Ruskin Bond: A Pioneer of Children’s Literature
CHAPTER-3

Ruskin Bond got success as a writer for adults, and then he became interested in writing stories about children. In his introduction to *The Night Train at Deoli and other Stories* he writes that in the 1970s, when he was facing all kinds of problems, his stories relating to children coped with the difficult situation. Earlier he had written a few stories for children and published in magazines and newspapers in India and abroad, but while in Mussoorie, after shifting to his new home, Ivy Cottage he started writing more frequently for children as he played the role of grandfather to Prem Singh’s children. He was always thinking of new stories to tell Rakesh, Mukesh and Savitri. His innovation was to make children protagonists in his stories. Also these stories satisfied his own urge and desire to write about his lost childhood. He writes in ‘Scenes from a Writer’s Life’ to the following effect:

“I don’t suppose I would have written so much about children or even about other children if my own childhood had been all happiness and light. I find that those who have had contented, normal childhoods, seldom remember much about them; nor do they have much insight into the world of children.”

Fortunately, his trauma was channelized towards children’s classics, which gave an outlet to his own agonies. Ruskin Bond found a resemblance with *David Copperfield* who sustained himself in an unfriendly world. The thought that children are rarely given attention by their elders, made him more sympathetic towards them. The children he came across in villages, their every day experiences suggested themes for his stories. Ruskin Bond always enjoyed their company.

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Ruskin Bond’s children’s stories can be put into two categories: “personal and impersonal ones”. Personal stories are autobiographical or semiautobiographical in tone, where he records his own reflections, unfulfilled passions and small adventures. These are stories like “My Father’s Trees in Dehra”, The Funeral, When I can’t Climb Anymore, The Tiger in the House, The Playing Fields of Shimla, Life with Uncle Ken, the Cherry Tree, The Last Tonga Ride, Coming Home to Dehra, All Creatures Great And Small, The Tree Lover. These stories show young Ruskin Bond’s affinity with trees and pets and his love for the town, Dehra. He was deeply attached to the places where he spent his childhood, hence his stories are nostalgic and vivid bringing to life the charming little places, colonial bungalows and fruit laden orchards where he wandered about as a boy. His stories for children reflect his rich imagination.

A perusal of children literature in India shows that at the time of independence in 1947, there were hardly any publishing houses that produced children’s books, and the adult publisher could not afford to invest in children’s trade books during the early post independence period. At that time they were supposed to publish text books and supplementary readers to counteract the effort of colonialism and to replace the imported books recommended in schools where the medium of instruction was English. The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), established in 1961, publish bias – free and appropriate text books. However, few number of urban population acquainted with English had to depend on books and magazines imported from England and United States for their entertainment. India is known for oral literature and therefore the modern trend of creative writing known as children’s literature written for young readers began in the 19th Century under the influence of western education and imported books. However, before 20th Century, children’s literature was confined to traditional tales related orally adapting adult’s books for children and translating foreign classics into Indian languages.
There are 50 publishers in India who publish books exclusively for children in all languages. Nearly 500 new titles are produced each year in all the languages. Ruskin Bond is the foremost Indian writer for children in English. When he started writing for the children in 1960s and early 1970s books for children were quite rare in India. Since, there was hardly any scope for publishing books, he got published his books and short-stories in children’s magazines abroad such as Cricket (USA), the Christian Science monitor (USA), Reader’s Digest (USA), the Lady (UK) and Asia Magazine (Hong-Kong) and in English-Language magazines and newspapers in India such as Children’s World, The Times of India, The Illustrated Weekly of India, Deccan Herald, Statesman, and Hindustan Standard. Ruskin Bond was never inclined towards detective stories highlighting social and political issues. Instead, he wrote imaginative stories for the entertainment of young readers. In his stories Ruskin Bond brought to light the inner world of children, because it was not until 1979, the year of the Child that Indian publishers, writers and scholars paid heed to the emotional and psychological requirement of children.

Ruskin bond’s vision of childhood is entirely different from the bleak world, he depicted in his novels. The most attractive period for a child is summer, when he can indulge in festival activities. Ruskin Bond’s children’s literature was greatly influenced by his perusal of the evocative poetry of Rabindra Nath Tagore, social realism of Mulk Raj Anand, R K Narayan, and Sudhin Ghosh. He shares Wordsworth’s romantic view that nature showers its blessings on those who live in close contact with it, and Rabindra Nath Tagore’s nostalgic association of childhood with a magical time is no less attractive. He records the beautiful and memorable experience of those who live in the small Himalayan Towns and Villages. Ruskin Bond’s early stories for children written during his stay in Delhi are based on his Anglo-Indian childhood and they refer to people and places he knew as he grew up. The plots are based on journeys, friendships, and simple
pleasures and games of children. Ruskin Bond wrote Children’s Omnibus in 1995, published by Rupa.co. The book is a collection of 7 children’s stories. These stories very well depict the temperament of children. Some children are extremely mischievous, while others are innocent. Similarly some are talkative and others are quiet and reserved. Ruskin Bond’s knowledge about the temperament of children is amazing because he always spent time with children rather than adults. Ruskin Bond excelled in writing children’s stories as K. K. wrote in the foreword of Ruskin Bond’s Children’s Omnibus:

“During the last twenty years, Ruskin Bond has probably spent more time writing for children than for adults. Those who have grown up on his stories read them again as adults, and find that they are as fresh and enjoyable as ever. They then give his books to their own children. Ruskin Bond has long since broken the age barrier”.28

The Omnibus collection contains some of his well-known stories, the heroic poem “Angry River”, the emotional “Blue Umbrella” the stimulating and naturalistic “Dust on the Mountain”. One of the stories “Cricket for the Crocodile” is about a cricket match played by the village children. Crocodile named Nakoo given the name on account of his name makes the story funny. There are other characters like Ranji, Nathu, Sunder, Anil and Sheroo along with their fathers. All the characters represent different classes of society including the lower and upper levels, but all of them are loving and giving. Cricket- match, in the story became interesting on account of the presence of Nakoo, who disturbed the match and in turn was disturbed by the presence of human beings at the bank because Nakoo regarded the land close to the shore as his private property.

In the story Ruskin Bond represents happy childhood. The story reminds one of the peaceful days spent in villages where children have enough spare time to play in the open air as opposed to the humdrum and busy life lived in small flats which are neither spacious nor have any exposure to natural scenery. Hence children are confined to their homes and can find an outlet by watching T.V or playing games on the computer which leads to bad health and end of all social activity. Ruskin Bond represents the life of village which bears no tension and is full of generosity and kindness. The people living in cities are ambitious and selfish and also have a complacency regarding their superior status. As they are engaged in a cut-throat competition their children are deprived of the blessings of childhood. The story also highlights the relationship of children and parents. Ruskin Bond through the story lays emphasis on the responsibility of parents to spend time with their children and get involved in their activities. In the story “Cricket for the Crocodile”, Bank Manager, Baker and the Postman also plays cricket with their children as the team member of the match. There is also a glimpse of Ruskin Bonds’ hidden desire to play with his father during his childhood and this he fulfilled through the story. In his children’s stories there is a glimpse of happy childhood which he yearned for.

Another story is considered an epic in itself. It is a short story but it has food for thought. It is a symbolic story published in England, U.S.A, France, Holland and Denmark. In “Angry River” nature is depicted through a river that flows from the melting glaciers and shows the high Himalayas. Ruskin Bond writes about his protagonist’s changing relationship with the river, from a deep love and gratitude on account of its several blessings to an awareness of its duality and the understanding of its mystical nature. This simple tale also reveals his deep insight into the philosophical concepts of Hindu scriptures and metaphysical thought. The protagonist of the story is Sita who lives in an isolated island. The story mentions the adventurous work of Sita. The story takes a decisive turn when the river
suddenly changes its nature and becomes violent and destructive. Sita was alone at that time as her grandparents were away and there was nobody to save her. The entire Island sunk on account of the angry river, then a boy, Krishna appeared on the scene and saved her life from the flood.

Ruskin Bond incorporates such post-modern devices that enable Sita to view her behavior and attitude from outside; she evaluates her experiences as she is experiencing them. At this juncture, when she is all alone and involved in danger, Sita critically examines her decaying physical world and her place in the cosmic order. It is through her rag doll, Mamta who symbolizes wholeness amidst chaos and disarray. Sita achieves the coveted objective necessary to reflect on her relationship with infinite powers. She does not accept the possibility that she is undergoing punishment for her Karma in this life or earlier rather indulges in dialectical reasoning. Sita retains her relationship with nature and with God by using the doll as an agent to do so. Hence she would save Mamta, who is her creation just as she is a creation of God and thus would not give up the doll in the midst of storm.

Sita tries to review the phenomena of rain and flood on the basis of her knowledge of Hindu Mythology. Her grandmother imparted her required information about “Brahma” the omnipotent and omnipresent being regarding three functions as Creator who is Brahma, Preserver who is Vishnu, and Destroyer who is Shiva. She had visualized an impersonal image of the river as destroyer, and she could not accept it into the form of wild beast; as presented in the story:

"The river was very angry, it was like a wild beast, a dragon on the rampage, thundering down from the hills and sweeping across the plain, bringing with
it dead animals, uprooted trees, household goods, and huge fish choked to death by the swirling mud.”

Sita visualize the mythological character of Hindus like Hindu children who are told stories from the Sanskrit epics. Sita thinks specially about the identity of Krishna. He reminds her of lord Krishna, when Krishna’s dark skin looks blue in the moonlight she could not help thinking of Krishna. In her sleep Sita dreams of Krishna and Krishan who is seen becomes one and the same. In her dreams she flies along lord Krishna on a great white bird over the high Himalayas to the realms of God.

The subconscious layer of dream sequences is associated with mythic time at a deeper allegorical level. Ruskin Bond’s choice of names very well illustrates the story in the context of Hindu tradition. These names are apt and up to the mark. Mamta a Hindi word signifies affectionate love that a mother feels for her children. Sita loves Mamta dearly and considers her the best friend with whom she can share all her thoughts. She takes Mamta when she is depressed.

“The God of mountains is angry’ said Sita

‘Do you think they are angry with me’?

‘Why should they be angry with you’ asked Mamta

‘They don’t have to have a reason for being angry. They are angry with everything, and we are in the middle of everything…”

30 Bond, Ruskin. “Angry River” Ruskin Bond’s Children’s Omnibus, New Delhi: Rupa & Co, pp. 73.
Like her Mamta as the very name suggests she is full of affection like a mother. Krishna is a character who occurs in Mahabharata and Sita is the name of the heroine in Ramayana. Krishna is worshipped as an incarnation of God Vishnu. Hindus worship Sita as the divine mother because she was both beautiful and gentle. Sita’s dream of flying on a white bird “Garud” refers to an episode of Ramayana in which Garud tried to save Sita the heroine from Ravana, the evil king of Lanka. Krishna and Sita in Angry River come from different epics of Hindus because both of them incarnated repeatedly on earth to end human suffering.

Ruskin Bond also incorporates the symbolic meaning of Lord Krishna’s flute into the story. To Hindus Krishna’s flute playing is the sensual equivalent of the quickening of life, the transcendental unifying spirit of God and nature. His music is regarded a symbolic submission to the divine will. Like Lord Krishna, Krishan in the story is also the son of a humble shepherd. When Krishan leaves Sita, he gives his flute to her as a token of love, just as divine Krishna promised Radha to return soon. At the end of the story the writer unites the male and the female to recreate the generation like Manu and Smirti, and that universe is recreated repeatedly after destruction. Ruskin Bond in the story Angry River showed his love and regard for the children and illiterate villagers.

Ruskin Bond’s second children’s book, “Grandfather’s Privet Zoo”, was published by India Book house in 1967. It consists of ten short-stories that had been published earlier in different magazines and newspapers, some of these stories were written in early 1960 in Delhi and the rest in Mussoorie. These stories are reminiscent of his happy childhood days spent in Dehra. The author wanted to maintain coherence and decorum in the stories meant for entertainment of the young readers hence he chose the autobiographical style. The hero was the only son of his parents, who were away from the country, and he stayed with his grandparent at Dehra. He was more intimate with his grandfather, who had a
menagerie of wild animals like Toto, the monkey, who enjoyed hot baths, a python, who indulged in self admiration by looking into the mirror; Harold, the hornbill, who played with tennis balls and Caesar, the crow, who tore things to pieces. His grandfather admires animals that have a right to enjoy life but the grandmother dislikes animals on account of their dirty habits that spoils the tidy house.

The narrator loves animals and also enjoys the friendship of Ramu, the farmer’s son who comes to the pond along with the buffalos and makes him give up the concept of gap of status. Although, grandfather and Ramu belong to different religions, they share the thought that one should be kind to the animal and avoid killing them. In the story the narrator secretly expresses his love for animals to entertain children and also to prove that even grandmother was kind enough to nurse the wounded animals when they needed her help.

Ruskin Bond gives new existence to animal because TOTO, CAESAR and HEROLD have certain attractions despite their mischievous activities. At the end of the story he advised the readers not to keep animal as pets for they were likely to become dangerous and forest was their most suitable abode where they survive well like human beings do in their own society. Ruskin Bond writes thus:

“Obviously Toto was not the sort of pet, we could keep for long. Even Grandfather realized that. We were not well-to do, and could not afford the frequent loss of dishes, loathes, curtains and wallpaper. So grandfather found the tonga- driver, and sold Toto back to him- for only three rupees.”

Ruskin Bond through his animal stories also throws light on the fact that animals, being living creatures, have the same right to live as human beings, but they are

killed and also tortured because of certain reasons like some are killed by hunters
others are kept in laboratories for performing experiments. Also they are killed
only for the sake of fashion to collect their skins for making stylish dresses for the
chosen few. Ruskin Bond never forgot to reveal the loving nature of animals so
that we also take care of them and avoid killing animals for pleasure.

John Eviton, in his story entitled “A Philosopher Stag” portrayed the violence
shown by human beings towards animals. In the story “A Philosopher Stag” the
protagonist is a Stag who looks for greenery, trees and natural beauty of forests
and he found it in the forests of India which appear like a heaven but he could
hardly enjoy it because soon one of these was destroyed by fire, burnt by people to
clean the forest and all natural beauty as well as the lives of many animals and
birds came to an end. John Eviton mentions this in the following words:

“A tongue of flame lit their faces for an instant before they fled. Within five
minutes the jungle was a light at six points, and peace was no more. Every
animal looked up and sniffed the breeze...”

Ruskin Bond looks upon nature and animals with loving care. During his
childhood he spent time wondering in the forests to observe all kinds of animals.
Animals do not usually harm human beings. Sometimes animals behave like
human beings. They also have the sense of love and responsibility. For instance
dogs are considered more faithful than human beings as Rudyard Kipling wrote in
his story “Garm A Hostage”, about a dog when he saves the life of his master:

“I give you the dog because of what you got me out of. He is the best I know,
for I made him myself and he is as good as man”.  

32 Bond, Ruskin. “A Philosopher Stag” The Rupa Book of great Animal Stories,
Ruskin Bond is influenced by James S. Lee, Frenk Buck, Rudyard Kipling, C.H. Donald and Charles D Robert. Ruskin Bond also wrote thrilling, moving stories which are usually true. Grand Father’s Private Zoo was written by Ruskin Bond in the first person narration to make it look authentic. Ruskin Bond also accepts this truth in an introduction of “A town called Dhera” in these words:

“So some of the characters in my Dhera stories were fictional; some were based on real people. Granny was real of course and so were the boys in ‘The Room on the Roof’ and ‘Vagrants in the Valley’.”

In the Auto Biography of Ruskin Bond “Scenes from a Writer’s Life”, he does not mention his Grand Father. Ruskin Bond got inspiration from his own adopted grandchildren Rakesh, Mukesh, Bina and Savitri to write this story. He enjoys living with them. Ruskin Bond always loved his grandfather though he could not stay with him for a long time. Hence this story entitled Grandfather’s Private zoo reflects his unfulfilled desire. His children’s stories very well portray the advantages of joint family where grand-children get a chance to listen to short-stories by grandparents before going to sleep and know the amazing experiences of their grandparents. Hence Ruskin Bond always preferred the company of old people to youngsters.

Ruskin Bond writes animal’s stories for the entertainment of children. There is a synthesis of fact and fiction in his stories. His animal stories for children are often close to reality because hill-stations abound with monkeys, crows, apes, and reptiles. Hence, some of his children’s stories relating to animals are also based on his own experiences like ‘Monkey Trouble, Monkey on the Roof, Who kissed me

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34 Bond, Ruskin “Introduction” A Town Called Dhera, New Delhi: Penguin Group, pp XIV,
in the Dark’. These stories seem to follow the style of such writers who wrote about real experiences of their lives; James S Lee is one such writer. His story ‘The Coming of the Tiger’, Ruskin Bond edited and added in the book of Great Animal’s Stories, published by Rupa & Co. The story is about James S Lee’s experience when he was posted at North-East front of India as a Mechanical Engineer and he had undergone an exciting adventure when a tiger trapped him like a mouse while engaged in his work at night but he was fortunate enough to escape from this man-eater tiger like Ruskin Bond’s escape from Java. In this story the protagonist and his friend Sono had an exciting experience when they were struck by the bombarding plane flying very low and was making terrific explosion. Both of them were nine years old and thus began running as Bond mentions in the following words:

“We were quickly on our feet and then we began running in the general direction of our homes. The twisted cycles lay forgotten on the road…”

Both of them nearly faced death as James S Lee saw death, disgusted with the Tiger, he wrote thus:

“Tiger’s fangs soon were snapping within a couple of feet of my body. Its breath came in horrid, foul gusts, filling the chamber with a sickening odour, and its roars inside the confined space were enough to hurt my ear drums, while its eyes were glaring into mine.”

Ruskin Bond often writes thrilling stories and sometimes soft and fun loving stories to entertain the children. The favorite theme in his stories is a binding

35 Bond, Ruskin “Escapes From Java” Escape From Java and other Tales of Danger, New Delhi: Penguin Group, pp 82-83
relationship between children and adults. In “Grandfather’s Private Zoo” the protagonist has a loving hand, sensitive grandfather, and then in “Escape from Java” the protagonist has a loving and caring father. Hence most stories portray a deep relationship between two generations. This makes all his stories amusing for the children and attractive for the adults. The grownups and children read the stories with revived interest and find them fresh and enjoyable. They pass on their books to their own children. Ruskin Bond’s children’s stories sometimes follow the traditions adopted by Rudyard Kipling’s ‘Maugli’. He also seems to be influenced by the stories of Oscar Wild, Charles Dickens, and Somerset Maugham. In his stories often childhood is spent in working on a tea stall or washing the vehicles of rich people of society. Sometimes the protagonist polishes the shoes on the road-side then it also happens that he passes a luxurious life like in “Grandfather’s Private Zoo”, ‘Dust on the Mountain’ are some of the stories of Ruskin Bond in which the protagonist named ‘Bisnu’ goes to the city in search for a job although he is merely a twelve years old child yet is a responsible person to run his family. Bisnu has an optimistic view point. Though he is almost a pauper, he never gives up hope to achieve something. In this story “Dust on the Mountain” Ruskin Bond offers a glimpse of the rustic life of Bisnu. Bisnu faces the tragedy of being deprived of monsoon in his village, where fields were dry so Bisnu decided to go to Mussorie to earn his livelihood. Bisnu was a very hard working and optimistic boy. After encountering the difficulties of life, he managed to get a job in the cinema where he was to sell tea during the interval but with the commencement of summer season, the cinemas were closed for the tourists stopped arriving. Then he looked for another job and soon he found a new job to clean the truck, to assist the truck driver. He liked this job but unfortunately the truck met an accident and the driver got seriously injured and luckily Bisnu got no injury but he almost faced death then he decided to return to his village on his own land. Ruskin Bond is very compassionate towards children who are forced to work instead of playing or studying during their childhood. Ruskin Bond finds a plot for
his story everywhere. Through Bisnu, Ruskin Bond depicts those children who work on the road side or in shops, which is a common feature of Indian life. He throws light on child labour and also presents these things before the readers in such a way that everybody admired the children who are ignored by society. Bisnu is very optimistic, loving, caring and a sociable boy who has to put in a lot of labour to earn money for his mother and little sister. At the end, he feels proud of his land on which he works and says to Pritam, the truck driver:

"I shall work on my land. It's better to grow things on land than to blast things out of it".37

Bisnu returned home that he loves dearly. Ruskin Bond himself came back from Britain with the same sentiments to his home Dehra and took pride like Bisnu being related to his family and its people. Ruskin wrote about Bisnu and himself:

"Bisnu came walking through the fields, and did not hurry. He did not run; he wanted to savour the moment of his return... It was his home and these were his fields! Even the snow was his".38

Through this story Ruskin Bond also exhibits his love of trees because the life of Bisnu was saved by a tree to which he was struck at the time of the accident and the truck directly went down to the bottom of a gorge, then Bisnu made up his mind to grow trees which are always helpful to human beings.

Ruskin bond wrote many stories about child labour, and was influenced by Charles Dickens in this regard because Charles Dickens, an eminent writer, wrote

37 Bond, Ruskin. "Dust on Mountain" Ruskin Bond's Children's Omnibus, New Delhi: Rupa & Co, pp 113
38 Bond, Ruskin. "Dust on Mountain" Ruskin Bond's Children's Omnibus, New Delhi: Rupa & Co, pp 114
about the social evils and struggle of middle-class children who work incessantly for their livelihood. Bisnu is also a representative of child labour as Charles Dickens’ Oliver Twist, David Copperfield and Philip Pirrip are victims of the same class. David Copperfield was one of the favorite characters of Ruskin Bond about whom he read the novel in his childhood days. David Copperfield like Bisnu goes in search for a job in London, when his mother dies and his step father, a cruel person forced him to earn his own living. Like Bisnu he struggles for a job and finds an unsuitable one during his school days. In London he meets his aunt and tells his sad story to her.

“I have been very unhappy since she died. I have been neglected and thought nothing and thrown upon my self and put to work not fit for me. It made me run away to you. I was robbed at first starting and have walked all the way and have never slept in a bed since I began the journey”.39

Ruskin Bond also read the full collection of Charles Dickens and he wrote in his autobiography that he had a passion for Charles Dickens and one of his teachers Mr. Jones, gave him a complete set of works of Charles Dickens. He writes thus:

“Mr. Jones had a passion for the works of Dickens, and when he discovered I had read Nickleby and Sketches by Boz, he allowed me to look at his set of the Complete works, with the illustration by Phiz. I launched into David Copperfield, which I thoroughly enjoyed, identifying myself with young David his triumphs and tribulations.”40

The story ‘The Last Tonga Ride’ revives the romance of Tonga ride on the steep roads of Dehra, fringed by lush green plantation on both sides. The boy loved the

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thrill of Tonga ride especially of Bansi Lal. It was not only the excitement of galloping pony, but the tantalizing charm of Bansi’s tale for which he escaped from the clutching of the nodding aya. Ruskin Bond’s other famous story ‘The Blue Umbrella’ is less exciting but more moving story, he weaves the story of basic human instincts: desires, possession, envy, greed and compassion. Binya who is a simple Garhwal girl, gets a beautiful blue umbrella from the rich picnickers. Children admire her umbrella and she feels proud of having such a unique luxurious thing in the village. Ram Bharosa tries to get the umbrella by hook and by crook, and finally discovered by the villagers. Ram Bharosa loses faith of people and is abandoned by the villagers, but Binya feels herself responsible for the miseries of Ram Bharosa. The story is a tribute to the basic goodness of man. It reveals the truth that human vices are not inborn. Man is conditioned by the circumstances and children to possess better understanding and broader view of life. As a children’s writer Ruskin Bond simply portrays the psychology of his characters and circumstances.

Some of Ruskin Bond’s children’s stories are the tales of little adventures and the discovery of the new vistas of life. The story ‘Four Boys on a Glacier’ imparts a vivid picture of snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas. The boys visualize the divine beauty of nature during their adventurous expedition. The story ‘How Far is the River?’ is also filled with the spirit of reckless enthusiasm peculiar to the adolescents. The gurgling sound of the water in a deep forest arouses curiosity in them and they march through the bushes on steep hills and valleys in order to trace it out.

In some of his children’s stories, Ruskin Bond talks about doting grandmothers who share their age-old experiences with grand children. The stories like ‘The Kite Maker’, ‘A Long Walk with Granny’, ‘The Cherry Tree’, ‘The Photograph’ depict the interest of sharing between the young and the old. In ‘The Photograph’ the boy enjoys a streak of blush in the wrinkles of Granny’s face when she looks at
her old photograph. The pigtailed girl in the photograph reminds her of those good old days when she bathed in the village pool along with other village boys and sat on the back of buffaloes. In ‘A Long Walk with Granny’ the boy talks to his old granny on the way to the town to buy a new pair of spectacles for her. The story depicts the hardships of hill-life as they have to walk many miles on foot to reach a road-head for a bus to the town. All difficulties become meaningless when the grandmother on getting new spectacles sees her grandson ‘Mani’ much better. She becomes very happy and while returning home she sits by the window in the bus and sings slowly like a little girl at the fresh sight of the world. Ruskin Bond writes about her craziness to this effect:

“As the bus moved off, Granny looked eagerly out of the window. Each bend in the road opened up new vistas for her and she could see many things that she had not seen for a long time...distant villages, people working in the field...what a large cow! She remarked, ‘It’s not a cow, granny’, said Mani, ‘its buffalo’...anyway, I saw it, she insisted”

Ruskin Bond’s aim is to spread love and understanding among all creatures of the world and children are the most active recipients of his vision. They are very quick in making friends. Small objects like a flower, a marble stone, a flute, a coin, a doll, bangles, ribbon, may serve to initiate their friendship. His child heroes have a completeness and independence. Unlike the elders, children have an openness of mind. They are eager to cross the barriers laid down by their elders.