

# Ruskin Bond: A True Indian Storyteller

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**Abstract:** *Ruskin Bond is the well known short story writer in English, who wrote in the light of his on experiences and the impressions ne found about things and people he came across are reflected in his works. He is sober by temperament and is polite and highly adjustable personality. He also discusses social problems and offers solution to theme. His works are enriched with the themes truly Indian in spirit, content, and locality.*

**Keywords:** Mother Nature, Indian English Literature, Social-political, Culture, Flashback

Ruskin Bond is an Indian author of British descent. He is considered to be an icon among Indian writers and children's authors and a top novelist. His novels, short stories and poems have created an enchanting world which has captivated the readers of all age groups. He enjoys a committed readership for being a writer with a difference. He is 'different' for 'his literature looks untainted like a clear stream of nature flowing through the dark caves of the modern world.'

Ruskin Bond is considered to be the most successful freelancer in India because he sticks to his pen and paper against all odds. He believes "Never despair. But if you do, work on despair" His status differs in a literary world, in modern times, where even creative writing is being dealt with in a business-like manner to highlight the product. He has proved himself to be a life time writer. He has been writing for sixty seven years and has been consistently good and original and this has been made possible because he writes what comes straight from his heart.

Bond is one of the major contributors to the cultivation and development of short fiction in India. This genre kept a low-profile till the first half of the twentieth century. But today the Indian short story stands on the threshold of immense possibilities. Bond has played a vital role in taking the Indian English short story to a significant position along with writers like R. K. Naryayn, Mulk RajAnand, Raja Rao, Manohar Alguna, Nayantara Sehgal, etc. P. K. Singh observes:

'Bond's contribution to the growth of the short story is that he brings to it a variety. He uses elements of nostalgia (flashback technique) and authentic life (vivid descriptions of places and people)'. Bond makes the short story a flexible form of writing, suitable for portraying the diversity of life.

Bond's goal as a writer is to be a "Simple Storyteller" who gives pleasure to both adults and children. His novels Room on the Roof (1958) and Vagrants in the Valley (1993) were the pioneering Young Adult novels in India. His reputation as a children's writer speaks well for him. Bond states that he writes so much about children and childhood because his own childhood was sad. He is a brilliant raconteur while writing for children. There may be a score of greater novelists, and even greater English novelists, yet no one else, however, has cast the greatest enchantment. Having read him once, it is difficult to forget him, or resist the

temptation of re-reading him. His precision and elegance capture the reader. His knowledge of hills, his power of observation, his simplicity, his humanistic approach, the fine faculty he displays in putting a book together, stairs him in good stead.

An in-depth study of Indian English Literature shows that much inferior talents have come in focus chiefly because they chose to write on popular and what sensational topics like apartheid or women's lib, communal frenzy or socio-political strife. But during these years this gentle genius has progressed talents have come tremendously showing maturity of vision and inborn sense of effortless art. What gives him a distinct place in Indian English Literature is the high value and positivism he attaches to his vocation as a writer. Ruskin Bond is one such victim of inadvertent critical omission, while justice demands full attention to the great literary achievements of this gentle genius. His positive thinking is enlightened by the divine Himalaya, a perennial source of inspiration for Indian art and culture.

His positive thinking and "jungle spirit" have much in common with Kipling's view of India. In the words of Mulk Raj Anand, he has gone far beyond other British writers into the heartland without any assumption of superiority and without imposing his own idea of India like other orientalis. He has approached India as a native.

Like Wordsworth he perceives 'Mother Nature' as an infinite power and longs to see her divine splendour in the objects of the world which he considers to be her imitations. His employment of humour is impressive and use of irony is gentle and unpremeditated. For Bond irony is a weapon to be used mildly and in good-humour. Being inoffensive in nature, it never works with harsh pricks. Like JaneAusten's irony, it is gentle and gives his language both subtlety and precision. Hisironical remarks on life are both witty and touching. Bond, like an ascetic, shows the vision of paradise, sunlight and greenery of the earth, beauty of the human face and the wealth of human life in his writing. As a true artist he has been striving consistently through his writings to unravel the mystery of God, Nature and the world.

In the Lamp is Lit (1998), Bond writes: 'And there are many brave and good Indian writers who work in their own language be it Bengali or Oriya or Telugu or Marathi or fifteen to twenty other without benefit of agent or media blitz or Booker prize. Some of them may despair. But even so, they work on in despair. Their rewards may be small,

their readers few, but it is enough to keep them from turning off the light. For, they know that the pen, in honest and gifted hands, is mightier than the grave'. Bond then goes on to write: 'And these are my parting words to you, dear Reader: May you have the wisdom to be simple, and the humour to be happy. ”

Bond's stories and novels present the picture of his childhood consisting of bitter-sweet experiences as a secure and happy child under his father's care, love and guidance and later on as an insecure and lonely orphan's journey into adulthood and maturity. Bond explains the pre-dominance of the personal element in his works: “I prepare to write about the people and places have known and the lives of those people whose paths I have crossed.”

His art of writing, therefore, is the art of creative feeling, the art of creative seeing, the art of creative hearing, the art of using all senses whether directly or through the imagination. He can be called a writer of moods as he has treasured memorable intense moments of life in his stories and novels, His novels and stories are, obviously, convincing portraits of life. His language is easy to grasp not only for the sophisticated cosmopolitans and academicians but also for the common readers.

His strength among readers is that he confers upon his readers the true feeling of Indian life that he himself has seen and lived. His European blood seems to be fully naturalized with the Indian spirit and the scent of Indian soil is deeply seeped into his soul. Obviously, Ruskin Bond has enriched Indian English Literature by his creative and positive thinking with an Indian soul. He still continues to enrich by virtue of his love for nature and creation. He really looks like the pole star in the sky of Indian English Literature.

## References

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