CHAPTER II

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Though only four autobiographical novels are taken up for study here, it is relevant to examine Anand's other novels also. This chapter briefly analyses his other novels with a view to bringing out the extent to which his personal life has influenced the characters that appear in the novels. It is humanly impossible for a writer to keep his distance from the characters he creates. Anand himself has admitted that "the struggle to extirpate the novelist's own personality and ideas, in order to give scope for the character to express himself, was very hard" (The Story 14).

For the benefit of the girl whom he loved, Anand had written his confessional which had run to more than two thousand pages. As he could not find anyone to publish it, he took certain characters and incidents from it for his novels. So the confessional became a source-book for all his novels.

He wrote the novel Untouchable to bring forth the miserable life led by an eighteen-year-old untouchable boy
who was his childhood playmate in the cantonment. The novel describes the events of a single day in the life of the untouchable named Bakha. It was written during a long weekend in London in 1930. Anand had witnessed his childhood playmate Bakha, who was physically like a God and excelled in all games, being humiliated by the elders of high castes because of his birth. He writes that he harboured a sense of guilt at the ill-treatment meted out to this untouchable and as an atonement and appeasement he wrote Untouchable with Bakha as the central character. He concedes that Rousseau's Confessions and the works of Gogol, Tolstoy and Gorky could have influenced him in making a proletarian the hero of fiction. He did not attempt to publish Untouchable -- actually it was first titled 'Bakha' -- as he found it too amorphous. He happened to read some copies of Gandhi's magazine Young India and he was moved by Gandhi's articles on the untouchables. He decided to leave for India and show Gandhi some parts of Untouchable. Anand writes:

I decided, as soon as I could, to go to Gandhi, and read to him some parts of my novel. This urge, inspired partly by sincerity, but partly by the feeling that the association with a man whose unorthodox stand against the caste order was
respected, would give me the courage to suggest the awkward things I had myself put down on paper. (The Story 8)

On the boat to Bombay Anand witnessed British passengers treating Indians with contempt and in anger he retouched *Untouchable*. At Gandhi's Ashram the symbolic act of cleaning latrines taught Anand the dignity of labour and he redrafted his novel. *Untouchable*, on which he worked for five years, was finally published in 1935 after being turned down by nineteen publishers. He strictly followed the three unities in this novel and his literary career may be considered to have begun with the publication of this novel.

Anand, on his first visit to India after a four year stay in England, spent some days at Hamirpur village in the Kangra Valley. This was the background for his second novel *Coolie*. It was written while Anand was in London and was published in 1936. Like Bakha, Munoo, the central character in the novel, is young and poor. Munoo is modelled on a character Anand knew as a young boy in his native place Amritsar. The tragedy of the fourteen-year-old Munoo is that he leaves his picturesque Simla hills and works as a coolie
in the cities. In the novel Anand describes something he had himself witnessed -- the miserable working conditions in a pickle factory in Amritsar. If in Untouchable he tries to portray a caste-ridden society, in Coolie he shows a class-ridden society. The novel written in three months was accepted by the publishers readily. The days Anand had spent in Bombay as a boy when he had run away from home comes in handy while describing the revolting surroundings in which Munoo lives in Bombay. While in Untouchable the action is confined to the cantonment, in Coolie it is spread over many places. Anand's anger at the social injustice and his sympathy for the victims of exploitation are reflected in this novel also. An innocent hillboy, willing to work, is exploited everywhere and finally dies of tuberculosis at Simla. It must be mentioned that Anand does not paint all characters as evil. There is Prabha, the kind-hearted owner of the pickle factory where Munoo worked. Incidentally Prabha is a character whom Anand knew well when he was living in Daulatpur.

Anand accused the British Government of exploiting India and debasing the character of Indians. It was his firm belief that the British turned the Indians into cringing sycophants of Englishmen. To prove his point Anand narrates
an incident where the fawning Babu Nathoo Ram, a sub-accountant in the Imperial Bank, invites Mr. W. P. England, the Chief Cashier, to tea in his house. The tea party, which ended in a fiasco, also proves Anand's belief that the Englishmen were afraid to be familiar with the Indians. Anand had occasions to taste the cruelty and sadism of the police force during his younger days and in his novels also he does not miss an opportunity of describing them as such. In Coolie the police mete out inhuman treatment to Prabha for the non-payment of debt.

Nature and especially mountains and valleys held great attraction for Anand and in all his novels he never resisted the temptation to describe them in all their splendour. Saros Cowsjee writes, "The sight of the mountains and valleys revives in Munoo the memories of his village, and this section contains some of Anand's best nature descriptions. He is a painter of nature in all its moods and has a remarkable flair for evoking the smells and colours of India" (82).

Anand's prejudice against the Anglo-Indian community gets the better of him and he unnecessarily portrays in detail the minor Anglo-Indian character Mrs. Main Warning. Anand has taken most of the characters in Daulatpur in the
novel from his personal life. From early childhood onwards Anand was an eye-witness to the Hindu-Muslim feud in India. So it is little wonder that in this novel he gives a realistic picture of the Hindu-Muslim riots in Bombay.

Anand's third novel, Two Leaves and a Bud, was published in 1937 while he was still in England. In 1929 he had visited a tea plantation in Assam and the outcome of the visit was the novel. He had personal experience of the sufferings undergone by the Indian estate workers during the pre-Independence days. It is interesting to record that the publication of this novel drew protests from the President of the Indian Tea Association and this caused the placing of the book on the list of books proscribed in India. Gangu, the main character in the novel and his family leave the plains to work in a tea estate in Assam. His sufferings in the new place are the theme of the novel. Throughout the novel Anand shows his annoyance at the tormented coolies for meekly submitting to the British Estate Officers. In this novel also he takes the opportunity to express vehemently how cruel and unjust the British rulers were. The lecherous Assistant Manager Reggie Hunt, an Englishman, is acquitted even though he murders Gangu. After a three-day trial the jury finds Reggie Hunt not guilty! Even though the novel was
authentically based, Anand was accused of writing propaganda. Anand refuted the accusation and declared that he was narrating a real story. His anger at the capitalist's exploitation and the abject suffering of the downtrodden is admirably depicted in this novel. He always ridiculed the Hindu theory that man suffered in this world because of his bad deeds in the previous birth. So the readers find Gangu accepting his troubles with meekness. Anand writes in exasperation, "He (Gangu) was prepared to accept any humiliation. It was only one more reward for the misdeeds of his past life, he said to himself, with the resigned indifference of the Hindu" (Two Leaves 115).

The English character John de La Havre is Anand himself. Anand's habit of describing in great detail the sexual act as seen in the autobiographical novels is evident in his earlier novels also. He describes, one feels, unnecessarily at length the brutal manner in which Reggie Hunt made love to the coolie woman. His portrayal of Gangu's daughter Leila is superb and she enchants the hearts of the readers. Like Sohini in Untouchable, Leila also has to put up a fight to save her chastity. In this novel also Anand shows how some Indians were social climbers and shamelessly cringed before the haughty and contemptuous Englishmen. In all his
novels he describes death as a welcome release for the suffering poor, who have no reason to fear it. There are many passages in this novel which echo Anand's own sentiments. He declares that the English while debasing the Indians became debased themselves. The English characters in this novel prove his argument.

Anand felt that the education imparted in schools and colleges was grossly inadequate. It was especially so in the pre-Independence days. Through the principal character, Nur, in the novel, *Lament on the Death of a Master of Arts*, Anand exposes the inadequacy of Indian education. He disapproved the unclean habits of the Muslims and also their religious intolerance. As in many other novels of his, in this novel also he ridicules these traits among the Muslims. This book was first published in 1938 and its protagonist Nur closely resembles Anand's college friend Noor Mohammed. The character Azad in the novel is Anand himself. Like Anand's friend of his college days, Nur in the novel also dies of consumption. In fine, it suffices to say that Anand has drawn heavily from his and his friend's college experiences in writing this novel. If he had been unsparing in his criticism of the Hindu priests in his novels, in this book he derides the Mullahs, and Maulavi Shahab Din is portrayed as a
crafty Mullah.

In his book *On Education* Anand had stated firmly his views on education prevalent in India and the same views are echoed in this novel also. He firmly believed that the education imparted in India by the British during his time was insufficient and purposeless. Parents educated their children with the fond hope that they would end up in government service. Anand's father also cherished such a dream for his son but Anand revolted. Likewise, Chaudri in the novel expects that his son would become a Master of Arts and secure a good job in government service. As Anand had disappointed his father, Nur disappoints his father. In this novel Anand shows Gama, who has not had proper education, in a better position financially than his friend Nur. Because he knew his friend Noor Muhammad's family intimately, Anand is able to give a realistic account of the protagonist's (Nur) family. His bitterness against school teachers for their cruelty and corruption is again evident in this novel also. If Anand was punished by his school teachers because he did not take tuition from them or his father did not send presents to them, Nur also suffers at the masters' hands for the very same reasons. Because he found his school masters immoral, Anand portrays Kanshi Ram in this novel also as
immoral. Like Munoo in *Coolie*, Nur also dies in the end because of tuberculosis. As is the case of most of his heroes, death brings to him too welcome relief from both mental and physical pain.

Anand's next three novels *The Village*, *Across the Black Waters* and *The Sword and the Sickle*, published in 1939, 1940 and 1942 respectively, form a trilogy. Meenakshi Mukherjee comments, "These three novels contain the quintessence of Anand; they illustrate his strength as well as his weakness; they reach his finest achievement and also mark his decline" (238).

The central character in this trilogy is Lal Singh, a Punjabi peasant youth. Anand visited India in 1936 and was moved by the sorry condition of the Indian farmers especially in Punjab and the outcome of this intense feeling was the trilogy.

*The Village* deals with Lal Singh's boyhood days at Nandpur, a Punjabi village. Marlene Fisher writes:

Although not an autobiographical novel as such, *The Village* does draw upon Mulk's early life in the
Punjab. The hair-cutting scene, for example, is based upon what actually happened to a young uncle of Mulk's. The rich setting of the village itself, with all its tangled patterns of family and communal life, he knew first hand. And much about Lalu Singh -- his warmth and intelligence, his impatience, rebelliousness, and independence of mind -- is based upon the character and personality of the young Mulk Raj Anand. (60)

Lal Singh's father Nihal Singh and mother Gujirir are modelled on Anand's grandfather and grandmother. It is in this novel that Anand recaptures with clarity his mother's village of Daska. Anand used to spend his childhood days at Daska during his school vacation. The protagonist Lal Singh, an adolescent of seventeen years, rebels against religion and customs, like his creator.

Anand is at his best in describing nature in this novel. Mahant Nandgir, the priest in the novel who was a drug addict and lecher, was typical of the priests Anand had known in his early life. He had witnessed the peasants being systematically swindled by money-lenders and priests and all his novels are used to ridicule and condemn them. With an
intimate knowledge of village life he describes how the illiterate and poor farmers are exploited by money-lenders and lawyers. Anand also finds fault with the British Government for being unaware of the pathetic plight of the Indian farmers.

By the time the Second World War broke out Anand had married Kathleen in 1939. It was in a state of inner and outer tension that he wrote the second novel of the trilogy named *Across the Black Waters*. The novel reveals Anand's horror and condemnation of war. The novel opens with Lal Singh in Marseilles with his regiment as the war has broken out. Drawing a parallel between Anand and Lal Singh, Saros Cowasjee writes: "Lal faints at the sight of blood, very much as Anand himself did when he saw a blood transfusion during the Spanish Civil War" (107). Anand wrote the first draft of this novel in Madrid and València during the Spanish Civil War. On the autobiographical element found in this novel, Saros Cowasjee writes, "*Across the Black Waters* is based on Anand's own knowledge of trench warfare in Spain, and on what he came to know about those who fought in Flanders during World War I. It appears he was familiar with the exploits of the Indian soldiers .... "(108). Anand shows in this novel that only the British had colour and racial prejudices while
The French were free from them. It should be noted that Anand's brother Des Raj Anand died in 1940 and his beloved mother also died in the same year at the age of sixty four. This novel is dedicated to the memory of his father Subedar Lal Chand Anand.

The third novel of the trilogy *The Sword and the Sickle* is a long volume and describes Lal Singh's involvement in the Indian Independence movement. This novel, which was published in 1942, deals with the protagonist Lal Singh's return to India after the World War and his subsequent disappointment and disillusionment. Because Anand wanted to record the Kisan Sabha movement and the peasant uprising that started in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, he shifted the scene in the novel from Punjab to Rajgarh. Rajgarh is modelled on Kalakankar in the Partabgarh district of the United Provinces where Anand had stayed in 1938 as the guest of Kanwar Brajesh Singh. Anand's description of the town and the palace is drawn from his own personal observance. Saros Cowasjee finds many parallels in this novel and writes, "Anand's Count Rampal Singh is modelled on Brajesh Singh, and he reveals many of the traits of Brajesh as he appears in Svetlana Alliluyeva's autobiography *Only One Year* (1969). The Count is a Communist, and so was Brajesh"
The major events in the book are faithfully recorded in Jawaharlal Nehru's book *An Autobiography*, which was published in 1936. It is noteworthy that Gandhi and, to some extent, Nehru are criticised in this novel. Though Anand believed that the British were mainly responsible for the plight of the Indian peasants, the Congress was also guilty of neglect. Meenakshi Mukherjee is very severe on Anand's novels when she writes that in the third volume of the trilogy, "Anand's stylistic devices congeal into mannerisms, and they become much more pronounced and jarring because there is nothing in the rendering of life or character which might divert the reader from the language and capture his attention" (241). However, the opinion of Saros Cowasjee is different. He writes:

The Trilogy is an impressive achievement; its scope is epical. It presents a great historical story, and it presents it in fine detail, searching out every grain of truth as it goes. Along with history, it offers the geography, the folklore, the religion, the values and attitudes of the many strata of Indian society. (124)
Whatever be the merit of the trilogy, the truth is that Anand relied on his personal experiences while writing them. The personal problems that Anand was experiencing during this period are reflected in the relationship between Lal Singh and his wife Maya. As in other novels Anand takes the opportunity to ridicule God and religion in this novel also. On the trilogy, Marlene Fisher writes:

If there are autobiographical notes struck in the trilogy; if there are particular ideas and points of view for which the novels are in part vehicles; and if, as he has happily admitted, Mulk was very much influenced in The Sword and the Sickle by Silone's novel Bread and Wine, Anand was nevertheless able to transform these melodies and ideas and influences into a trilogy that is both successful as art and uniquely the product of one particular artist. (71)

When Anand published his next novel The Big Heart in 1945, the World War was not over, and Anand was in considerable personal stress. When Anand had visited India in 1939 he found that the advent of machines was not well received by the coppersmith brotherhood in Amritsar.
The conflict brought about among the coppersmith community by the introduction of machinery forms the theme of *The Big Heart*. One hears the voice of Anand when the protagonist Ananta cries often, "There is no talk of money, brothers, one must have a big heart" (7). The novel takes place within a period of less than twenty four hours. The central character Ananta, a coppersmith by birth, concedes the usefulness of machines in his hometown Amritsar but is accidentally killed when the unemployed destroy the machines. The hero Ananta is modelled on a relative Anand knew during his boyhood days. Anand is very familiar with coppersmiths and their problems. Since the story takes place in the hometown of Anand, the description of the city and its unhygienic conditions are realistically portrayed. The Ananta that Anand had known was accused of being a drunkard and living with Janki, a woman he had run away with. In the novel also the hero Ananta is accused by the coppersmith brotherhood of being a drunkard and whoremonger, having illicit intimacy with Janki. Needless to say that Anand's sympathy is with Ananta. The message that Anand wishes to convey through this novel is admirably put by Marlene Fisher: "It is not, then, a question of whether to have machines or not. Anand is no Gandhian in this respect. It is a
question, rather, of how mechanization and industrialization may be used to enhance human life" (79).

It is noteworthy that Anand as a boy was drawn towards men who were condemned by the elders of the Thathiar Community as drunkards and whoremongers. As in his other novels, Anand presents the Indian wife as suffering silently at the hands of her tyrant husband. One sees the meek wife Gujri looking upon her husband Murli Dhar as the supreme lord though he carries on an affair with his own daughter-in-law. The novel presents the last phase of the life of the protagonist Ananta, the confirmed atheist. Anand voices his opinion of poverty through the reflection of Ananta: "He recognised that men like Lal Chand had made poverty a major crime, that poverty degraded one and made one unworthy, and that all kinds of insults and humiliations could be heaped upon the poor by any Lalla with a soft cushion under his bottom" (117).

Anand had first left India in 1925 and returned to India permanently in 1945. His next novel The Old Woman and the Cow was the first novel to be published originally in India. It was published in 1960. Anand was always obsessed with the timid nature of the women of India and the docile
manner in which they bore the cruelty inflicted on them by their husbands. Anand created Gauri, the heroine of the novel, as a woman of spirit who could assert her rights. In describing Gauri, he remembered his peasant mother who suffered under his father's uncontrollable anger. He wishes to convey through this novel the message that the modern woman should be like Gauri, an awakened woman.

Gauri, the heroine, suffers because her husband Panchi listens to his aunt Kesaro who harbours jealousy for her. Poverty and pride make him ill-treat his wife and later on doubt her loyalty also. Marlene Fisher aptly describes the main theme of the novel thus:

The fullest fictional expression of Anand's advocacy of freedom for women is in his novel, The Old Woman and the Cow, published in 1960. This narrative is convincing and effective in part because the sympathy Anand evokes for young Gauri is not at the complete expense of her husband, Panchi. The latter's inability to keep up with his wife in her growth into self-hood is due to his own immaturity, his blind, unquestioning faith in the tradition-bound, orthodox Hindu views governing the
relationship between husband and wife, and the pressures of earning a livelihood in a period of drought and famine. (99-100)

The problems posed by the joint family were well known to Anand and the novel brings out this. He is well versed in the myths of the Ramayana and the Mahabaratha and for the first time makes use of them in this novel. There is a parallel between Sita and Gauri, but the myth explodes when mother earth does not swallow up Gauri. In this novel also Anand takes the opportunity to depict the deplorable conditions of the small farmers who found agriculture an unprofitable occupation. The religious fanaticism and the absurd superstitions that Anand witnessed during his lifetime, he exposes in this novel. As in the other novels the husband physically attacks the wife and what helps Gauri is the education she gets at the hospital, which leads finally to her emancipation. It is the only novel of Anand which has a woman as its central character. Anand shows to what extent poverty can be crippling, when Laxmi, Gauri's mother, sells her own daughter to save a cow!

The next novel Private Life of an Indian Prince, which was published in 1953, was Anand's last novel to be published
in England and it was written during the partition of India. The tragic happenings, during that time, froze Anand's literary imagination for some years. Marlene Fisher remarks, "The Private Life of an Indian Prince remains one of Anand's most well-crafted novels and testifies to his ability, at its best, to transform felt experience into art" (117). Anand has strictly adhered to historical and political fact while writing this novel. The narrator in the novel, Dr. Hari Shankar, is the personal physician of the Maharaja Ashok Kumar. Declaring that there was some of Anand both in the Maharaja and the narrator Dr. Hari Shankar, Saros Cowasjee writes: "There is as much of Anand in his Prince as in his narrator, and this partly accounts for the penetrating analysis of the Prince's character. Dr. Shankar is the rational side of the author analysing the irrational side as seen in the Prince" (141). Many of the musings of Dr. Shankar on man and destiny are obviously Anand's own as can be seen in his book, Apology for Heroism. Surender Singh writes:

Here it seems relevant to mention that Mulk Raj Anand had written Private Life of an Indian Prince as a therapeutic device to cure him of his illness. And, therefore, it is not surprising that he gives vent to his personal anguish through the frequent
fits of grief and anger of Maharaja Ashok Kumar, the protagonist of the novel. (10)

It is well known that Anand held the priests in contempt and never let pass an opportunity to ridicule and condemn them. Ganga Dasi, the nymphomaniac who exerted so much of influence over the Maharaja was the daughter of a priest and Anand shows that she has inherited the craftiness of Brahmin priests in her blood. About this novel Anand himself declares:

And *Private Life* written from the white heat of a tremendous crisis may, by its evocation of absolute pity and absolute love, have said or rather radiated the almost Buddhist compassion I feel -- the yoke of pity which I have tried to carry throughout.

The novel was first conceived in London before the Second World War, because I heard that Prince, whom I had taught in Simla in the early twenties, had ended up in the Poona asylum. (*Art is not Life* 238)
The Maharaj in the novel also becomes mad and Anand poignantly portrays the ravings of the Maharaja in his deranged state of mind.

The next novel of Anand, The Road, was published in 1961 and the theme of the novel was the animosity shown by caste Hindus towards the untouchables. The untouchables are employed by the Government to lay the road from the Govardhan village to the city. The caste Hindus oppose the construction carried on by the untouchables as they feel that even the stones are defiled due to their touch. After the road has been laid, the untouchable Bhikhu leaves his village to Gurgaon where he hopes no one would know him and where there would be no caste distinction. This novel is based on an actual incident Anand had experienced while he lived in Haryana. To him there was something tragi-comic in the fact that the caste Hindus would not touch the stones quarried by the untouchables to make the road. Anand mentioned this incident to Nehru, who did not believe and was quite angry with Anand for mentioning this awkward fact. In many ways this novel resembles Anand's first novel Untouchable, written twenty-five years ago. If the central character of Untouchable was Bakha, it is Bhikhu in The Road. Anand again takes the opportunity to ridicule the caste Hindus and the
greedy priests, who fleeced the illiterate and superstitious people. One finds the women in the novel feeding the sadhus to ward off evil even as Anand's mother had done. The priest Pandit Suraj Moni is not only a glutton but also a lecher, and obviously Anand has in his mind the priests Pandit Jay Ram and Pandit Balakrishnan whom he knew in his childhood days. The opinion of Saros Cowasjee about The Road is that it is a "timid work, and one cannot help suspecting that Anand's concern for the outcastes is somewhat eclipsed by his fear or embarrassment in what he calls the human empire of Jawaharlal Nehru" (163).

Anand's next novel, Death of a Hero, was published in 1963 and after this only fictional autobiographies were published. In this slim volume, running to about a hundred pages, Anand describes the horrors that followed the invasion of Kashmir. Like Anand, the hero of the novel Maqbool Sherwani is an atheist and advocates secularism. Anand wishes to convey through this novel his opinion that the people of Kashmir should be allowed to shape their own destiny. The hero Maqbool Sherwani flees to Srinagar during the Pakistani invasion of Kashmir and the Indian leaders request him to return to his hometown Baramula to oppose the Pakistani invasion. Muslim fanatics shoot him at Baramula and
hang his body on a pole. Anand makes use of the hero to state his opinion that the Pakistani invaders were only gangsters using religion to plunder the people. Of the novel, Saros Cowasjee opines:

**Death of a Hero** is an unimpressive work. Anand in a postscript to the book says that it was first written in 1947 (about the time *Private Life of an Indian Prince* was written), but the carelessness in both planning and style suggests that it was written at the time of *The Road*. And along with *The Road* it does serious damage to Anand's reputation as a novelist. Neither of these works should ever have been published. (165)

Saros Cowasjee feels that Anand tried to accomplish too much in this slim volume. He states that the thoughts that pass through the mind of the hero are clothed in a language that is very imprecise and rhetorical. Saros Cowasjee declares:

Had Anand confined himself to exploring the mind of one man with respect to the invasion of Kashmir, the novel might have been better. But he set
himself the enormous task of bringing out the conflicting viewpoints held by different segments of the people, and this could not be done with any measure of success in a work as short as this one. A large number of characters are introduced, and the debates that occur between them and Maqbool are inconclusive and sketchy. (164-165)

Along with the earlier novels of Anand mention must be made of one book of his which does not exactly come under the category of the novel. At the end of the Second World War, a young editor had asked Anand to write on "What I Believe". Absorbed in writing fiction, Anand found it a difficult proposition. He felt that life could not be reduced to abstract ideas. Anand writes:

So I wrote this autobiographical essay and tried to acknowledge my false starts in life, the losing myself to find myself, and criticized, what seemed to me, the false emphasis of our Hindu Brahminical tradition, recorded some of the influences which exerted themselves on me in the struggle for authenticity. I defined it as my "humanism" and called it an apology for heroism, to seek
forgiveness for any assertiveness which may have gone into my formulations, against the tentative insights shown in my novels and short stories. (Apology Preface)

At the suggestion of Jawaharlal Nehru, this book which is subtitled A Brief Autobiography of Ideas was reprinted again. This book is an invaluable one in the sense that it gives a glimpse of Anand's life and also an insight into his views on many aspects of life. For example, Anand confesses in this book that he did not learn much from his mother about religion. About his mother and religion Anand writes: "Sometimes when we joked about her assortment of idols, my mother said that there was one God behind all Gods and religion; but even her pantheism was vague and untrustworthy" (Apology 30).

So this book is invaluable in the sense that Anand here describes his parents, his childhood days, his college days and finally his life in England. He describes the General Strike of 1926 in England and how it altered some of his views. He reveals how he came about to write the long autobiographical novel and also discusses the functions of a writer. On art and life he remarks:
The form of creative writing, which is the novel came to me much more naturally than any other form, because through this I could live through the experiences of other people and realise what silent passions burst in their hearts, what immediate and ultimate sorrows possess them, where they want to go and how they grapple, in their own ways, with their destinies. I have tried in this sense to express my passionate love for the suffering people, in spite of the misunderstanding and the ridicule of those who are better situated in social life and call my pre-occupation with the outcastes, the disinherited peasants, and the eternally wronged women as a morbid, sentimentalist preoccupation with these "ignorant People". (Apology 197-198)

As this book has been extensively quoted in the following chapters, further discussion is not required here. This is the only book by Anand which is overtly autobiographical and contains many first-person accounts of his intimate personal experiences. It serves as a source book for details of his personal life and has been drawn upon to a large extent in this study.