush is joined by a female, sometimes they gave solo performance and sometime they sang duets. It is a symbol of love and the unity of the lovers. The duets of whistling thrush kindles the emotion of Arun for Sushila. It reminds him of her. These birds are liveliest in midsummer and even in the winter. They start singing as they flitted from pine to oak to naked chestnut. It was Bond’s favourite bird. After finishes bathing in the water puddle, it perches on a branch of the walnut tree and it starts singing. It tries out the tune, whistling to himself and then confident of the notes, sends his thrilling, full-throated voice far over the forest. The song dies down, starts again, joy fully and suddenly stops as if the singer had forgotten the words or the tunes. Whistling thrush is a sign of love making and magnetizing the partner with its charm. Bond’s invitation to this bird is to highlight the atmosphere of sounds, tunes and notes the bird creates, attribute to the thought of the hero. The bird alters a sharp, rather metallic but not unpleasant call which sounds like kiss me, kiss me kiss me (Bond, *Book of Nature*. 192). Bond introduces the whistling thrush to remind or recall the love affair of the narrator and Sushila. It is a commemoration to his love.
Ravi has written to say that the marriage of Arun and Sushila will not be possible. Arun will wait his chance if he knows that Sushila is for him. Anyway, reading the letter, he starts to Delhi to find out how the things stand. The worst part is that Ravi has asked him not to come to the house for sometime. Dinesh is also in Lucknow. Therefore, Arun sits on a bench and wait to meet Sunil. He does not like to hang about near the house or her school like a disrespective character. He is sure that he cannot see Sushila this time. He conveys to Sunil that if she wants him to wait, until she is eighteen, he can wait two or even three years. He will wait if she waits for him alone. He sends Sunil and decides to meet him tomorrow to know about Sushila’s opinion. After hearing, Arun has to catch the train out of Delhi and Sunil has to go home early. Sunil informs him that she doesn’t care for Arun or Pramod. She is going to marry a person her family has chosen for her as husband and is perfectly resigned to her fate. All his attempts to tie the knot fail miserably, particularly when a bank officer armed with a car enters the fray. Arun felt lonely under the ‘peepul tree’. Bond depicts the loneliness of Arun:

“It was lonely under the peepul tree…. For peepul trees are cool and shady and full of loneliness” (Bond, NTDOS Love is a Sad Song. 237).

The ‘peepul’ is a hospitable tree in itself. It shelters everyone comes to rest. The emptiness of Arun is revealed in the loneliness of the peepul tree. The peepul tree is an image, depicting the isolated situation of Arun. He utters that he may stop loving her but he will never stop loving the days he loved her. It gives the impression that the narrator still holds talk to his lover though she lives in some other town and recalls bygone days of courtship. By the passing of time his passion gets intensified when he says that he will not stop loving the days he loved her.

One important structural feature of Love is a Sad Song is the novelist’s treatment of time. The first half of the book spreads over one and a half years. The narrative flow prevents
us from realizing that events have actually taken so long. The first picnic is in May, during
the summer vacation, which Sushila is spending, and Arun is near the girl he loves. Over the
next four months he commutes between Mussoorie and Delhi, making attempts to seal some
kind of relationship with the members of Sushila’s family. In November, he is back in the
hills. Soon after, the letter arrives from Sushila’s uncle Ravi, telling him that marriage is
definitely out of the question. He makes a desperate last bid to salvage the situation by
returning to Delhi. He meets Sushila’s brother Sunil and comes to know that she is going to
marry a man her family chose for her, a bank officer. The book ends as the author presently
recounting the story one year later in Mussoorie. Though his love ends unfulfilled, he never
ponders his sad emotions in the story. Bond renders more important to the day of being loved
than the lost love. This moment reminds us Tennyson’s ‘better to have loved and lost than
never to have loved at all’. The recollection showers joy and happiness and hope to lead the
life never regretting for the immature love of Sushila. Love emerges as a prominent theme of
Love is a Sad Song. Bond’s vision of love is both physical and spiritual. He feels that spiritual
love wades through physical attraction. This can be applied in almost all spheres of life. Love
that unites both body and soul is perfect and can defy death. In Love is a Sad Song Sushila
and her lover experience the warmth and texture of each other’s bodies with such fullness
that they feel as if all nights of a life time, all eternity. In spite of such experience, Sushila
goes away without any commitment and only the narrator lingers the fragrance of their
togetherness. Bond’s conviction is very simple, if a person feels perfection in a transient
relationship, why should he linger for years expecting consummation which is very remote.

Bond’s concept of love is encompassing all creature, men and beasts alike. The
narrator loves Sushila as he love butterflies. Comparing Sushila’s feet he utters that they are
no less than the wings of butterflies. Each and every objects of nature reflects love for him.
He says that Sushila’s feet laved with dew, stood firm on the quickening grass.
There was a butterfly between them red and gold its wings heavy with dew and it could not move because of the weight of moisture of the dew. He warns her not to crush the butterfly. He spares it. In return, she likes to have him kiss her foot. The hero voluntarily and willingly wants to kiss both her feet for they are not less than the wings of butterflies. Since he is filled with love every thing he views, reflect the love in him. It reminds the reader of Shakespeare’s “Twelfth Night” opening lines:

“If music be the food of love, play on.
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting” (299).

According to Bond nature with its sights and sounds, is the food of love, played for the readers through his writings. Bond’s love includes and surrounds and roams around the natural phenomenae. The narrator hero and Sushila are intoxicated by inhaling and consuming the food of love in the aroma of nature. Bond strongly believes that human beings, beasts and birds along with flowers, trees and insects too respond to love. Hence man and woman relationship is just a part of this universal life force. He is in constant search of love. Sushila in this novel represents different stages of love. It seems that love is an enigma and each individual is trying to resolve it in his own ways.

Bond's story revolves around love besides nature. In *Love is a Sad Song* Arun is a matured writer of thirty two, just double the age of his beloved Sushila who is still a school girl. Like an impatient lover, he speaks of his love and like an innocent girl of her age she responds to it waywardly. Resultantly the lover cannot materialize his passion into matrimony. If you take love superficially as a pleasure hunt, ultimately it will end as nothing. Here, sometimes sheer physical attraction is misunderstood as love. Such attraction cannot abide by time. Therefore, Sushila chooses security instead of love and the lover surrenders despondently. She prefers to marry a rich widower, banker who showers costly gifts, to a struggling writer.
Bond has pointed out that some sort of understanding or sacrifice is essential to make relationship enduring. In *Time Stops at Shamli* the sequential story of *Love is a Sad Song* Sushila is the wife of a hotel owner. He is an aged widower and remains absorbed in his business. Mistaking her miseries as a result of this mismatch, her former lover proposes her to elope with him. She being a wife and daughter of respectable men cannot stoop to such action which will bring disgrace to the family. In “Time Stops at Shamli” Bond portrays Sushila who voices the hypocrisy of most of such couples who live like strangers under one roof. Despite the absence of matrimonial happiness, she does not wish to create miseries in husband life. Sushila as married woman is in a better position to entertain her lover. She rejects the idea of elopement as solely foolish.

Sushila of *Love is a Sad Song* chooses security and her family’s reputation and prefers to marry a widower. Arun’s Sushila is that kind who never allows her family into disgrace, accepts her fate to marry a banker of her family’s choice. When the author meets her accidentally six years later she has become extremely practical and mentally reconciled to her marriage. It is an experience of love that precedes the crucial point in the development of Bond’s major characters. Love is the central preoccupation and in particular, is composed of a string of reminiscences of the affair. These memories are linked in a semi-stream of consciousness.

*Love is a Sad Song* depicts both romantic and realistic phase of love. Bond portrays the conditional love of Sushila and the unconditional love of the protagonist. Materialistic considerations in real life play an important role in the matrimonial alliances. Marriage is a general theme of man and woman relationship. Through Sushila, Bond highlights the truth of married life. It is not love, but individual and traditional bounds that keep matrimony intact. The narrator calls Sushila ‘a practical wife’ Amita Aggarwal spells out the reason for not creating a single happy married couple in Bond’s stories:
“Bond has not created a single couple enjoying happy conjugal life in his stories. Perhaps, the trauma of his parent’s separation does not allow him to conceive of a pair of lovers living in blissful matrimony” (Amita Aggarwal, Fictional World of Ruskin Bond. 30)

One cannot help feeling that in his heart of hearts, the novelist echoes the sentiments expressed in his poem “Walnut Tree Revisited” in Book of Verse (113) that he can wait for her lover with the same pain if summer and his lover care to come to again. These lines affirm his faith in nature and love. He waits for her number of years that holds him leading the life. The poet expresses that he can bear the pain of separation for years if his lover comes again in his life. He loves her with a sweet pain of those loving days.

Nature redeems his sense of loss. Nature affirms the bond between man and nature. Senior Bond’s faith in the living organism of nature got firmly established in his mind with the passage of time. Bond’s description of nature and love subtly elaborates that he handles both equally and well balanced. When the narrator thinks of nature, he can’t help himself from the thought of Sushila.

This novel is an epistemology dairy-like style meant to be simplistic. The trees, birds, stream, sun light, moon light never escape from Bond’s pen. They do have the tongue to speak and reflect the moods and the minds of the characters. Nature is yet another protagonist who facilitates to accelerate the story and it walks hand in with real characters. It alters the mood of the reader towards the events of the characters even before encountering them. Nature is a backstage, in its absence, the story can’t exist.

Nature evades the sad moments and makes the hero to forget his lonely past. He becomes sensitive to the sound and sights of nature. He feels as if he is in the lap of her lady love. Partition or the love failure affects his mind, but it drags him to the cliff of solitude nature, it is signified through the peepul tree at the end, which comes to secure him from the
ill feeling. Nature, another lady love teaches him to go with the current of stream in order to live the life.

Bond’s writing is a refreshing mountain spring. Bond’s passion for trees, birds, hills, sound of rain and stream are all attractive and the reader responds to them automatically. These natural atmospheres have a positive effect on one who attains it. His writing is an invitation to the magical and the musical world of nature which exhibits a power and sweep of nature. The predominant natural scenes and abundant natural descriptions tune well with the deportment of the characters and their love for the mountain, rain, stream, pool, trees, lend a romantic touch to his novel.

In a nutshell, Bond describes the hill station in one sentence that he could say was: ‘a Paradise that might have been’ and the love affair of Sushila and Arun. The first meeting of the protagonist and Sushila holds in the hills. For Bond, the ideal vision of love is consummated in the environs of nature. But, love is never fulfilled for Bond’s protagonists in other novellas too. The characters are forced to mature out of that idyllic phase. They always remain in pursuit of that ideal world that briefly glimpsed. They became conscious of the relentless advance of life.

The whole story is narrated as a beautiful dream, which the narrator would not like to shelter at any cost. In this novel, love is presented as a sad song or a passing fancy. Those who love the feeling of being in love are great individuals. They renew their spirit and live gracefully. Bond finds it, a celebration of two innocent souls bound together. This novel is a proof that Bond is both a realist and a romancer.

The magical aura of Himalayan flora and fauna presented as a persistent source of inspiration, joy, self realization and a means of survival in Bond’s writing. His nature writing promotes the idea that if we walk close to nature, we come to a better understanding of life, for it is from the natural world that we first emerged and to which we still belong.
Nature provides Bond unlimited impressions which he moulds in the form of a moving story and novel. Ruskin Bond’s entire works, both fiction and non-fiction is a magnificent document of Bond’s deep association with nature. In the process of writing a novel, a tiny bird or a flower outside his window freshen him profusely. It recharges Bond’s creative spirit. The clattering of rain drops, the warbling of birds, the rippling and the gurgling of books, the whispering of plants and the dancing summer breeze radiate his novella with the exquisite softness.

For Bond, nature is very personal. This is because he has lived very close to it up in the mountains for the last thirty five years. But even before that, he was quite in kinship with forests and the general flora of the country. In India, particularly in the Hindu religion, there is a very strong element of nature. Nirmala Pathak in “Bonded to Nature” says that many of Bond’s novellas and stories have for the last many years had the strong element of the natural world (112).

Bond remains loyal to the world of hills and dales is a result of his attachment to the place he was born in and settled afterwards. His descriptions of ravines, slopes, valleys, brooks and forests with geographical accuracy are due to his natural familiarity with the region. This novella seems a magic casement opening on a beautiful stretch of nature. Nature is projected as a powerful background conveying the spirit of the story. In The Sensualist, barren hills, thirsty traveler, blazing sun, pathless terrain and leeches are identical to the mysterious sterility of the sensualist.

The Sensualist is the final novella of this chapter and it is the story of a man enslaved by an over powering sex-drive, and it takes him on the downward spiraling road to self-destruction. Bond in author note marks The Sensualist is a novella or a long short story which suits his style and temperament. Andre Gide’s The Immoralist was a strong early influence for this novel. Bond accepts that in The Sensualist there is brooding quality and a pessimism
which is alien to his nature. He has used the device of a narrative within a narrative. The recluse in the mountain is his other self. But it is not anyway auto biographical. There is a Jekyll and Hyde in each of them, two personalities warring with each other, and to certain extent it reveals the author’s psyche.

The story begins with the protagonist’s or narrator’s climb up a mountain and his search for a place called Kapila. On his way he comes across a cave where a starved looking recluse awaits his visit. The man in the cave speaks of his life gone by and how his many excesses of a sexual nature lead him eventually to renounce his life and live in a cave.

In *The Sensualist* Bond imparts the pictorial view of mountains, hills, the mountain path, the river, the stream, the monsoon rain, moonlight and the sky. These natural settings have linked with the life of the protagonist. These reflect the mind and the temperament of the recluse. Such backdrops have been nourished in Bond’s blood as he has grown up against these great blue and brown mountains. The opening scene settles down the tone of the plot.

“This range is bare and rocky with steep hillsides suddenly rearing up in front of the tired, discouraged traveler. The grass is short and almost colourless… I walk alone and I am thirsty” (Bond, *The Sensualist*. 2).

Dreary rocks with steep hills, short and almost colourless grass, an eagle circling high overhead and the burning sun all constitute a weird landscape. The traveller, narrator is driven by some unseen force. The traveller being caught in the maze of dreary hills treads on a wrong path. The village and the terraced fields have left behind. The September sun scorches him. He finds no sign of life except the eagle. To escape from that lonely terrible site, he dreams of a green grass and he finds patch of emerald grass at his feet, and trickling through it a silver of clear water, which comes from a rock in the hillside. Below the rock the water runs into a small pool made by the human hand. He drinks from that little pool and finds the water cool and sweet. He splashed his face and let the water run down his neck and
arms. The dream is a replica of his longing to quench his thirst and to have a human contact in the unknown place. The dream comes true and he quenches his thirst.

In the beginning it seems as if the traveller was being caught in the maze of hills. He lost his hope and confidence of passing through. The appearance of silver fresh water denotes optimism of life. In *Rain in the Mountains* Bond narrates his walking expedition. When he was feeling particularly depressed he went for a walk along the sea front. He was alone in a wild waste land of wind and water. He felt as if something had touched him, something from the elements took hold of his heart and all the sufferings went out of his head. The youth ascetic also experiences the same in his walking around Deoband.

Bond remembers in *Rain in the Mountains* (92) that a little mountain path which led his restless feet into a cool, sweet forest of oak and rhododendron and then on to the windswept crest of a naked hilltop as that of the traveller in *The Sensualist*. The entry into the hills seems to be mysterious but the exit is a peak, a clear view of everything from above, a hilltop. The mountain commands a view of the plain on one side and of the snow peaks on the other. Little silver river twisted across the valley below where the rice fields formed a patch work of emerald green. The traveller in this novella climbed higher with the aid of rocks and grass and reached the cave high up on the hillside. Bond threats nature as a parody to life. In order to be in the comfortable zone in life one has to cross the barren land with rocks and thorns. If one hesitates to tread he can not reach the top or solve the mystery.

Tramping has been a favourite past time for Bond as it gives him numerous sensations and impressions of life around him. Each new stirring, new passer by, new sound, new vistas thrill his nerves. Bond calls his tramping zigzag walk deliberately invented to perceive sudden unfamiliar turnings, narrow alley ways. Instead of following main roads he prefers to make his walk as cross-country as possible in order to receive impressions shooting from all sides. The narrator in *The Sensualist* walks alone to introduce him to novel sensations and
experiences and that gives him an opportunity to know his own self. On his path he encounters green grass, silver clear water and small pool which renew him, fortify and beef up him. He can climb higher to reach the cave there to rest. He hopes to have a shade and a place to rest.

The narrator sees in the cave, a recluse squatting and crouching. He looks like a primitive man but speaks like an angel. The narrator explains that he has lost his way. The recluse replies that it is a whim that makes him desire his company. The narrator hopes that the recluse will be able to set him on the right path. As he refreshes himself in the pool, he has certain confidence of his own. Hence, he does not afraid of the power of his thought. He can recognize the ascetic’s hypnotic gifts. He might have been here about five years. He can sustain his body and manage to destroy his former interest in food and body. He begins to share his experience to the narrator that he took every pleasure there was to take and then he satiated and he took leave of the world with regret (Bond. *The Sensualist*. 5-9).

The recluse looks out the bare rolling hills and the valley and the silver river twisting across the distant plain like serpent. To bathe in its waters is to wash away all sin. Bathing in the river is a form of cleansing or purifying oneself from worldly vice. As the water cleanses the body, it cleanses the mind and the soul and makes the human attaining rebirth. Water is the catalyst, cleaning the dirt and filthiness of anything which plunges in it. Just like the current of the river, the ascetic goes on narrating his nostalgia to the narrator. The river is a connotation of his insatiable appetite for pleasure. The narrator has to reach Kapila which is situated on the banks of the river which emerges from a gorge in the mountain. It is an ancient city, attracted by the sages. Even the stones in the river are smooth that the water rubs away its angles for a few thousand years. As a stone becomes smooth and polished, the river water polishes him not thousand years but a day. The narrator finds difficult to resist his will, he decides to stay with him that night.
The recluse advises the narrator to stay at night since it is not safe to walk these hills at night. It is dark in the cave. He explains that you have nothing to fear if he is pure at heart. He asks him that has he ever destroyed the soul of human. He admits that he destroys souls and he destroyed his last soul, his own, a long time. He makes fire at the entrance of the cave to send the darkness and cold inside the cave. The fire keeps the animals away sometime. The fire puts light on his darker side of life, opens his heart to speak more of the powers he developed in his youth (Bond, *The Sensualist*. 23).

The boy recluse at first sought to assuage his restlessness by communing with nature. No one can satisfy him fully. He searched for the truth in the rippling of streams and the rustling of leaves, in the blue heavens or the wilderness of the jungle, in the behaviour of men, beasts and plants and in the abundance of sunshine. In the bosom of nature, he realizes that, our bodies germinate as the resurrections of nature. Each bubbling spring, swelling fruit or bursting blossom reminds him that he was part of this process. The throb in his loins was as tenderly painful as the unfolding of a rosebud. He depicts that the cave is the end of all his searching for his inner self. Before that there was the indulgence which was a part of the process and that brought him to this place (Bond, *The Sensualist*. 39- 40).

The natural atmosphere creates a real self in him. To be fruitful, he has to die and resurrect as the seed germinates to be useful. It is not the literal death but the death of his ego and self-assertion and the process of indulgence took place in Shanhini’s place. One day, entering her room unannounced, he found Nalini and Shanhini in each other’s arms, kissing each other. They drew apart without any sense of guilt. The dark girl left the room, she was her friend. He came to know that Shanhini loved her as she can not share her thoughts and feelings with any man. Though he wanted to have her mind and soul, he was not loved in the same way. It was a frustrating day for him. He felt that he was being neglected since Mulia was out for shopping. Samyukta’s house was full of people. He was told that loving is giving
but he realized that he was interested in taking (Bond, *The Sensualist*.43-52). He felt like a change from his confined life in Kapila. His father asked him to go to Delhi to attend an industrial exhibition and he set out with a sense of impending adventure. He deviates from a business trip to Delhi which had been imposed on him by his father to help him prove his mettle in the family business.

The youth recluse got train, it reached Deoband. Suddenly he felt the urge to get out of that stuffy compartment to be a free wanderer with the five hundred rupees. The man of excesses decided on whim to jump off at an unknown station and embark on a different journey.

The monsoon arrives. He knew it that there were clouds over head, dark clouds burgeoning with moisture. The birds know it and the grass knew it since there was the smell of rain in the air. The monsoon alters the mind of the pleasure seeker. Each drop of monsoon represents a little bit of creation and of life in itself. It showers renewal everywhere and the earth releases a fragrance sweeter than any devised by man. Rain brings joy to earth, grass, leaf, bud, blossom, insect, bird, animal and the pounding heart of man. The lakes and rivers overflows with the monsoon’s generosity. Bond draws out his pictorial view of monsoon in *The Sensualist*:

“The grass, the birds and I responded to this odour with the same sensuous longing. We would welcome the rain as a woman welcomes a lover’s embrace, his kiss, the fierce fresh thrust of his loins after a period of abstinence” (Bond, *The Sensualist*. 56).

The smell of the rain showers sensation, freedom and joy in the second narrator’s mind. He forgets his past like birds, grass he too identifies the aroma of rain. The recluse or the second narrator unites himself with it. It is the first time since the beginning of the novel he is sensuously longing for nature as a woman longs for her lover’s embrace. The youth recluse explicates in his well known knowledge of woman that he invites the rain as a lady
love aspires for her lover’s kisses, hugs and his fresh thrust after a period of separation. He articulates his mood with nature which is waiting for the arrival of the rain for months. The rain is a blessing in disguise. It is a boon to his life and his entire life is going to change as the season changes from summer to monsoon.

The train began to move he flung the door open and tumbled on to the platform. He stood alone on the platform. The scene was uninviting and dismal one. If the train had still been at the station he would have returned to it and gone to Delhi. By evening he was still on a small hotel balcony. Nothing happened to him and it looked as if nothing was going to happen. There were camels and buffaloes and the traffic had increased. There were more flies on the balcony one came buzzing into his half-empty glass. It was a suicidal kind of evening for the recluse and the fly. He rescued the fly from his glass. His compassion was wasted, as the fly neared the wall, a gecko swooped on the insect and gobbled it up. The fly is a symbolic representation of the recluse himself, who moves from one to another for pleasure, at last meets the end unexpectedly. Like the fly he cannot be rescued by anyone but by realizing himself. The gecko may be a representation of a hill woman he is going to meet. It is yet another indulgence on his way of searching his self.

A large drop of water hit the balcony railing, a faint breeze sprang up and he felt the moisture, closer and warmer announcing the approach of the rain. The rain approached like a dark curtain and it marched down the street, heavy and remorseless. It drummed on the corrugated tin roof and swept across the road and over the balcony. The youth stood without moving; letting the rain wet his sticky and gritty hair. He was waiting for all the attractions of rain and the result of it. A group of small boys gloriously naked came romping along the street which was like a river in spate (Bond, *The Sensualist*, 60). The naked boys romping in the rain symbolizes the protagonist peeling of his ego. He starts to realize what will be his real quest. Like a child and a rain, one must be innocent in heart and soul to enjoy the tranquil
beauty around him. So far, he is unaware of the fact that he was being distracted as well as attracted towards Mulia, Samyukta and Shankhini. As he was standing in the balcony of the hotel, he observed the brief freedom of insects in that cool breeze after rain. He wished to possess that kind of freedom. But, it was a pity that the geckos end the life of insects. They had reward for weeks of patient waiting. They devoured insects as swiftly as Americans devour popcorn. All through the hot season the insect world prepared for this flight out of darkness into light and not one survived its bid for freedom. The insects are the parody to the youth’s life. It is a premonition that he is going to be over powered by the hill woman. She devoured him to flesh and skin.

He started walking in the streets of the town for three hours and it was midnight. He bathed in the brightness of the moon light. It drives away the darkness of his past. Along with him, the whole Deoband was filled with moonlight. Besides the refreshment of the rain, Bond’s character still wants more by walking alone in the silent night. The moonlight evades the darkness prevailed there.

Bond’s plots and characters are the outcome of his routine walk. He enjoys the sight of pebbles in the stream and portrays his joy in the writing. These scenes have a perfect harmony, though transient yet permanent, though sensory, yet spiritual. Bond’s absolute perception is a part of his spiritual awakening. He recapitulates the precious moment of walking in *Rain in the Mountain* (147) similar to that of the sensualist in *The Sensualist*. Bond feels as if all the sufferings went out of his head and he felt free. The youth recluse also experienced the same. Nature, as a therapy, cures the physical and the mental ailments. Three quarter moon was up, shining through drifting, breaking clouds and the roofs and awning of the bazaar, wet, glistened in the moonlight. Bond describes the night that three stray dogs were romping in the middle of the road, a jackal slunk across the road, a field rat wriggled its way through a hole. Even the dogs, jackal and a rat seem restless like the youth recluse and
searching for their own place. He walked in the deserted street as if he is deserted. He found a young boy sleeping in a small recess under a wooden staircase. He seemed a very heavy sleep of one who was protected by his own innocence. The second narrator, the youth recluse gave him a good shaking, the boy woke up with a loud cry as if from a nightmare. He was a runaway boy from the Jalan hills. He did not have money to return to his home. The recluse narrator came to his help providing, that he would help the boy if he took him with him as he liked to see his hills. The boy agreed and the deal brought smile on the somber face of the boy Roop. Roop accepts to take him to his home where he had house, fields and a buffalo. Both returned to the hotel.

The following morning, the sun embraced them moved lovingly over the dark gleaming body of Roop. But he did not awake. Roop was the one who blessed with the gift of sleep sweetly and soundly through cannon – fire and earth quake. He slept as if drugged. The mountain innocence is a gift to the boy. His village is far away and they had to take a train or bus and they must walk about thirty miles. The boy was bored with his home, his father and mother and servants. He had a younger brother who was going to school. The second narrator the sensualist wanted to get away from Deoband, the urge to move on was stronger. It may be, he wanted to have the same innocence of the boy.

During the night the sensualist had a dream. He dreamt of pine forest and mountains, streams, pale pink flowers growing in the clefts of rocks and fair hill, maidens bathing beneath pellucid water falls (Bond, The Sensualist.70). The dreaming of mountain, hills, streams and waterfalls is advancement in youth sensualist’s life. This advancement is to draw only the corrupt in him. He is able to put his disappointments behind him. The dream provides him the chance to manage with the strange twists and turns in his life, he is going to face. Bond says to Rusty and I by Swapan. K. Banerjee:

“A man without a dream is like a bird without a wing
A wingless bird and a lame man are just the same” (18).

According to Bond, a man without dream is like a man without eyes, helpless, deserted like a lame. The dream is a force which drives the man to reach his destination. Once one discovers his or her dreams, which helps him concentrate within himself, never look back, but advance and pursue no matter how the outside world treats him. Advance and never halt, for advancing is perfection. The advancement never fears the thorns in the path. The youth sensualist could not resist himself from following his dreams. The passion of realizing the dream sends him signals which guide him throughout journey. He had a strong urge to reach the place of his dream. Both were sitting in a bus and moving hopefully in the direction of the hills.

Another attraction of traversing to nowhere is, finding some where in particular, the striking up of friendship, the discovery of new springs, water falls, plants, rare flowers and strange birds. The youth sensualist utters:

“It was a monsoon day and I was moving towards the unknown” (Bond, The Sensualist. 74).

He refers to the new atmosphere he is going to view in Jalan hills with Roop. It provided him a friend, Roop’s brother who showed him the way to life. He encountered trees and water falls along with mighty mountains. In the hills a new vistas opens at every bend in the road. It makes the recluse, a compulsive walker towards the new vistas and the charm of the unexpected. Bond expresses that the recluse here is his other self, his secret sharer. He depicts his desire of walking through the recluse. Bond ponders his emotions of tramping in one of his poems “A Quiet Mind” from Rain in the Mountain (121).

“Lord, give me a quiet mind,
That I might listen;
A gentle tone of voice,
That I might share
In the joy of walking
And leaping and running;
And a good sense of direction
So I might know just where I’m going!” (121).

Bond insists on the good sense in choosing the direction, so that he can reach his proper and perfect destination.

It had been raining all morning. Most of Bond’s stories have the recurrence of rain. Ananda Lal in his “Essay on Ruskin Bond” in Indian English Novelists quotes that when the monsoon breaks it usually brings separation (159). In The Sensualist, the sensualist is being separated from the world of sexual bondage and enters into the world of liberation. He becomes conscious of what is his real quest and he is free to choose his own path. Rain is also a premonition of something that is going to happen in the life of the youth recluse. He is unaware of the fact that he is going to be enslaved by the hill woman. As Ananda Lal puts it that the heavy rain threatens disaster and the fear of impending doom and the sensualist’s ego is shattered by the hill woman. He was driven waste by the strength of the woman. He was sucked and released into nothing.

Bond shows his gratefulness to the trees especially neem trees. Trees are yet another aspect touched and sensed by Bond in all his novels. In The Sensualist, the youth ascetic or the second narrator came across trees such as neem, deodar, forest and fruit trees which grew behind Roop’s house and the lime trees in the outline of the mountains. Neem trees pods had fallen on the roadside. It had been burst and crushed against the wet earth by passing vehicles. It emits a powerful pleasant aroma which drifted in through the window of the bus, on the breeze during the rain. Neems give out more oxygen than most trees. The ancient herbalists held that the neem was a great purifier of the air and its leaves, bark and sap have
medicinal qualities. Bond denotes that as the beneficiaries of the trees, man must be fruitful to everyone. There is a requirement of purity in heart and soul. The youth sensualist is at last in search of it. Trees also stand for growth. Ironically, the sensualist met a tragedy that he lost the love and the lover and his love with his ego. Bond describes the hill side with trees:

“As the sky lighter, I could see through the pattern of glossy lime leaves, the outline of the mountain. I could see trees and bushes, and a path leading up the hill to the deodar forest on the summit. A couple of fruit trees grew behind the house” (Bond, *The Sensualist*. 76).

Trees are a friendly one. The breath of wind makes the leaves break into conversation and their rustle is a cheerful sound. Deodar is Bond’s favorite tree. It is a sacred tree in the Himalayas as its timber has always been used in temples, for doors, windows and even roof. Bond worshiped deodar as anything for in the beauty and majesty. It represents creation in its most noble aspect. The youth recluse looked at the deodar forest. It is a representation of rebirth of man, towards the truth of life. Some reformation is going to take place in the mind and in the life of the youth. It is a kind of creation or shaping one’s own self.

Bond has deeply dealt with the physical relations of man and woman through the image of leech in the novella *The Sensualist*. Leeches, traditionally, the symbol of sycophancy denote the complete absorption of the sensualist by an over powering hill woman. Bond wonderfully presents the scene of leech and its aftermath. Amita Aggarwal in her *Fictional World of Ruskin Bond* opines:

“The description of leeches stuck to his entire body and gorging themselves on his blood is an anticipation of his impending sterility” (Amita Aggarwal, *Fictional World of Ruskin Bond*.129).

Leech acts as a prelude to the novel. Bond portrays the leech and its quality to depict the vulnerable human desire for sensual pleasures and at last the youth recluse lost himself.
The sensualist sought pleasure not only from his maid Mulia, his cousin Samyukta and from Shankini, a prostitute but also from brothels. He derives fiendish pleasure by exercising his sexual aggressiveness against to overpower them who inspire him to do so.

Nature rises as a mighty and forceful background conveying the spirit of the story. At times nature herself dominates the course of life. As Egdon Heath in Hardy’s novel The Return of the Native emerges as a powerful character playing dominant role in the tragedy, the flooded river in the Bond’s short story “Sita and the River” takes away her entire self in her currents, natural aspects as images dominate the life of the story. Nature highlights the character also. As Eustacia Vye is the personification of Egdon Heath’s mysterious charm and wilderness, the hill woman Roop’s mother in this novel The Sensualist embodies natural vigour and innocence of the mountain. Description of the blood filled leeches stuck to the body of the sensualist corresponds to her insatiable sex urges.

The youth recluse accepted that with a tremendous innocence and natural vigour of the mountain, Roop’s mother conquered him. Those who have grown up in the cities cannot understand the innocence of the mountain people, because we can not understand the innocence of mountains. He obtains that high places have retained their power over the minds of men as they still remain aloof from the human presence barely touched by human greed. These mountains and hills serve as a powerful background in Bond’s The Sensualist. They are the reservoirs of primeval innocence. It is a significant character in this story. These mountains are free from the mechanized, artificial society. Hence, the people of the mountains are as fresh as the red earth as pure as the snow and as pretty as the flower. The second narrator, the recluse in this novella forfeits his ego in the Jalan hills. Roop’s mother, a hill woman completely disarms him and he realizes the innocence of mountain and its people. The mountains exude deep emotional influence upon the psychology of the protagonist. Few days of his life in the hills develops him a sense of realization and accepts his failure. It is
another indulgence in the process of blooming of the bud. Though it is painful he welcomes it as he knows himself.

The novella The Sensualist highlights the hypocrisy of urbanites through the recluse in his youth. This novella is a call to our natural living and preserve the ecological balance. These mountains retain their magnitude and primitive force. Bond focuses upon the distinctive features of the hills and the plains. Most of the people from the plains turn to the hills for greed. Hill people migrate to big cities for livelihood. The fear of loss of identity is always writ large on their faces and they wish to return to their hills like Roop in this story. With the help of the protagonist he moved back to his place. Hill people feel secure, as the spirit of the hills is their natural safe guard. The sense of belonging is crucial for their survival. But plains are senseless not only towards their people but to nature also, as they have uprooted the faith which binds man with nature and God. The casual remark of the sensualist is deeply connotative in this regard that in the cities it is easy to despise those who live in awe of the mountains, because in the cities, the vehicles and noise and light sends out the fear of dark that is the beginning of religion or faith. But on the far hills, the darkness is still terrible hence there is the beginning of the religion of nature.

Bond believes that journey is more important than the destination. The glory comes not from conquering the Himalaya peaks. But, his greatest pleasure lies in taking path-any old path will do-and following it until it leads him to a forest glade or village or stream or windy hill top. The youth recluse and Roop’s brother followed the path. The path is a personification of life. At one point, the youth recluse left alone to decide on his choice of selecting the path, to put an end to his purposeless wandering. The tramping renders him the importance of purpose that is to know him.

Both took the path to the stream, then followed the water course for a mile until that path forked, one twisting up the mountain on right, the other keeping to the stream. The boy
left him handing over his wallet with money. He has shown him the way to go. The forked path remained the readers of Robert Frost’s poem “The Road Not Taken” where the poet has the dilemma in choosing the road. In *The Sensualist* Roop’s brother helped the recluse to come out of the cocoon he made and he showed him the right path which is entirely different, in a sense that he never travelled. The boy brought a revelation to the recluse and he considers him, his first and only friend.

It began to rain and he walked ten miles in pouring rain until he reached the bus terminus and returned home. He was also a run away from home now. He was back as a prodigal son. The mountain life and nature render him charge in his mind and attitude and perception. He becomes totally unresponsive to Mulia’s ministrations. That evening he bathed in the river. The water refreshes him and he felt listless and ill at ease, as if the icy water instills new life in him. His meeting with Mulia, Samyukta proved that he had lost his physical powers and his impotence was obvious.

The recluse ends that he had a talent and he misused it and destroyed it. He was in love with his ego and so concerned about his self esteem. He took the love but spurned the lover. As a result he lost both. The first narrator leaves this recluse and continues his search for a perfect stranger who loves others and he is also loved in return.

While the life story is being told, the first narrator listens. He plays the part of the impatient reader who at first is reluctant and then pays complete attention. The narrator also tries to pacify the ascetic that his life is not that bad, there are worse cases.

This novella is well ahead of its time and today it seeks to impress the adult readers. The contradictory nature of the two characters brings about the novelty in the story. A different perspective is portrayed in the end of the sensualist, one which seemingly ridicules the ascetic ideology. Ambiguity seals the deal of the story, the reader is left with perceiving the piece in whatever way she or he pleases.
Bond pedagogically condemns the way the child was brought up. He believes that man was born good or at least was ethically neutral until corrupt philosophy and inequitable institutions perverted his will. Though man was good by birth he became a man of circumstances which pervert him. The sensualist became corrupted by the servant Mulia in his childhood. Hence, he invokes sympathy in the hearts of the reader for his tragedy. The story highlights that human vice are not in born but a result of circumstances.

Parent-child relationship is a matter of psychoanalysis and social observation. In the entire corpus of Bond’s fiction, it emerges as a persisted theme. Bond’s personal infantile trauma owes to the depiction of this relationship. He does not believe in any compulsions for healthy relations. But, parental relations are beyond excuses. Children are parent’s top priority. An unnatural experience of his childhood never allows him to forget those unhappy days of his life. He is nostalgic in many of his stories because he has not grown as a normal child. The emotional vacuum still persists in his consciousness. He believes that once a child is born, the couple is bound to patch-up their petty interests for the sake of the greater one child. Through a child, generations speak. His right upon the parental love and guidance is unquestionably natural.

When a seed begins to grow, to germinate, it requires air water and sunlight and soil along with the special care and protection till it grows on its own. After that it can withstand any situation and give forth its fruits in its time. Like a baby plant, a child needs a cave and special attention and protection for a certain period of time. In this novella, the sensualist lacked these and he was left to be brought up by a caretaker who was cause for his downfall and spoilt without the proper guidance of his parents.

The fact that a child gets spoilt without the proper care of his mother is presented through the protagonist. The novella The Sensualist is a shocking revelation that the
indifference of a mother towards her child proves disastrous. Non-discharge of motherly duties makes her child, a seeker of dark sensual delights.

_The Sensualist_ is a sort of dramatic monologue. Through out the narration, the first narrator rarely interrupts the second one. It gives the impression that he is reluctant because he reveals the mystery of the sensualist’s tragedy. The shock of being reduced haunts the sensualist. Though he has denounced the world and has practiced to channelize his thoughts to gain mastery over the mind of others, he has no peace at heart. Hence, the first narrator concludes the dilemma of the sensualist that the sensualist lost both the love and the lover and the world is not exclusively a place for the pursuit of sensual pleasures. Bond embodies the sensual pleasures through various images from nature such as; the insect, the fly, gekos, spider or scorpion, the pack mule, the green lantern, and the leech.

The description of the bare rocky hill side, the frigidity and the directness of tone and economy of words are blood curdling. The first narrator appears to have been summoned by an ascetic to carry out some dark deed. Ashok Malik opines in his “At Home with Nature Innocence” that _The Sensualist_ is a cautionary tale, more unusual narrative. This novella is Bond’s attempt to be erotic without appearing prurient (27).

The sensualist sets out literally on a voyage of self-discovery and eventually finds himself in a hill woman’s snare, trapped by the very pleasure he idealized. The novel is also a parable, about the affirmation of the triumph of the spiritual over the sensual. It is about Bond’s pursuit of a love that his mind has already fashioned and also it is about a love he never finds and never wants to find.

The barren land, emerald grass, silver clear water, a small pool, the smell of rain, the smell of neem pod, the break of monsoon, the heavy rain, the insects, bathing in the moonlight, walking alone in Deoband, meeting the boy Roop, visiting the Jalan hills with Deodar trees and lime trees, his encounter with the hill woman Roop’s mother, the bite of the
leech, all change the course of the action of the story. These natural aspects symbolically
depict the plot and the characters of the story. Some time they serve as a premonition. These
aspects change the mentality of the protagonist as the story moves. They are the back drop or
back bone of the story which gives beautiful form or shape to the entire novella. They
constitute certain vital part in the development of the plot. They reflect reform and transform
the attitude of the protagonist. Nature is a powerful background and it serves as a mother
character, teaches or injects the innocence it possesses. Davis. J. Lockwood opines in his
journal Journal of Humanistic Psychology that nature experiences in the wilderness settings
are paradigmatic examples of spiritual or transpersonal experience. The recluse of this
novella has experienced such transpersonal benefits of nature in the hills and tries to know
himself and drives away his false ego. Nature is the most common trigger for peak
experiences. Many spiritual leaders like Moses, Budha, Mohammad and Jesus had key
mystical experiences. The beauty of nature has led one to have an intense spiritual
experience. It facilitates the sensualist to strip of his pretension and hypocrisy. He breaks out
the fetters of ego and self-esteem to understand his real self. The inner message is that the ego
of human beings is absolutely misplaced. No human being can equal the majesty of God.
Therefore realizing this, a man should always remain humble whatever might be the nature of
his accomplishment and discover the purpose of his or her existence and accomplish it.
Reading the script of nature’s language, its signs and wonders one will be able to stick to it
till the end. Bond imposes his readers that they must have mountains in their blood, they must
have a dream worth pursuing and they must be stripped of their egos so that they can view the
cosmic wonders of nature with the eyes of a child.

Literature is manifestation of the fulfilled and unfulfilled dreams and aspirations of a
writer. A writer’s personality and perception, trial and tribulations, faith and frustration get an
outlet through his writings. Bond’s work is fine example of this. His art is projection of life
and nature. His own mood and spirit is embodied throughout his work. The sensitive portrayal poor and orphan children, lonely and old people, neglected and rejected common masses of society, niggles of adolescent and inclination to the world of nature have much to do with his insecure and troubled childhood, lonely youth and single life. His dedication and devotion to the heavenly landscape around his abode helped him to overcome the misfortunes of his life.

Bond’s novellas promote the better understanding of life and help the readers to explore their true potential. The positive attitude of Bond and his emphasis on simplicity infuse zest for living. His optimistic approach to life, his inoffensive neglect of vices, respect for values and gentler virtues, faith in the goodness of man, celebration of seemingly invisible people who survive through the struggle of living, love for serene beauty of nature, for environment have become the source of baffled modern man who caught in the labyrinth of hurry, worry and fury and fast-paced commercialism.

Bond’s sensitive portrayal of the countryside, his being so much in tune with nature are remarkable for their range, open out a new dimension of Indian writing in English. His fictions are powerful appeal to eradicate the roots of evil and violence against man and nature and to keep this earth beautiful and healthy. Bond depicts nature as an integral part of human world. He has humanized the world of nature to consecrate his own joy. The climate change, the weather, the rain, the trees, the flowers, the plants, the birds, the insects, the stream, the pool, the water, the hills and the valleys are all constitute towards the healthy character development of the protagonist of these novellas. Natural descriptions not only decorate the story but serve as the backbone for the entire events of the story.

Rusty in *The Room on the Roof* and *The Vagrants in the Valley* has grown from an adolescent to an adult, from immature to mature, and from dependent to independent man. Bond depicts the growth through the portrayal of nature. In *Delhi Is Not Far, Love is a Sad*
*Song* and *The Sensualist* Bond presents the adult named Arun who is the protagonist of first two novellas. His aim is to be a writer and he takes all efforts to reach his goal inspite of difficulties and sufferings without any financial aids. *The Sensualist* shatters the false ego and the self-centeredness of the narrator. It happens because of the direct encounters with intact healthy ecosystem which result in the self awareness of the narrator and the wholeness and meaningfulness in life. The role of rain in all these five novellas is sigficant. The heavy rain implies the death, loss or separation from the loved one. The showers indicate an abundant flow of something such as happiness and the unity of the lovers. The first shower of the monsoon serves as a symbol of refreshment and purity. His love for the natural world around him makes his living under the fostering care of nature that strengthens his tie with nature and his understanding of it. Bond’s works make even the readers realize that they are part and parcel of nature.

All the five fictions of Bond dominate the optimistic fervor and the unyielding spirit of the commoners of India. He sensitively paints the sensuous images from nature and nuances of his beloved country in his novellas. His land emerges as a happy, rapturous and glorious land where there is laughter and joy, love and hope, where dreams comes true, the people are friendly and accommodate all, where people do not surrender to circumstances and have learned to live and laugh amidst the clouds of trouble in the eternal comradeship of nature. Bond makes us to trail with him in a carefree world of exuberance and freshness by exploring the beauty of nature within and in the world around them.