CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

Among tens and thousands of men who had a great concern for the welfare of the human beings in this century the name William Saroyan shines and shines almost alone like a star. He was an out and out a Fresnowian dramatist born on August 31, 1908 and died in his home town on May 18, 1981 at the age of seventy two. Saroyan who struggled a lot to make both ends meet was not born with silver spoon in his mouth. A high school drop out, Saroyan was largely a self-educated person. He decided at an early age to pursue his career as a writer drawing his experience as an Armenian-American growing up in California. He sold news papers on the streets, delivered telegrams attended school and learned about life.

He wanted passionately to be a writer, became one and achieved world wide recognition for his short stories, novels and plays. Saroyan wrote well-well enough to win a Pulitzer prize for his play The Time of Your Life. It's a fact
that he did not have formal education like many of the American dramatists; yet he proved to be a greater genius than most other dramatists of his time.

In the words of Flamm Jerry

*He had power to hold the readers in large and faithful numbers.*

*He combined the esthetes’ responsiveness to life with the stoic’s resignation to the death which he chose in preference to a mindless pursuit in an insensitive idealized world.*

*(Jerry127)*

Saroyan was mainly concerned with celebrating America. He stood committed to the pure in heart, to the people rather than to an ideology or class. He was undoubtedly an impartial dramatist. He was of the view that it was impossible to support one side or the other when the people were in both sides.

Saroyan felt dismayed to note that there was disorderliness on both ordinary and superior human beings leaving man in art speechless, unwilling to act and incapable of accepting responsibility to himself and society. He held
the firm belief that art and religion would not be able to stop the war anymore than they would be able to stop tomorrow. The most as well as the least we could do was to seek to bring the spirit of man together again.

Few American writers tumbled as dramatically from critical acclaim as did William Saroyan. There were many reasons, not the least of which was his personality. Saroyan’s self centered sometimes his abrasive character became perhaps more important than his writing. William Saroyan was, during the first half of his career, as much a public figure as an artist, and the confusion of those two roles made it easy to ignore his literary accomplishments once his notoriety faded.

Though William Saroyan was a high school drop out, he was for the most a self educated person. His first published works were sketches in The Overland Monthly in 1928 which inspired to seek his fortune in Newyork city.

The year 1934 made a land mark in the career of William Saroyan. It was in this year William Saroyan published The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze and other Stories. It was published by Random House. His first
dramatic work *My heart in the High Lands* which was published in the year 1939 was based on a short story called *Three time Three*.

*The Time of your life* was perhaps the most famous of his works for which he received both Newyork Dramatics' Circle Award and the Pulitzer Prize. In the same year he released the story collection *My Name is Aram* a book of the Month Club Selection.

William Saroyan started his literary career with his collection of short stories. After the publication of *The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze* and other stories in the year 1934, he brought out the second collection which was called *Inhale and Exhale*. It was published in 1936. The other important story collections were *Three Times Three* 'Love, Here is my Hat' and other short 'Romances' 'The Trouble with Tigers', 'Peace it is wonderful' and 'My Name is Aram' 'The Hole' oyal and other stories. As a dramatist *The Hugened*, a short play (1939), it was followed by the *Time of Your Life* (1939) *My Heart Is In The Highlands* (1939), *The Pong Pong Game* (1940).
My Heart is in the Highlands (1941),
The Beautiful People (1941)
Loves old sweet song (1940)
Jim Dandy (1941).
The Time of Your Life (1941)
Across the Board on Tomorrow Morning (1941)
Hello out There (1942)
Get Away old Man (1944)
A Happy Funeral (1944)
Sam Ego's House (1949)
Sweeny in the Trees (1953)
The Cave Dwellers (1958)
The Laughter of the Innocent (1958)
Here comes, There goes you know who (1961)

His important novels were as follows

The Adventures Of Wesley Jackson (1946)
Rock Wagram (1951)
The Laughing Matter (1953)
Mam I Love You (1956)
Papa You ' e Crazy (1957)
Boys And Girls Together(1963)
One Day In The Afternoon Of The World(1964)

Autobiography

The Bicycle Rider in Beverly Hills (1961)
Here Comes There goes you know who (1962)
Not dying (1963)

Fantasy:

Tracy's Tiger (1951)

Reminiscences

Short Drive, Sweet Chariot(1966)

Juvenile

Me(1963)
Besides this he was a contributor to Armenian - American Magazine, Overland Monthly, Saturday Post, and Saturday Review. He wrote lyrics and composed music for several songs.

In the year 1941 Saroyan agreed to work for Lewes M. Mayer in Hollywood. This resulted both in the Oscar winning film *The Human Comedy* as well as the popular novelized version of the original screen play, published by Harcourt Brace simultaneously with the movies opening. *The Human Comedy* was published in the year 1941.

When Saroyan was drafted into the army, he was stationed during part of the second world war in London. In the year 1946, he wrote the most controversial anti-war book *The Adventures Of Wesley Jackson*. Through the 50s he continued to produce plays, short stories and novels.

Saroyan was well known for his untutored, personal, homely and human talent. He arrived on the literary scene at a time of great cynicism; yet the affirmed a kind of nineteenth century faith. Almost immediately he became one of the most discussed writers of the time.
As Howard R. Floam points out

*The passing years have indicated his power to hold readers in large and faithful numbers. In the closeness to folk traditions his characters reflect aspects of our national life that are too little represented in our literature.*

*(Floam 29)*

Saroyan successfully charmed the public; He also provided them with a correlative for some of their most representative emotions. In the whole of San Francisco, Saroyan was the one who exhibited the talent in the most significant way.

His romantic themes included man's innate goodness, the difficulties of immigrants asserting the old world, the immigrants' spiritual uprootedness. He also portrayed in his dramas men's dreams as they were changed by the passage of time and personal isolation as the ultimate tragedy.
Saroyan considered that death was as natural as life. In fact its closeness led him to feel the intensified view of the preciousness of life. In short he was a facile optimist. To him

*Living is an art. It takes a lot re hearing to get to himself*

* (The Time 26)*

Saroyan didn’t pay much attention to talk about the urban people. He had greater inclination to talk about the rural folk. He felt at home while he dealt with small – town environment. It was a setting more congenial to romanticism. There was in him something of a Wordsworthian return to the natural man. Saroyan was very much assertive – as assertive as Lord Byron was in his poems.

Joseph Wood Krutch observed

*Few men ever displayed a completer or more clearly defined set of the stigmata of Romanticism as did William Saroyan*

(Wood Krutch-99)
Saroyan accepted the universe as it existed; he believed in the goodness of the human heart and held the view that God is love. Saroyan had always hatred for the so-called dignified and respectable people. He thought that they exhibited dual views. They were not united in their aims.

Saroyan rejoiced in the variety of the world. To him an individual was an important entity. He was a Keatsian in the sense that he had a firm faith in the dictum that “Beauty is truth.” Above all, he was convinced that the secret of success in both life and art was to let oneself go as completely and as unthinkably as possible.

Saroyan, at the same time, didn’t refrain from dealing with the darker themes also. For example in the plays like “Hello out There” and “The Cave Dwellers” he presented a tragic picture of life. It was his belief that man was ultimately responsible for his own catastrophe. Happiness was but an occasional episode in the drama of pain. Time was simply empty and murderous for him. In utter desperation he said,

All minutes are dead. There is nothing to wait any more.

(The Time 62)
Saroyan had been charged both with carelessness and sentimentality. He had a magical hand. The foul became fair in his hands. One of the strongest of his gifts was his creation of atmosphere. Edmond Wilson points out,

*Saroyan takes to the bar and he creates for you there a world which is the way the world would be if it conformed to the feeling instilled by drinks. In a word he achieves the feat of making and keeping us boozy without the use of alcohol and purely by the action of the art.*

(The Edmond 67)

Because he was defiantly unliterary, it was difficult to trace his literary influences. He bore some similarity to Sherwood Anderson, in his indifference to plot, his overplaying of sincerity and spontaneity, his homely philosophy his preference for outcasts, his contempt for formal education, and his distrust of creeds combined with a nearly mystical reverence for life. At times he sounded like Walt Whitman singing 'a song of my self'. His early
work seemed to imitate. 'Hemingway' in its clipped dialogue and sparse descriptions.

But Saroyan said that he was largely influenced by the ideas of Shaw. Saroyan said,

*I am so innately great that by comparison others who believe they are great or act as if they are great seem to me to be only pathetic, although occasionally charming*  
*(The Adventures –125)*

Saroyan’s short stories deserve a fair mentioning. He wrote at the rate of one short story every day. His short stories received kinder attention than his novels or plays. According to Elizabeth Bowen

*Probably since G.Henry nobody has done more than William Saroyan to endear and stabilize the short story.*  
*(Bowen 18)*
Between 1934 and 1940, he wrote more than 500 stories. He learned to get the history immediately; to fit character, setting and mood to the action; to express with colloquial vigour what his people were capable of saying, and to imply much about what they were able to feel. His style grew lean partly because of the influence of Hemingway and partly because of his own reaction to the criticism that he tended to talk too much. In establishing setting, he began to dispense with description altogether and rely on simple statement.

Ignoring appearances and backgrounds of his characters, he began to do little more than assign names to his people and to start them talking. Because of his mastery of colloquial speech, these sketches often appeared vital and significant. They were at times no more than incomplete exercise in dramatic composition. But at their best, they achieved moments of genuine recognition and at such times the economy of drama became an important virtue of his story form. It should also be noted that many of his stories were based on himself and his family. He claimed that most of the passages in “My name is Aram” were autobiographical.
His plays were fantastical, surrealistic employing incidents rather than plots. It was a sense of pageantry which held most of his plays together. He made a fundamental departure from the views of the traditional dramatists like Ibsen and Shaw who relied more on plots than on incidents. Herbert Gold believed that

*Saroyan might well be called Robinhood fellow among the modern American playwrights.*

(Gold 220)

Although the locale of his plays was far removed from the woodland scene, his puckish humour and abundant good nature in the face of economic depression and the impending doom of war provided the atmosphere of a summer idyll in a San Francisco Lonky-tonk setting.

David Kherdian said,

*Whatever doubts you may have about Saroyan's status as a formal dramatist, you cannot, I think, deny him one of the rightest and most fantastic imaginings in the theater.*

(Kherdian 93)
Despite this rich imagination Saroyan’s plays were not especially successful, perhaps because Saroyan in the end always turned away from the conflict. "The Time of Your life" was his only play to achieve an extended Broadway run.

Saroyan turned to writing novels in the early forties and found scant critical favour. There was apparent mystical vagueness in his novels. Saroyan once said

*Everything I have ever written is allegorical. This came to pass inevitably. One does not choose to write allegorically any more than one chooses to grow black hair on his head. The stories of Armenia, Kurdistan, Georgia, Persia, Arabia, Turkey and Israel are all allegorical and the real are closely related in my mind.*

(Back – 47)

When all is said and done Saroyan never achieved an order of success in the novel equal to that of his short stories. In style, he lacked the necessary
suppleness and range and in temperament he was without the circumspective habits of mind and interest in character for its own sake that were the novelist’s principal stock in trade.

Saroyan had been writing since the age of thirteen prolifically much of the time and he had many pieces which remained unpublished. His main purpose of writing was to earn as much as possible. He himself admitted it frankly. That is why, he treated even the serious themes casually. Many of his works didn’t get as much recognition as they very much deserved.

After the Second World War the California fell with a thud out of critical fashion. Not only were the books be published slammed, but his earlier achievements were ignored or slighted, making him a kind of literary non-person. Even in his native west, his accomplishments were neglected; he was not listed in the annual bibliographies published by Western American Literature, although much of his best writing was set in the West. My Heart is in the Highlands, The Time of your Life, and Hello out There, Saroyan’s three finest plays, employed distinctly western settings and tones, as even
negative critics acknowledged. William Saroyan was very much a writer of his time, of his plays and of his dynamic cultural blend Armenian-American.

Taking into account the meritorious works written by Saroyan we can conclude easily that few twentieth century American authors produced a richer, more diverse body of work than Saroyan. Saroyan straddled the worlds of high and folk culture. He was an artist of unique and powerful gifts, marred by an apparent lack of discipline, but one who moved both regional and ethnic expression to new heights.

Willion Saroyan emerged as a writer during the Depression while America was in the throes of a national loss of faith and questioning of values. Although many critics had trouble accepting his optimistic original stories, readers did not. He was powerfully pro-human. He talked and wrote about the human spirit.

America was far behind the times in the field of drama. As early as in 1915, new thought was no longer so very new. A group of players called Washington Square Players who occupied the stage had no commitment to any
social or political programme. Most prominent dramatists of this group were Lawrence Langer, Edward Goodman and George Gram Cook. None of them was able to become prominent in the field of drama.

After the outbreak of the First World War, Washington Square became non existent. A few years later another group was formed. It was Theatre Guild. The plays performed by this group were esoteric, radical and intellectual in character. The influence of Ibsen and Shaw was in their productions. Maeterlinck Susan Glaspell and Oneill were some of the important dramatists of this group.

The modern American drama was intellectual in character. These dramatists tried to interpret contemporary life as freely, as imaginatively and with as much originality as possible. They tried to create a serious American drama which could take its place as part of American literature.

The theatre had almost become as a medium for serious expression. Dramatists like Synge and Schmitzler began to occupy a pride of place at this time.
The new American theatre was merely a theatre which hoped to find an audience for various kinds of plays, native or foreign, more conventional. Broadway managers were unacceptable to their public. They differed largely from the earlier dramatists. The earlier playwrights were conventional and conservative in their outlook. But the modern playwrights regarded themselves as in some degree iconoclastic—All the dramatists wanted to create a serious American drama which could take its place as part of American literature. Prominent dramatists of this period were Tom Robertson and James A. Hearn.

Sincerity and realism were the hallmarks of these dramatists. The theatre became chiefly a platform for the dissemination of advanced ideas.

These playwrights were most successful on the stage. They were pioneers in so far as they were the first Americans to exploit. The dramatic possibilities of certain aspects of modern life and of modern attitudes, but they were not intellectually pioneers as Isben and Shaw had been. At the same
time we have to admit the fact that the plays of Shaw and Ibsen were meant more to be read than to be acted on.

The period in American drama began in some confusion and ended with a sense of achievement and distinction that the drama in America had never before experienced. The dramatists and the theatre artists reacted enthusiastically to foreign influences. With the upsurge of the theatre movement, America began to build a significant modern drama. Various threads of its own past were happily cut, while others were woven into the skiel of modern drama in ways once thought impossible.

The twenties were a period of happiness and prosperity in the theatre. The sense of freedom and individually which pervaded the decade also characterized the drama. As a sequence of increased emphasis on the the drama in universities and communities, a new group of character dramatists appeared—Sidney Howard, Mabwell Anderson, Philip Barry, Paul Green among others. Their training was generally quite different from that of the dramatists at the turn of the century and the effect was a refreshing variety in theme and form. The experimentation in form particularly expressionism, the range of ideas,
and the quality of the plays distinguished the twenties from past American drama.

The thirties were vital and moving period in the history of American drama and theatre. The range of play themes continued, but a great majority of the plays were generally what might be called social drama. Certainly, they contributed to the dominant social theatre of this decade in a major or a lesser fashion. Different kinds of plays, like social melodramas, and social satires were performed during this period. It was a period of theatre growth and turmoil. It is true that social consciousness dominated; it is also true that an awareness of the spiritual side of life and a questionnaire of man and his values constituted a story interest of the playwrights - Ó'Neill, Anderson, Barry, Thornton Wilder and William Saroyan. Their plays indicated in both craftsmanship and depth of thought that American drama from its early imitation through its growth to a profession and an art had finally reached a position of challenging importance in the world drama.

Saroyan certainly played a vital role in the field of American drama. Born among the American farmers of the Fresno Valley, he saw
people caught in the grip of major forces they little understood. The human spirit was chained by mass production and corporate power. After the First World War, he saw Europe in the throes of a spiritual depression and the United States exhausting lives in an economic depression. He returned to the simple things of life to find understanding. With the farm hands of the vineyards and the patrons of the waterfront bars of San Francisco, he reached for the fundamentally good behind the impersonal mask of social aggregates. The form that he evolved was similar to improvisational music, a developing of themes as they occurred, a creation of words and atmosphere that shadowed plot.

His behaviour like some of his writing, seemed downright unliterary As novelist Herbert Gold wrote following Saroyan’s death.

*He didn't want to be the greatest Armenian American writer in the world. He wanted very boyishly just to knock every ones eyes out with beauty and fun and delight*

(Gold 112).
Small wonder that Saroyan’s work evidenced little social or intellectual pretension. He also refused to be limited. In “Seventy Thousand Assyrians” his protagonist says.

\[ I \text{ am an Armenian. I have no idea of what its like to be an Armenian. I have a faint idea what its like to be alive. That is the only thing that interests me greatly.} \]

(Seventy 47)

That is, while everything he writes is influenced by his Armenian and poor, small-town and western heritage, that influence emerges from within rather than being imposed from without when he tells his truth well enough, it is every one’s.

Saroyan was for the most part unconcerned with established literary forms. Many of his tales were viewed by critics as undisciplined. Saroyan’s response to Eric Bentlay’s complaint about careless writing perhaps sums up his attitude.
One cannot expect an Armenian to be an English man. I cannot resist the temptation to mock any law which is designated to hamper the spirit of man

(Obituaries 153)

Critics of that period, burdened by polemic proletarian positions or still awakening to the power of naturalism did not know how to treat this brash westerner; Nona Balakin asserts,

Saroyan was inevitably misunderstood or belittled

(Balakin 93)

By the beginning of the Second World War, Saroyan estimated that he had written more than five hundred tales. His craft progressed so that not only great talent but considerable skill marked his writing and he began to evidence a profound sense of place in his fiction. In his superb work My name is Aram, Saroyan returned to Fresno and California’s Sam Joaquin valley for both setting and subject. In so doing he produced some major western American literature.
Saroyan arrived on the literary scene at a time of great Cynicism, but he didn’t on any occasion express cynical views in his works. There was a dark cloud looming round the Indian life during the pre-independent days, people were governed by superstitious ideas for the most part. Illiteracy was rampant everywhere. There was little social awareness among the people. Child marriages were popular. Widows were forced to embrace the feet of death on the pyre of their husbands. People like Raja Ram Mohan Roy robustly raised their protest voices against these social evils. Spiritual prophets like Swami Vivekananda stressed the need for disciplined life and intellectual awakening.

Vivekananda stoutly denounced that slovenliness is the curse of life. He gave a clarion call to the youngsters, to arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached.

Similarly the poet Bharathi also stirred a new awakening in the minds of the people. When people were reeling under poverty and they had a crying
need for food and shelter, Bharathi stoutly proclaimed in anger, when there is no food for an individual in this world, we will shatter it into pieces.

Just as the social workers, spiritual prophets and men of letters tried to change the face of India, Saroyan also did the very same job in America. Saroyan’s ideas seemed to hold good at the testing times. He affirmed a kind of nineteenth century faith. When America was emerging from the gloom, anger and dismay of depression, Saroyan tried to eliminate these darker thoughts from the minds of the people. He didn’t at any time try to be a pessimist. He was a gay, exuberant, romantically an individualist. He was so very much convinced that the world was full of beautiful people. He was of the view that life should be a relaxed one breathing in and breathing out.

Saroyan had a strong faith in the theory that one should write by simply letting oneself go as far as possible. It was perhaps responsible for the success of his place. Saroyan accepted the universe as it was and believed in the goodness of the human heart. He rejoiced at the variety of the world and believed in the uniqueness of the individual. He attached a great value to
realism. He was an out and out realistic in his statements. He himself states in

_The WholeVoyald_

_As for my writing ,I think it has been profoundly realistic. I did
not think my writing is sentimental either........

_(The Whole 57)_

Saroyan believed in the values of life. Life was a gift with which every
man was endowed. He must live a meaningful life and make the world better
than it was before. While talking about the value of life, Saroyan in his most
popular play _The Time Of Your Life_ stated that living was a matter of art.

In a conversation between two of the important characters of the drama
Joe and Tom ,Joe advised Tom to pursue the art of living in a meticulous way.
To quote the words of Joe

_Living is an art. It is not book-keeping. It takes a lot of
rehearsing for a man to get to himself._

_(Time 26)_
Joe besides being amiable and adjustable to the complexities of life advised all others including his friends to be as much practical as possible in life. He had come out of depression just then. He was no longer impressed by money alone. Money was the greatest thing in the world. It created a stimulating sensation. He advised everyone to obey to the dictates of Christian conscience and they should not be led astray by a social one.

He wanted to create an atmosphere of kindness and charity everywhere.

Saroyan was very much aware of the complexities of life. He had a great concern for the down trodden and the neglected lot of the society. They were subjected to different kinds of problems all the time in their lives. Happiness was but an occasional for them in the general drama of pain. In the play the *Time Of Your Life* Joe acted as the spokesperson of Saroyan himself.
Out of 24 hours, 23½ hours are dull, dead, boring empty and murderous. Minutes on clock and not time of living. All minutes are dead. There is nothing to wait anymore. (62)

Saroyan came out readily with solutions for solving the problems of life. He advised the people to have a feeling of awareness in life. People should seek goodness in everybody and everywhere and when it was found they must bring it out from its hiding place. He also advocated the cause of free and unashamed life. No man was inferior to another. Sorrows and sufferings might come; But they must be tactful enough to circumvent them cleverly.

While making a comment on the humanistic view of Saroyan Nona Balakim paid encomiums to Saroyan in the following terms.

He is aware of the crisis that America is facing today. An America of big business, of labour strife, of depersonalized government and above all of the imminent war Implicit is the suggestion that if the nation survives, it will do so by
reaffirming certain qualities of its youth and by solving the problems below, through awareness and goodwill on the part of the people

( Balakin 19,20)

To Wiliam Saroyan, the earth was a miracle beyond the range of man's knowledge. Every living man was a simple demonstration of the endlessness of the beautiful marvel of matter in motion.

To become free is the compulsion of our time, free of everything that is useless and false, however deeply established in men's fable.

( Burns 16)
In the play *The Hero Of The World* Saroyan talked about the disorderliness at the world level. It had affected both ordinary and super human beings. The integrity and the faith that was so far maintained by the ordinary man was lost.

In the same way, the faith and the personal force maintained by the super human beings was also lost. The man of art had become speechless. He was quite unwilling to act. He was incapable of accepting responsibility to himself and the society.

Saroyan tried his best to create an atmosphere which was free from the problem of trouble and turmoil. In the play *Sweeny In The Trees* he said that war had started quite inevitably it was their duty to bring it to an end. All of them were disgraced once more and the most that we could was to bring the spirit of the man together. Sweeny the new of the play was a standing proof to exemplify the theory of universal brotherhood. He said that he loved not only his father and mother very much but also loved all the fathers and mothers of the world as well. He had a deep contempt for everything that was rude and contemptible. Sweeny exhorted to his friend Elixa.
"We should be silent for years and do nothing but love one another. By that time may be we shall have something to say."

(Sweeny 173)

Saroyan sought to capture the gay and melancholy flux of the existence to make reality endurable through the play of art. He depicted a fragile world in the throes of apocalyptic transition. In his work World and Theatre Saroyan made a comment about the trend of the world.

"It is an end of an era. It attempts to preserve the memory of a moment in the history; a moment of hopeful time poised precariously at the edge of apocalypse"

(World 128)

Saroyan was out and out a lover of human beings. He was always a friend of the unfriended poor. He advocated the theory of brotherhood and friendliness. He hated the idea of people clashing with each other. He also
hated people being unfriendly to each other. He had a great disregard for the war mongers. According to him they were the harbingers of death. In an informal letter written by him to his friend Hairenik Saroyan gave vent to his feeling the following words. One thing I continuously see in the newspaper is death. I predict that Mussolini, Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin are going to die in the battle field. I further predict that when each of these man dies, he shall stop to breathe and begin to decay. I predict still further that at the very moment when each of these men dies, the world will not know the difference. The sun will rise in the morning and descend in the evening; rivers will go on flowing; the four reasons will come and go as they always have; seeds will grow out of the earth and bring forth their produce; and all the living things will go on living.

Thus Saroyan had great obsession for war. E.E. Cummings quite appropriately put both the feelings Saroyan.

*Saroyan wages the eternal fight of self hood against mobism, the immortal battle of beauty against ugliness*

(Cummings: 367)
Saroyan’s  *The Man and the Writer* was a documentary film released on 13th April 1991 at the William Saroyan Theatre in Fresno, California. It was about Saroyan, the internationally renowned Armenian – American writer, playwright and humanitarian. It was written and directed by Paul Kalinian and produced by his daughter Dr. Susie Kalinian.

The story highlighted Saroyan’s personal life, his works, his message to the world and the undying love and passion he felt both for his native country as an American and the country of his forefathers, as an Armenian.

The film won six international Film Festival Awards including a Gold Award for Best Documentary Film. From 1991 to 2003, the film was shown in 58 cities in 22 countries. More than one million people had seen this film.

Saroyan discussed in detail his cultural heritage and the importance of it for his becoming a prolific writer. He never aspired for the
accumulation of money. He never ran after glory and fame. He ultimately went back to his roots and found his final rest.

The story began in Fresno, California in the early 1900’s. It covered exclusively all the important details of his life till the death of the writer in 1981. The film had a number of Saroyan’s reminiscing about his past.

The film also included the details of Fresno in the past and present. The interview he had with Paul Kalirvian was also filmed. All the six books published during his life time had been included in the film. The music was composed by Paul Wzikion. Saroyan’s voice was copied from various pre-recorded monologues and interviews throughout his life. The film recorded the greatest achievement of Saroyan as writer for over sixty years.

Some of the important excerpts of the film The Man and the Writer are given below. They stand as testimony to the zeal and zest that the writer Saroyan had in his life. While discussing about The time of your Life, he said “Despise evil and ungodliness, but not men of ungodliness or evil”. Saroyan’s unbounded love for human beings is explicit here.
In 1987, during a slide show presentation at the university of Chicago, a person by the name of Thomas A. Kooyumjian approached Kalimian about putting his work on film. Although this had already crossed Kalimian’s mind, Kooyumjian’s enthusiasm to be his first contributor encouraged Kalimian to follow his dream.

Paul and his daughter Dr. Susie Kalimian continued extensive research on William Saroyan and were deeply involved in learning about his character and philosophy towards humanity. As they became more knowledgeable about Saroyan, the Kalimians wanted his life and works on film. They spent more than eight years accumulating the limited resources available for this documentary, creating new materials, restoring old photographs and claiming and editing Saroyan’s voice – recorded by him from 1948 to 1976.
Through much difficulty, some rare film footage of Saroyan's trips and interviews were obtained from Soviet Armenia. Despite numerous obstacles, delays and revisions, the Kalimians finally completed the hour long documentary film in 1991.