

A Geocritical Reading of Malgudi and Dehradun

as characters in the oeuvres of
R.K. Narayan and Ruskin Bond

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In literature, it is imperative to acknowledge the importance of setting as it localizes and adds authenticity to characters and events. Taking the importance of setting further, we could consider it like a superconductor that enhances not just the plot and gives it density but also helps to build up an eco-space that moves beyond the plot proper and contributes to form a wider world that is small enough to remain a setting, yet big enough to situate a way of life.

IWE or Indian Writing in English has a history spanning across a cross-section of literary genres over time which has been successful in creating a niche of its own, asserting an ethnicity that is characteristically Indian in its essence. To render a perimeter to our devoir, for this paper, let us consider the question of setting that is critical to the creation of this essence called *Indianness*, specifically, in a discussion that begins with two Indian stalwarts: R. K. Narayan and Ruskin Bond. Spanning an oeuvre from about 1935 to 1994, both have one unique thing common about their writing: the creation of a space that itself defines India and becomes a microcosm of the quintessential Indian identity.

R. K. Narayan had used 15 of his novels and most of his short stories to create a town called Malgudi. This is an imaginary