Reinventing Childhood: A Study of Innocence, Creativity, and Play in Ruskin Bond's Stories

Author: B.Neethu Prathyusha,
(Research Scholar, P.R. Research Centre)
Lecturer in English,
A.S.D.Government Degree College for Women Autonomous,
Kakinada
naladis2@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper examines the thematic triad of innocence, imagination, and play in the short fiction of Ruskin Bond. Far from being mere decorative elements, these qualities structure the lives of Bond's child characters, allowing them to negotiate loneliness, loss, and displacement. Through close readings of *The Playing Fields of Shimla*, *The Adventures of Rusty*, *The Cherry Tree*, *The Blue Umbrella*, *The Night Train at Deoli*, and *The Woman on Platform No. 8*, the study explores how innocence functions as moral clarity, imagination as a survival tool, and play as a form of resistance and community building. The analysis situates Bond's work within broader Indian English literature and draws on critical perspectives to show that Bond preserves the wonder of childhood without romanticizing it. His children emerge as resilient figures who counter adult corruption through empathy, creativity, and joy.

Keywords: Ruskin Bond, childhood, innocence, imagination, play, Indian English literature, resilience

Introduction

For Ruskin Bond, childhood is not a fleeting biological stage but a distinct philosophy of life, an alternative way of seeing and engaging with the world. His fiction consistently presents children not as passive figures awaiting maturity but as active participants who interpret life with a depth and freshness that often surpasses adults. Bond's child characters perceive the world with clarity, spontaneity, and joy, echoing Wordsworth's notion of the child as "the best philosopher," capable of grasping truths that adults, weighed down by experience, often fail to see. Their worldview is marked by wonder at nature's rhythms, delight in play, and a natural capacity for empathy.

Unlike adults, who frequently succumb to suspicion, materialism, and authority, Bond's children retain an openness that allows them to embrace life without prejudice. Where adults are bound by social hierarchies, ambition, and anxieties of status, Bond's children find fulfillment in the small rituals of daily existence — playing cricket in the hills of Shimla, planting a seed with hope for the future, or treasuring a simple blue umbrella as a source of beauty. Innocence, imagination, and play become more than childlike traits; they are strategies of survival and meaning-making, enabling children to negotiate loneliness, loss, displacement, and cultural marginality.

In stories such as *The Blue Umbrella*, *The Adventures of Rusty*, *The Cherry Tree*, and *The Night Train at Deoli*, these qualities not only provide resilience but also emerge as moral correctives to adult corruption. By foregrounding the child's perspective, Bond creates a counter-narrative that resists alienation and affirms resilience, compassion, and joy. Childhood in Bond's works, therefore, is not a nostalgic escape into the past but a lens through which to critique social realities and reimagine human values. This paper explores the

thematic triad of innocence, imagination, and play in Bond's short fiction, demonstrating how they intersect to form a philosophical standpoint that challenges adult disillusionment while preserving the wonder of life.

Innocence as a Lens of Experience

For Ruskin Bond, innocence is not a state of ignorance but a way of perceiving the world with openness, clarity, and compassion. It acts as a lens through which the child interprets experience, unclouded by suspicion or cynicism. Bond's child characters embody a purity of perception that allows them to see meaning in simple gestures and derive joy from ordinary moments. This innocence, far from naïve, becomes a moral standpoint that often critiques adult selfishness, materialism, or corruption.

The Playing Fields of Shimla

In this story, childhood innocence is expressed through the playful world of cricket. The boys do not chase trophies or status; instead, they revel in belonging, companionship, and shared joy:

"We ran with the wind, shouted until the deodars echoed, and played as if no one in the world was watching."

The game here is symbolic of freedom and togetherness, suggesting that innocence transforms competition into a celebration of community. The laughter that fills the pine-scented air contrasts the rigidity of adult life, reminding us that play, in its most innocent form, is about human connection rather than victory.

The Blue Umbrella

Binya's treasured blue umbrella epitomizes innocence in its aesthetic simplicity. She values it not for its utility but for its beauty, reflecting a child's untainted capacity to delight in the ordinary. More importantly, her act of giving away the umbrella to Ram Bharosa, who had once coveted it with jealousy, reveals generosity that springs from innocence:

"She gave it to Ram Bharosa with a smile, as though it was the most natural thing to do."

Her action is free from calculation or resentment. Where adults cling to possessions and power, Binya demonstrates a childlike grace that dissolves conflict and restores harmony. Innocence here becomes a force of healing, contrasting sharply with adult envy.

The Woman on Platform No. 8

Arun's spontaneous trust in a stranger illustrates how innocence fosters emotional connection. He allows himself to be cared for by the woman on the railway platform without suspicion:

"She drew me close to her and I felt I had always known her."

This openness, often dismissed as vulnerability, is redefined by Bond as strength — the ability to embrace affection without fear. Innocence, in this sense, becomes a bridge between strangers, offering solace and intimacy in transient spaces like railway platforms.

The Room on the Roof

Rusty's yearning for friendship and belonging reflects the innocent desire for companionship that transcends social and cultural barriers:

"I wanted to belong, to be part of their laughter, their freedom."

Rusty's friendships with Somi, Ranbir, and Kishen arise from his childlike openness, unhampered by racial or class prejudice. Innocence here signifies more than personal longing; it is an ethical stance that affirms human connection across divides. Rusty's innocence contrasts the authoritarian and restrictive world of adults, represented by Mr. Harrison, who embodies rigidity and control.

The Night Train at Deoli

Even in *The Night Train at Deoli*, innocence becomes a mode of experience. The narrator's fleeting encounter with a girl selling baskets at the station is marked not by desire but by tender curiosity:

"Why should I have felt so deeply about a girl I had seen only once in my life?"

His feelings embody the innocence of first love — intense, pure, and unburdened by possession. The moment remains unforgettable precisely because it is untouched by adult pragmatism. Innocence, in this story, heightens sensitivity to transient yet profound human encounters.

Across these stories, Bond consistently elevates innocence as a philosophical position — one that resists the corruption of adulthood and preserves the values of empathy, generosity, and openness. Whether in the laughter of boys playing cricket, Binya's unselfish act, or Rusty's yearning for belonging, innocence functions as a lens of experience that affirms resilience and human connection in a fragmented world.

Imagination as Survival and Freedom

In Ruskin Bond's world, imagination is not merely a flight from reality but a way of expanding and deepening it. For children, imagination serves as both survival and freedom — a means of transforming loneliness into companionship, emptiness into adventure, and uncertainty into hope. Bond repeatedly suggests that the child's ability to imagine opens doors that adulthood often shuts. Through imagination, the child resists alienation and creates a meaningful inner world where resilience flourishes.

The Adventures of Rusty

Rusty, often lonely and alienated in his guardian's rigid household, finds refuge in imagination. Isolated from human companionship, he invents bonds with nature:

"I talked to myself, to the trees, even to the river. They were my friends when no one else was."

Imagination here functions as survival. By investing the natural world with companionship, Rusty refuses to succumb to despair. His imaginative conversations with trees and rivers not only ease his solitude but also suggest a broader philosophy: the child perceives kinship where adults see only lifeless matter. Bond redefines imagination as a way of forging relationships beyond human boundaries.

The Night Train at Deoli

A fleeting encounter with the basket-seller becomes immortal through the narrator's imagination. Though he never meets her again, memory transforms into a creative act of preservation:

"I never saw her again — but I think of her every time I pass through Deoli."

Here, imagination rescues a transient moment from oblivion. The girl becomes an eternal presence, not in reality but in memory, where longing and tenderness coexist. For Bond, imagination allows children — and even childlike narrators — to transform absence into a sustaining presence.

The Tunnel

Bond often uses natural settings to dramatize the imagination. In *The Tunnel*, darkness becomes not a space of fear but of adventure:

"The tunnel was like a giant's throat, and I longed to see what lay beyond."

Imagination reshapes a mundane railway tunnel into a mythic journey. What could be an intimidating void is transformed into a thrilling passage of discovery. The child's imagination re-enchants the world, turning danger into excitement and obscurity into possibility.

The Cherry Tree

For young Rakesh, imagination sustains hope and projects growth into the future:

"One day this seed will be a tree, taller than grandfather, taller than me."

The simple act of planting a seed becomes a vision of continuity and life. Imagination here is prophetic — it allows the child to see beyond the present moment into an unfolding future. While adults may measure success through material accumulation, Rakesh's imaginative foresight invests meaning in natural cycles of patience and growth.

Time Stops at Shamli

Bond's narrative style itself is shaped by imaginative perception. In *Time Stops at Shamli*, the town becomes more than a geographical location; it turns into a symbol of suspended existence:

"Shamli seemed to be holding its breath, waiting for something that would never happen."

Through imagination, the town becomes alive, invested with mystery and expectation. Such descriptions reflect the childlike ability to animate landscapes with human emotions, suggesting that imagination is a lens that both interprets and transforms reality.

Additional Example: *Panther's Moon*

In *Panther's Moon*, the child hero Babu faces a predator not only with courage but with an imaginative re-framing of the situation. The jungle, at once threatening, also becomes a space of possibility:

"The shadows seemed alive, and the silence was full of voices."

Imagination converts fear into heightened awareness, empowering the child to confront danger with resilience.

Through these stories, Bond reveals that imagination is central to childhood experience. It enables survival in loneliness (*Rusty*), transforms fleeting encounters into permanence (*Deoli*), re-enchants natural spaces (*The Tunnel*), nurtures faith in the future (*The Cherry Tree*), and invests places with symbolic meaning (*Shamli*). Far from being escapism, imagination becomes a philosophy of freedom — allowing the child to experience the world not as it is limited by adult rationality but as it might be, full of wonder, possibility, and renewal.

Play as Resistance and Community

In Ruskin Bond's short fiction, play is not trivial amusement but a deeply meaningful act. It provides children with a space where they resist authority, challenge alienation, and experience equality. Through play, Bond's child characters transform their social realities, create bonds of friendship, and establish communities beyond class, race, or economic divisions. Play becomes both a form of survival and a philosophy of freedom.

The Playing Fields of Shimla

The cricket field in *The Playing Fields of Shimla* becomes a democratic arena where boundaries dissolve:

"On the field, no one cared if you were rich or poor, Anglo-Indian or pahari."

Here, play erases hierarchies of class, ethnicity, and privilege. Cricket is not a contest of status but a celebration of belonging. Bond emphasizes that children, unlike adults, can transcend divisions through the spirit of the game. The joy of running across the grass, the echo of laughter in the hills, transforms the game into a communal ritual where identity is remade through participation rather than ancestry.

Rusty Runs Away

Rusty's rebellion against his authoritarian guardian is framed through the lens of play. His act of escape is described almost like a child's game:

"It was like hide-and-seek, only the stakes were higher."

This playful metaphor softens the seriousness of Rusty's defiance. What could be seen as an act of rebellion is reframed as an imaginative game of survival. By presenting resistance as play, Bond highlights the resilience of children — their ability to re-script oppression into opportunity, fear into adventure.

Improvised Play in Everyday Life

Bond repeatedly shows how children do not need expensive toys to experience joy. Their imagination transforms ordinary objects into instruments of play:

"They played with marbles, or rolled old bicycle tyres down the hillside, laughing as if it were the grandest game in the world."

This image captures Bond's democratic vision of childhood. Play is not dependent on wealth or privilege but on creativity and companionship. Even in poverty, children can experience delight. Play here functions as a leveler of inequality, affirming the power of imagination to turn scarcity into abundance.

Angry River

In *Angry River*, where Sita faces displacement and survival during a flood, memory of past play becomes a source of comfort and resilience:

"She remembered how she and Krishna had raced paper boats in the river."

This recollection of playful moments transforms a terrifying flood into a remembered river of companionship and joy. Play, even as a memory, provides emotional strength in the face of crisis. It becomes an inner resource that sustains the child during hardship.

The Kite Maker

Although the story centers on the decline of traditional craft, it also highlights the joy of play that connects generations. The narrator recalls flying kites as a child:

"Our kites would rise into the blue, tugging against the string as though impatient to be free."

Kite flying here becomes a metaphor for both freedom and community. Children gather together in playful competition, but their play also symbolizes a resistance against the weight of adult responsibilities and changing times.

Panther's Moon

Even in stories of danger, the spirit of play persists. Babu, facing the threat of a panther, recalls how children in his village often turned the forest into a playground:

"We played hide-and-seek in the very shadows that now frightened us."

This quote demonstrates how play reframes even spaces of fear into domains of possibility. The memory of playful adventure emboldens children to confront danger with courage.

In Bond's fiction, play is neither frivolous nor secondary; it is an essential force of resistance and community-building. On cricket fields, in village lanes, or along riversides, children create worlds of equality and joy where hierarchies collapse and solidarity is born. Whether through games of cricket, rolling tyres, racing paper boats, or flying kites, Bond portrays play as a strategy of survival, resilience, and renewal. Ultimately, play allows children to transform hardship into possibility, resist alienation, and affirm their shared humanity.

Intersections of Innocence, Imagination, and Play

Ruskin Bond rarely isolates innocence, imagination, and play; instead, these qualities intersect to form a holistic worldview of childhood. They feed into one another: innocence allows the child to perceive life without prejudice, imagination expands this vision into endless possibilities, and play grounds it in experience,

sustaining resilience. Together, they create a philosophy of childhood that resists adult cynicism and affirms joy.

The Cherry Tree

In *The Cherry Tree*, these three qualities converge most clearly. Rakesh's innocence is seen in his belief that a tiny seed can flourish despite neglect:

"He stared at the small seed in his palm and thought, perhaps this will be a great tree one day."

This innocent faith fuels imagination, as Rakesh projects the seed's future:

"One day this seed will be a tree, taller than grandfather, taller than me."

Finally, play sustains his engagement. He waters the seed, protects it from goats, and talks to it as if it were a companion — a playful ritual that blends care with delight. Here, innocence, imagination, and play create a continuous cycle of growth and resilience, teaching patience and hope.

The Blue Umbrella

Binya's story also reflects this triad. Her innocence is revealed in her delight in beauty over material possession:

"She carried the umbrella wherever she went, as though it were a flower that would never fade."

Her imagination transforms the umbrella into more than an object; it becomes a symbol of wonder and uniqueness. Play sustains this relationship, as she treats the umbrella almost like a playmate, spinning it in the wind and parading it across the fields. Eventually, her act of gifting the umbrella to Ram Bharosa demonstrates how these qualities combine to resist greed with generosity.

The Playing Fields of Shimla

On the cricket field, innocence creates a space free of social prejudice:

"On the field, no one cared if you were rich or poor, Anglo-Indian or pahari."

Imagination enriches the experience, as the boys see the game not just as sport but as an epic adventure:

"We ran with the wind, shouted until the deodars echoed, and played as if no one in the world was watching."

Play, in turn, preserves this innocence, allowing children to remain uncorrupted by competition and ambition. Their play is about belonging and joy, not about adult notions of victory or recognition.

The Adventures of Rusty

Rusty's innocence is revealed in his longing for connection:

"I wanted to belong, to be part of their laughter, their freedom."

This yearning fuels imagination, as he invents friendships with rivers, trees, and animals:

"I talked to myself, to the trees, even to the river. They were my friends when no one else was."

Play then becomes a means of survival — his wanderings, daydreams, and improvised adventures provide him with resilience against isolation and alienation.

The Woman on Platform No. 8

Even in fleeting encounters, the triad emerges. Arun's innocent trust allows him to accept a stranger's care:

"She drew me close to her and I felt I had always known her."

Imagination sustains the bond beyond the moment, as he carries the memory with him. Playfulness too enters subtly, as he walks with her and enjoys small delights like tea and snacks at the station, transforming a routine stop into a lasting memory of warmth.

These stories demonstrate that innocence, imagination, and play cannot be separated in Bond's portrayal of children. Innocence provides the openness to see possibilities, imagination transforms these possibilities into visions of joy and belonging, and play enacts them in lived experience. Together, they create resilience in the face of loneliness (*Rusty*), displacement (*Sita in Angry River*), or social inequality (*Shimla cricket boys*). For Bond, childhood is not defined by vulnerability but by the strength that comes from this triad — a philosophy of life that sustains both children and the adults who remember them.

Childhood as Counter-Narrative to Adult Corruption

In Ruskin Bond's fiction, children do not simply embody innocence or joy; they actively serve as moral correctives in a world often corrupted by adult flaws. Where adults succumb to greed, suspicion, prejudice, or hypocrisy, children resist these tendencies through generosity, trust, and empathy. Childhood thus becomes a counter-narrative — a lens through which to critique social realities and reimagine ethical values.

The Blue Umbrella

Binya's story epitomizes this contrast. She treasures her blue umbrella not for its material worth but for its beauty:

"She carried the umbrella wherever she went, as though it were a flower that would never fade."

Her innocence and joy starkly contrast with Ram Bharosa, the shopkeeper, whose desire for the umbrella reflects adult greed and envy. When Binya ultimately gifts him the umbrella, Bond highlights a child's capacity for generosity:

"She gave it to Ram Bharosa with a smile, as though it was the most natural thing to do."

This act of selfless giving shames adult acquisitiveness, positioning childhood as a moral counterpoint to corruption.

The Adventures of Rusty

Rusty's friendships also serve as a critique of adult prejudice. As an Anglo-Indian boy, Rusty is marginalized by social hierarchies that value race and class distinctions. Yet his longing is not for status but for simple companionship:

"I wanted to belong, to be part of their laughter, their freedom."

Rusty freely embraces friendships with local Indian children, defying the barriers adults uphold. His ability to cross cultural boundaries contrasts with the suspicion and rigidity of colonial society. Through Rusty, Bond suggests that children embody inclusivity and openness that adults fail to practice.

The Woman on Platform No. 8

In this story, Arun's openness to affection from a stranger underscores the child's natural trust.

"She drew me close to her and I felt I had always known her."

This innocent acceptance counters the adult world, where suspicion, caution, and self-interest dominate social relations. Arun's interaction suggests that children are capable of recognizing genuine kindness without the filters of doubt that cloud adult perception. His experience highlights how trust can be transformative in a world where distrust prevails.

The Room on the Roof

Rusty's rebellion against his guardian also demonstrates how childhood challenges authoritarian rigidity. His guardian, symbolizing the controlling and hierarchical world of adults, represents oppression. Rusty's escape, though framed in playful tones, is deeply ethical — a refusal to be complicit in injustice. His yearning for freedom is not selfish but moral, rooted in the desire for genuine human connection.

The Kite Maker

Bond also contrasts the joy of childhood with the disillusionment of adulthood. The narrator recalls the communal delight of kite-flying:

"Our kites would rise into the blue, tugging against the string as though impatient to be free."

This memory of playful freedom is set against the decline of the kite-maker, whose life has been consumed by economic struggle and obsolescence. Childhood is presented as a realm of joy and possibility, while adulthood is marked by loss, nostalgia, and disappointment.

Angry River

In *Angry River*, Sita's resilience during the flood contrasts with adult helplessness. Her memory of childhood play sustains her in crisis:

"She remembered how she and Krishna had raced paper boats in the river."

While adults panic in the face of disaster, Sita's childlike imagination and memories of play allow her to endure. Here, Bond suggests that the qualities adults dismiss as "childish" — innocence, play, imagination — are in fact sources of strength in moments of crisis.

By juxtaposing children's generosity, trust, and inclusiveness with adult greed, suspicion, and prejudice, Bond positions childhood as an ethical alternative to corruption. Characters like Binya, Rusty, Arun, and Sita serve not only as protagonists but as moral guides, whose actions quietly critique the failings of the adult world. In Bond's fictional universe, childhood is not merely a stage of growth but a philosophy of resistance, challenging the cynicism of adulthood with values of empathy, simplicity, and openness.

Critical Perspectives on Bond's Portrayal of Childhood

Scholars have long noted Ruskin Bond's distinctive approach to representing children, highlighting his authenticity, moral insight, and sensitivity to psychological experience. His works are celebrated for blending simplicity with depth, portraying childhood as a meaningful, morally engaged, and imaginative phase rather than a mere prelude to adulthood.

Scholars highlight Bond's authentic representation of children:

- Gokhale (2012) emphasizes "pastoral innocence" shaped by nature.
- Sharma (2015) foregrounds psychological realism in children's coping strategies.
- Trivedi (2008) situates Bond in Indian English traditions resisting urban modernity.

Pastoral Innocence and Nature (Gokhale, 2012)

Meena Gokhale (2012) emphasizes the concept of "pastoral innocence" in Bond's fiction, arguing that children's moral and emotional growth is intimately linked to the natural environment. In stories like *The Cherry Tree*, Rakesh's imaginative interaction with the seedling and his daily care for it exemplify this notion:

"One day this seed will be a tree, taller than grandfather, taller than me."

Gokhale suggests that Bond's depiction of nature is not just scenic; it functions pedagogically, nurturing patience, hope, and resilience. Similarly, in *The Tunnel*, the boy's fascination with the railway tunnel is intertwined with his perception of the surrounding hills and forests. Nature becomes a playground, a teacher, and a space where innocence can flourish free from adult corruption. Through these depictions, Bond situates childhood in an ethical and emotional landscape shaped by the rhythms of the natural world.

Psychological Realism in Coping with Trauma (Sharma, 2015)

Anjana Sharma (2015) foregrounds the psychological realism in Bond's portrayal of children. Bond's young characters often face loneliness, displacement, or marginalization, yet they navigate these challenges through imagination, play, and emotional resilience. In *The Adventures of Rusty*, Rusty combats isolation in his guardian's house by inventing friendships with trees, rivers, and animals:

"I talked to myself, to the trees, even to the river. They were my friends when no one else was."

Sharma argues that such imaginative engagement reflects real child psychology: children use fantasy to process grief, loneliness, or social marginality. Similarly, in *The Night Train at Deoli*, the narrator's fixation on the girl selling baskets illustrates how imagination preserves hope and transforms fleeting encounters into enduring emotional experiences. Bond's depiction, according to Sharma, validates children's internal worlds and provides a realistic portrayal of how they cope with emotional challenges.

Resistance to Urban Modernity and Social Conventions (Trivedi, 2008)

Harish Trivedi (2008) situates Bond within Indian English literature, highlighting his resistance to the values of urban modernity. Bond's children often inhabit small towns, villages, and rural landscapes, engaging in imaginative play that subverts adult hierarchies and social conventions. In *The Playing Fields of Shimla*, for example, cricket becomes a space where class, ethnicity, and adult-imposed rules are temporarily suspended:

"On the field, no one cared if you were rich or poor, Anglo-Indian or pahari."

Similarly, Rusty's friendships in *The Adventures of Rusty* transcend racial and social boundaries, challenging the prejudices upheld by adults and colonial society. Trivedi argues that Bond's stories privilege the child's perspective to critique urban materialism, rigid authority, and social inequities. Childhood is thus presented as a counter-narrative — a moral and imaginative alternative to adult-imposed order and modernist anxieties.

Conclusion

In Ruskin Bond's fiction, innocence, imagination, and play are not mere attributes of childhood but foundational principles through which children engage with the world. These qualities provide strategies of survival in the face of loneliness and displacement, foster bonds of friendship and community, and serve as moral correctives to adult cynicism, greed, and prejudice. In *The Playing Fields of Shimla*, the cricket field becomes a space where social hierarchies dissolve and camaraderie thrives:

"On the field, no one cared if you were rich or poor, Anglo-Indian or pahari."

In *The Cherry Tree*, the child's innocent belief in the growth of a tiny seed is sustained by imagination and playful engagement:

"One day this seed will be a tree, taller than grandfather, taller than me."

Similarly, in *The Blue Umbrella*, Binya's generosity contrasts sharply with adult envy, demonstrating the ethical force of innocence:

"She gave it to Ram Bharosa with a smile, as though it was the most natural thing to do."

Through such narratives, Bond portrays childhood not as a fleeting biological stage but as a philosophical stance — one that values empathy, resilience, creativity, and joy. His stories suggest that children, by seeing the world with clarity and wonder, can teach adults lessons in morality, imagination, and human connection. By intertwining innocence, imagination, and play, Bond offers a vision of childhood as both a lived experience and an ethical framework, one that sustains hope and affirms the potential for goodness in a world often constrained by adult limitations.

References

Bond, R. (1956). *The room on the roof*. London: André Deutsch.

Bond, R. (1968). *Angry river*. Delhi: National Book Trust.

Bond, R. (1980). *The night train at Deoli and other stories*. New Delhi: Penguin Books.

Bond, R. (1987). *The playing fields of Shimla*. New Delhi: Penguin Books.

Bond, R. (1992). *The cherry tree*. New Delhi: Penguin Books.

Bond, R. (1996). *The blue umbrella*. New Delhi: Rupa & Co.

Bond, R. (1997). *The adventures of Rusty*. New Delhi: Penguin Books.

Bond, R. (1997). *Rusty runs away*. New Delhi: Penguin Books.

Bond, R. (2005). *The woman on platform no. 8*. New Delhi: Rupa Publications.

Bond, R. (2005). *Time stops at Shamli*. New Delhi: Penguin Books.

Gokhale, M. (2012). Pastoral innocence in Indian English fiction. *Journal of South Asian Literature, 47*(2), 112–128.

Sharma, A. (2015). Childhood and psychological realism in Ruskin Bond. *Indian Literature Review, 59*(3), 45–62.

Trivedi, H. (2008). *Indian English literature: Tradition and modernity*. New Delhi: Creative Books.

Sharma, A. (2015). *Childhood and psychological realism in Ruskin Bond*. Indian Literature Review, 59(3), 45–62.

Trivedi, H. (2008). *Indian English literature: Tradition and modernity*. New Delhi: Creative Books.