CHAPTER II
THE FAREWELL PARTY 
AND 
HEIGHT OF NOON

In this chapter, The Farewell Party and Height of Noon, are taken, to prove that the affirmation of life is seen to expose itself through the autobiographical narration and self-evaluation of the author. In the novel The Farewell Party, the protagonist Prof. Prakasam is shown to the readers as a good academician, distinguished scholar and an astute administrator. The form of stream of consciousness technique takes the reader into the musings of Prof. Prakasam, the main character, on the various episodes of his life as a teacher for over thirty years, during the ninety minutes of time before leaving for the farewell party, on the eve of his retirement. There is a wide range of subtle and sensitive problems in the life of a university teacher, which is brought to the notice of an ordinary group of readers, who are unaware of the happenings in a university.

The novel starts with Prof. Prakasam relaxing on his sofa on the eve of his retirement and passing into retrospection of his thirty year long career as a teacher. He enters the university five years ago. He establishes himself as a good teacher and a sympathetic guide. The university town is situated on the banks of the Krishna.
The village Srikakulam, named after one of the Andra kings is surrounded by green vegetation. The university encourages the pursuit of subjects useful for a living. It also gives an insight into the cultural aspects of life. The students have a very peaceful atmosphere and make a full man out of a student.

Prakasam experiences the problems of life and his inquiry into life is to ask, how God could make man bestial, when he is of the notion that God is based on the three great qualities of beauty, love and justice. Experiences in his life gives him the answer to his inquest, which is that man has both qualities from which he has to choose. He feels that one day the better will surface the evil and man will come to an understanding of life. The concept of caste and creed in a society bothers Prakasam and he feels that even the educated people are foolish enough to be carried away by these thoughts. “Prakasam very often pitied the narrow minded men and women carried away by considerations of caste and creed.”¹ Prakasam in his early days never believes in rebirth. He thinks that the dead are dead and nothing can make them come back. “To Prakasam of the early days, ‘rebirth’ was almost a ridiculous notion. Once a man was dead, he was dead.”² The immortal part of man joins the infinite. He feels that rebirth is “unscientific”, to think.
Later in his life, his vision of life enlarges and makes Prakasam think of rebirth on a new angle. Prakasam wants to understand the destiny of man, asking, if man’s destiny is shaped by heredity and environment, then why is it that one among a family becomes a genius and the other becomes a dunce. He understands, that a man’s past is the enforcing force behind a man’s ups and downs in life. The destiny of man also depends on the past doings of his parents. Understanding this attitude of a man’s life saves Prakasam from bitterness and unhappiness on many occasions.

Prakasam wants to seek an interpretation of life after retirement. The retrospection of Prakasam, brings out the thoughts of life that affirms itself through the protagonist. The Hindu thoughts about his life, death and ‘Karma’ are the thoughts that the professor, after living his life to the full, comes to understand at the end of his life. Rama Sarma, through the character Prakasam, puts out his thoughts about the life of a teacher who wants to live a life of truth.

Prakasam often pulls himself into a shell and he talks with nature to relieve his burden. He always feels satisfied as a teacher because he considers his profession as a noble one that helps his students to flourish in life and understand the truth of life. He cannot think of his profession with any mercenary thoughts. “He loved his
profession. The happiness and the satisfaction he had in teaching made him forget the rebuffs of life. And now on the last day of his service he could look back and feel satisfied. 

Interrupting his thoughts, Mrs. Prakasam enters and she likes to see her husband in his meditative stance. Prakasam always feels happy in his domestic life because his wife is his student. She understands Prakasam thoroughly and respects his intellect. Prakasam has bad moods and during those hours he is very critical in his views. Prakasam is dogmatic and assertive. But Mrs. Prakasam is meek and submissive. He is a dreamer and Mrs. Prakasam is a realist, he a utopian and she a practical minded person. They love each other though their characters vary in many ways.

Here there is an affirmation of the character, to have a very strong mind, a strong professional integrity and scholastic bearing. The professional and scholastic bearing is found in the novelist's life as well. The afternoon of his retirement is immersed in past thoughts. He is away from the present Prakasam waiting for retirement and is immersed in past thoughts, when he was only twenty-four. As a young teacher, he could capture the love of his students, even the backbenchers. He wishes to understand his student's indifference towards him and make them feel at ease with
him. This makes his students like him more, for not treating them as
dunces. For Prakasam, punishment did not prove anything good to
happen. His students feel the approach of Prakasam to be different.
"They were surprised. Such an approach was novel. They were
usually rebuked and punished. It aggravated the malady and they
became more and more mischievous. The teachers often lost
patience and abused them heartily. But Prakasam was different."* 

Here the story shows Prakasam as a man who affirms his
strong mind with scholastic creditability, sets himself as a true
teacher or an ideal teacher with moral values and thoughts. He feels
that man is always good and can be shaped into a good personality,
if the character in him, is picked out by good guidance. This
guidance is found in Pakasam the teacher who has faith in the
goodness of his pupils.

Seeing his wife in front of him, he starts thinking of the days
when he had a wonderful romantic affair with Sarala. She is beautiful
and has the beauty of a young girl of twenty. He encourages her to
speak to him. One day Sarala attempts to give him a card, but it is a
love letter addressed to Prakasam. Since he did not answer her,
she goes to his home and asks him for an answer. He laughs and
gives her a kiss as an answer to her letter. They want to unite as
husband and wife, but since they are of different caste, it takes them
sometime to convince themselves to face the society whatever be the opprobrium. The institution where he works serves him a notice of dismissal.

Sarala and Prakasam join forces to fight social tyranny. Prakasam pores more faith in God and struggles to be indifferent to the temporary set-back in his life. He has faith in himself and waits patiently for something to happen. Prakasam’s belief comes as a solace for him, when he gets a place at Hyderabad, where he moves along with Sarala.

Their thoughts are disturbed by the arrival of the postman with letters from his son Manohar who is in Indian Foreign Service in United Kingdom. There is another letter from their daughter. She is married to an I.A.S. officer and Prakasam loves his daughter more than his sons. She rules over her husband and this disturbs Mrs. Prakasam, for this attitude might spoil her marriage. She also thinks that Prakasam is giving her too much of encouragement:

Prakasam opens another letter, which is from his rival Gupta. He tears the letter of Gupta and feels the same intensity of hatred that he felt years before. That letter pushes him back to thirty years of his summer and winter days. Prakasam believes in the essential dignity of man and also sees the possibility of man becoming divine.
Man has a negative force working within him but it is up to Man to become divine or beastly.

These three letters that start off his thinking, of the past, affirms the innate in man’s growth from a young man who falls in love and suffers caste indifferences, to live a life as a true husband and a revered teacher among the students. The protagonist believes in God’s ways to attain a place in society, if his deeds are good. The feeling of love towards his children and the hatred towards his rival shows that he has all the basic qualities of man (love and hate). The divinity in man and the beast in him are clearly asserted through the living thoughts of Prakasam. Any human, ruminating on his past will touch upon the goodness around him and the evil around him, “he did not condemn vice outright, for he realized that it was a part of man. It was the negative force in him – it was up to him to become divine or beastly.”

Prakasam considers teaching as a noble profession, but even in such a noble profession sins are creeping into it. Some teachers come into this profession by accident and they take this profession as an institution for private tuitions. There is Sastry, a friend of Prakasam, who always thinks in terms of money. Sastry is not a single person in some university or institution, but there are many ‘Sastrys’ in all places of teaching. As a friend, Prakasam sees the
good qualities in Sastry but he cannot accept the attitude of money bargaining in his profession. Another character is Sekhar who teaches Philosophy. For him, self-good was the only goodness and for attaining it he will not shrink from doing anything.

Prakasam sees the faults of examination methods that did not take into account the examinees work done for the whole year. The examinations of today just expect a student to cram in everything and reproduce it in three hours. But this system could produce intellectual giants. There is another character named Ramesam, a scholarly man meant for his genius, whose intellect was only for the elite. He did not have the gift of the gab and thought that speech is meant only for the politicians. Prakasam sympathizes with him and befriends him. Prakasam could befriend people like Ramesam, because human nature could not be ‘faultlessly pure’. He considers it to be hypocritic to think of one self as ‘godhead’ and condemn others as being beastly and inhuman.

To a lover of human nature like Prakasam, these little angularities mean nothing. He can therefore be friendly even with Ramesam. He sincerely believes that it is too much to expect men and women to be faultlessly pure and divinely good. "- - - - One had to live in an imperfect world, with human beings not in any way
perfect. It would be sheer folly, if one were to assume for one self
the godhead and condemn others as being beastly and inhuman\textsuperscript{6}

Prakasam feels happy to think about his past, which is his
spring, summer and winter, while his present days are considered as
his autumnal days, which are dim. His thoughts and thinking are
becoming dim. Man has his spring, summer, winter and his autumn
in his course of life. This slow movement of man's life is all the more
emphasized through Prakasam. Parakasam's thoughts about past
are not the thoughts of his alone and also not of the novelist alone.
It is the thought of millions who on the eve of their retirement acquire
such thoughts of the past. His thoughts are seen as:

\begin{quote}
So he had developed a tendency to live once again the
life of his youth, through his mental pictures. Moreover he
was getting older and less clear in thinking. On that account
also his mind ran fast backwards and the recent happenings
were not as vividly recorded as it as the past ones. - - - - The
past was lovable for it was hectic, romantic and eventful.\textsuperscript{7}
\end{quote}

After three years at Hyderabad, he gets a scholarship to go
abroad and to prosecute his studies at Oxford. His two years at
Oxford gives him a maturity of thought and polishes him into a man
of culture. His views about himself and human nature get changed,
for he has time to think over it. He has already seen something of
life and has extra thinking makes him become a real man of culture.
The novelist’s experience of a foreign land attains extra thinking, and is brought through the thoughts of his protagonist Prakasam. Here, the assimilation of a foreign culture and the broad view of life form its place in the character of Prakasam who is thought by critics as the ‘surrogate’ of the novelist himself. Prakasam has faith in himself and his education to become a better man. This affirmation of his life being a perfect one is seen to overflow in this novel. He “matured into a man, with his views well defined and shaped.” He wants to see himself as a better man, with his extra thinking giving him an added positive outlook of life. The culture of an alien land brings him closer to a wider outlook of different cultures. He is able to assess the goodness in the alien culture for a better view of life. His view of man stretches itself to the western side where life has the same evolution but only has a different culture. This affirms the view of the protagonist to look into a wider angle of his life and gather the best for a fulfilled life style: This is understood, as the novelist gives his protagonist Prakasam, the opportunity to go abroad and bring about a new change in his view of life.

Though Prakasam enjoys his stay at Oxford, the Salt Sathyagraha Movement is launched and Prakasam is divided in his loyalties. His friends at Britain treated him with love and friendliness
and he could not put off their friendship for the cause of political upheavals in his country.

Prakasam has a friend called Margaret, who has many doubts about India and Indians. Their arguments about independence and Prakasam supporting his views on early marriage and social concepts show how much of an Indian he wants to assert himself. Prakasam did not believe in religion but only on God. When Margaret questions him about the different types of Gods and Goddesses, he replies saying that Hindus believe in the freedom of worship. This he says is the catholicity of Hinduism. Even about idolatry, Prakasam gives a good view of how one needs something to concentrate, for worshiping God. He affirms his thoughts about religion by asserting that intellectuals could attain salvation through spiritual enlightenment. He concludes his argument by saying that there are many ways of attaining salvation.

Margaret wants to know if caste system is a part of Hindu religion. Prakasam explains to her that it is a social institution. He very aptly compares India’s caste system to British class system. From the ages past, the Indian caste system gets absorbed into religion. He feels that this is the reason for Hindu religion to lose its essence. Both of them feel that man-made distinctions makes God lose his Supreme identity.
After his return Prakasam joins New College. The principal of that college is disliked by Prakasam because he follows the divide and rule policy. There is one person called Suri, who is given too many powers by the principal. Suri poisons Sundaram against him. Prakasam finds Sundaram to possess a gentleman quality than Suri. Sundaram is friendly, sociable and obliging. Prakasam stands firm to support Sundaram, because Suri and the principal shoulder him off. For supporting Sundaram Prakasam is punished, by not awarding him the post of Professor. The thoughts of his college atmosphere, the various characters seen inside the campus, the politics prevailing among the staff, the flaw in administration, the jealousies, hatred and biased outlook of the educated circle are visualized clearly. Man’s bestial psyche, uncontrolled by the higher thoughts of education, shows a shameful group of educators serving as teachers. The true greatness of teaching and teachers are seen to have lost its dignity by some characters like Suri and the Principal.

The novelist in Rama Sarma gives his feelings an outlet through the character Prakasam who suffers in the group of men who try to suppress his growth. Every detail of the academician Rama Sarma, of his life as a lecturer is seen to naturally weave into his novel without any break. He seems to live the life of Prakasam, the teacher without any doubt at all. Only a true academician can bring out the details with such a flow of his own experiences as a
teacher, a scholar and a true friend of his colleagues. His life gives him enormous themes of feelings to touch and deal with. This provides Rama Sarma with an easy flow of his experience woven into characters of his choice.

Mrs Prakasam comes into Prakasam's room and disturbs his reverie by asking about a girl named Padma. Padma is infatuated towards Prakasam and she later comes to know that Prakasam is already married. She rebukes herself for such thoughts. She becomes friendly with Mrs. Prakasam. Prakasam loves his teaching at the post-graduate level.

Gandhiji calls off the Salt Sathyagraha Movement, but their path to freedom was getting stabilized. Many of his students join the freedom struggle. Prakasam wishes to be one among the fighters, but is not able to do so. He welcomes the struggle for the cause of Harijans. These people are excommunicated from society. The primitive man is more rigid than the modern man. He punishes and throws men out for his disobedience of the laws implemented by him. These men who come out of society are the Harijans who are cut off from normal life. Temples are closed on him. Prakasam is very vehement in his support of the Harijans. The social upheavals and man losing his respectability among his fellowmen are brought
The caste system had outlived its usefulness. There was no point in keeping some human beings out of the normal, social fold. It was pitiful and harrowing for Prakasam to see human beings in object misery. He had a curious explanation for the origin and growth of the Harijans. To him primitive society was more rigid than the modern one in implementing its laws. So these unfortunate persons, cut off from normal life, developed peculiar habits, and from generation to generation there was greater degeneracy.

Prakasam feels happy to see the white caps to be honoured and respected. His student Rao becomes the minister in the Assembly of Madras. His student wants to see Professors like Prakasam, to remain in the academic side, to educate the future younger generations of India. He tells the professor that the Zamindari system will be abolished to make the poor people reach a higher status of life. This outlook shows the futuristic thought of the novelist to keep the teaching groups to remain in teaching, for the betterment of a better future society. This thought of the author shows how he has thought of so many feelings of man, in the past, present and the future. Readers of this novel welcome this futuristic affirmation of life. Indians give a teacher a higher status and this outlook is seen to run along the lines of this novel. Rao's praise about his teacher is a moving statement. He says, "But you are doing a great service to the country in training the youth. I can never
Prakasam's thoughts on the eve of his retirement are full of these faces of the past. This gives him more satisfaction than of thinking of his future. On the whole, Prakasam is a good sailor who steers his ship to perfection during his period of professorship. English teaching is not an ordinary job even though it was the ruling language of that time. Prakasam knows the technique of teaching interestingly and scholarly. A teacher can be serious but through an emotional appeal he can make his teaching lively and human.

The Second World War starts and Prakasam is against the ghastliness, horror and the savagery of war. Civilians have to undergo a lot of sacrifices. The unemployed graduates get an opening due to war. To the unemployed the war is a boon. He feels that even in things rotten there is some goodness. Life is also equally beautiful and wintry in all aspects. During 1942 Salt Sathyagraha Movement, some of his students lose their lives in the struggle. The struggle for freedom becomes a unique struggle with non-violence to become history one day.

Prakasam remembers Seshu, who is a very dear student to him. Seshu commits suicide, when he is not allowed to marry the girl
of his choice. Prakasam thinks about Seshu when he is about to retire from his profession. He also remembers how he made Seshu’s father feel less guilty about his son’s death. He convinces Seshu’s father that Seshu’s deed is only his ‘Karma’ – ‘the magic world for a Hindu’. Seshu’s father is relieved after this explanation and says:

- - “Karma” – the thing we do now the actions we did in the past life, the inherited good or bad from our parents – the sum total of all this is capable of producing results that can never be anticipated by us - - - - Everyone blames me; society calls me a sinner. The same society would have called me a sinner if I had allowed my son to marry that girl of a different caste from ours. How ridiculous the social laws are! How foolish is man’s reasoning. You are the only ones who have not condemned me.”

Life has its own reasoning and this reasoning of life is done by the ‘Karma’ of each individual. These can produce results that can never be anticipated by anyone. Hindu tradition of looking at life is quite different from the western thinking. Life has its own destiny and this outlook of life is very aptly seen in Rama Sarma’s novels. Life given to one is God’s gift and this gift has its own good and evil as the basement of living. Prakasam has more faith in his life and living, rather than in religion.

Prakasam doubts that his life after retirement will become dull and lifeless. This affirms his love towards his profession that has given sustenance to his living. Sarala wants Prakasam to look back at his life and its purpose in this world. She wants Prakasam to do
service to humanity for love and not for money. Past actions are mainly considered selfish and personal. Human nature cannot help being selfish. Prakasam called the service to humanity as 'Nishkama Karma'. Sarala puts forth her guidance to Prakasam by saying:

Our actions in the past have been motivated to a large extent by personal factors and selfish interests, I don't say we have been bad, but human nature being what it is, it can't help being selfish. But by God's grace we have passed through the storm and stress of life creditably. Now we can devote ourselves to the service of others.

In the evolution of man's life he is born innocent, depending on his sustenance from his parents and others. After individual development he lives for himself and his children, where duty to the family stands higher. This is everyman's duty to himself and those dependent on him. In the last stage of man's life, finishing his work at home and for himself, he devotes himself to humanity's sake. This duty to humanity is duty to God. This evolution can be seen to grow within this novel of Rama Sarma. Life in its totality is felt in every line of this novel.

Prakasam enters into reverie again and starts thinking of his visit to England in 1949, two years after Independence. It is springtime in England and this cheered Prakasam. Prakasam takes to visiting many places like West Minister Abbey, Hyde Park,
Piccadilly Circus, Stratford-on-Avon and is thrilled by nature's beauty around him, Prakasam meets Margaret again and she is not changed much. Margaret has suffered in her marriage and seeing her suffer, Prakasam thinks that no marriage system is ever perfect. Margaret too believes in her 'Karma' in the working of her marriage. She feels that happiness or sorrow of man is predestined. After coming back home, Prakasam joins as a professor in a rural university, which is surrounded by peace and nature.

Prakasam believes in the ways of God to be just, though peculiar. He believes in an all pervading godhead and spirit in the universe. By serving humanity one can achieve his mission. He knows that nothing can happen without the grace of God. He loves freedom, but enforces discipline mercilessly on himself and others. He hates being western but loves some aspects of its culture. He thinks of good and evil being inseparable. Even in man one can find saintliness as well as bestiality. God's glory lies in creating good out of evil and beauty out of ugliness. Life is a puzzle, where to try solving the riddles will lead to bafflement. One has to accept life with all its ups and downs. He will understand the totality of life during the rest of his life. Prakasam happily feels that:

\[\text{Now that I retire, I can happily look back and feel satisfied. Life with all its storm and stress, with all its hideousness is lovable. Human beings are essentially good. I can never imagine anything exclusively negative. I don't}\]
think I have understood life in its totality. But I shall try to get at the truth of it. That will be my major work for the rest of my life.  

After a long reverie Prakasam comes back to reality and sees Mohan waiting to take him for the retirement function. He sweetly abandons himself to meditation. Mrs. Prakasam lovingly sees her husband leave the house with Mohan.

After reading through the novel, there is the affirmation of life throbbing in every line and character. The characters stand alive along with the author's writing. D.H. Lawrence in his Why the novel Matters says, "In the novel, the characters can do nothing but 'live', If they on being good, according to pattern, or bad according to pattern, or even volatile, according to pattern, they cease to live and the novel falls dead. A character in a novel has got to live, or it is nothing."  

According to T.S.Eliot in Tradition and Individual Talent we understand the novelist Rama Sarma to store up his 'numberless feelings, phrases, images' for bringing a new form to them. T.S. Eliot propounds it as saying:

What is to be insisted upon is that the poet must develop or procure the consciousness of the past and that he should continue to develop this consciousness throughout his career. What happens is a continual surrender of himself.
The progress of an artist is a continual self – sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality. 

These thoughts prove to assess the novelist Rama Sarma as imbibing every straw of his life into words and character of his making. His thoughts about life, is only his own life, already lived and understood. The tone of affirmation is seen running along with the thoughts of Prakasam the protagonist. This analysis will help analyze the next novel Height of Noon, considered as another semi autobiographical novel.

**Height of Noon** by Rama Sarma resembles **The Farewell Party**, in its theme and narration. An autobiographical element is found to pervade in this work, as in **The Farewell Party**. There is a campus atmosphere within the structure of the novel, showing the growth of an academician, from a simple boy to that of a Vice – Chancellor.

Dr. Anand, the protagonist, who serves as a principal of the university college and also the professor of the department are waiting his retirement. All the people of the university are ready to give him a farewell party. The government sent a message asking Dr. Anand to accept his office as the Vice-Chancellor. He is spell bound by the grace of Almighty and is ready to accept any responsibility. People around him were rejoining to celebrate his
placement as the Vice – Chancellor. He feels that divine providence has a greater role in his developments rather than his individual efforts. Expressing this thought he says:

He talked as though it was God's will He knew it was providential. God's blessing had come to him. He realized once again that divine providence had always played a greater role than his individual effort in life. He felt that the benevolent hand of God made things ready for him. That was his experience throughout his life - - - - - He had a greater role to play in his own country and he was given an opportunity to serve the university for another three years.  

An internal professor being appointed as the Vice – Chancellor is a great event. As a scholar Anand is interested in teaching and research. On 26th evening Anand takes his family to the hills and has a very good darshan at the temple. After his first darshan at the temple, Anand becomes the president of the university. The people at the university feel at ease because Anand has already worked there as the principal for six years. He asked the university people to co-operate with him to create a good place for teaching and research.

Some eminent scholars welcome Anand to visit New York, and they want to honor him for his placement as the Vice – Chancellor. Anand stops at England for he wants to visit Cardiff where he took his Ph.D. Invited by the principal of Cardiff, he explained that he would come again in May to meet some of his
friends. His next visit is to the Open University in London. Anand believes that extension studies will help the common men to come closer to the universities. He is all praise for such innovative programmes. There is a sense of duty of a true teacher in Anand as he is one, who wants education to reach common men. Education in a man’s life will uplift him to a better thinking and the aspirations of the learned will form a better independent country. Life of a man did not stop in acquiring food, clothing and shelter, but went higher in thought and deed. This outlook of a better society is what Anand wants for his country too.

Some residents at New York receive Dr. Anand with warmth. He attends paper – presentations and feels elated to be one among the scholars there. The secretary of the association makes it possible for Dr. Anand to receive a warm ovation. It is a great moment for Anand. He feels that his quiet work is well rewarded. The next day was also given to paper - presentation and he was taken to Dr. Ramesh’s place. The Andra residents association receives him and they give him an enjoyable evening.

Anand returns back to India with the hope of going to Cardiff in May. To his surprise he is elected Fellow of the University College, Cardiff, for being a distinguishing member and an old student of the college. The Principal invites him to Cardiff in June.
When Anand goes to Cardiff, he feels his memory to return back to the day of college life where he played tennis and badminton. He meets his friend John and they have a pleasant talk about old times. John tells Anand about Mary who has lost her life by marrying a man who becomes a total failure in her life. Anand observes about western marriages to Mary, once when they were friends as:

--- Even after all the elaborate process of knowing each other, getting engaged and marrying, there were some old cases of incompatibility temperament and other excesses in behaviour leading to the break up of marriages. So his conviction was that no system was completely satisfying. He was not prepared to condemn any system for each had its advantages as well as disadvantages.16

Mary is inquisitive about Indian caste system and he replies saying that it is, "As bad or as good as your class system. The same barrier holds good in both the cases, ours is based on social customs, and yours is based on economic conditions."17 Anand is happy to see John being friendly with Mary and he hopes that they will get married and live happily. But unfortunately Mary marries another man and her marriage proves a total failure in her life.

On the last day of his stay at Cardiff he attends the Fellows dinner and meets an old friend of his, sitting next to him. His thoughts go back to the days when he struggles to get a place into the university for research (Ph. D). Anand makes arrangements to go to England and on the day of his departure he receives a letter
from England stating him to come after a year. Anand is not able to cancel his trip and did not say anything about the letter to his wife.

Anand is at first shocked to see the bleak weather of England as against the beauty described by the poets. The contrast with the true landscape and imaginary beauty is seen to give Anand a shock. When Anand meets the professor, he looks at Anand with a cold look that is unwelcoming. He is denied Ph.D. stating that he is only 25 years of age, and a fresher. He spent a year at London working and feeling humiliated. At last he gets admission for Ph.D. at Cardiff and this makes him believe more in God. He understands that Man’s effort alone cannot give him success but only divine dispensation counts in a large measure. He accepts his defeat. He feels immense joy when recognized by the university college, as a fellow researcher.

For the first time in his life Anand realized that God’s grace was needed before anything could be achieved. Man’s efforts alone could never give success in life. In the final analysis, he felt, divine dispensation counted in a large measure. This was a new awareness that came to Anand. He accepted his defeat. He was humbled and this was the first stage in the gradational process of his understanding God’s ways.  

Here is where, Anand understands that life is not in the hands of man to shape according to his whim and fancy. The providence of God on Man’s life is understood and a mellowing of spirit within
the protagonist is seen to process in due course. The ego of Anand is seen to get smashed, for till then Anand thinks himself as a superior person, who looks down on people without equal literary status. He understands life's progress that shapes everyone's fate. The flow of water has a power to rush along with a force that is super natural in nature's gift. The affirmation of life, moulding a man's life is felt intensely by Anand.

After his stay at London he flies to America for establishing collaboration with the universities in India. At a dinner given in his honour, he meets an Andra doctor by name Dr. Siva Rao. He is invited to his house and there he meets a lady who is his student. Her name is Latha. She is thrilled to see Dr. Anand who is her professor at the university college. Latha enquires about his wife Lakshmi and they have a happy moment discussing about past memories. Anand after leaving Rao's place, keeps thinking of Latha his student, and how she always had a hero - worship sort of look for him. He knows that she has a soft corner for him. Dr. Anand asserts that, he is always loyal to his wife Lakshmi.

Anand flew over to Washington where he goes to the Smithsonian Institute. There he is happy to come across scientists who are interested in visiting his university in India. Anand's motive
is to do service and service to God. He understands that he will be
rewarded duly for his patient, sincere and faithful work.

Dr. Anand's faith in God gathers momentum through his
experiences in life. The way he achieves his Ph.D. seat, the way he
is selected in the university as the Principal and his wavering mind to
get into administrative work, is proof to the way, his aim in life
pushes him towards the path of goal. Though he tries his level best
to do the things of his liking, his aims in life comes to a fruitful end
only by God's grace, and the time is also according to His will. He
feels the omnipotent power in God to push man's destiny in its
proper setting. Life is for every living being, a road to lead them to a
path where they are destined to go. This path has to be lead only by
God and his grace. This theory is brought out in this novel of ideas.

When Anand is taken into service at Delhi, he is loved as a
man of humanity. He is more of a humanist and takes an immense
pleasure in helping others who suffer or have problems. His view of
man is, "- - -, When you see a good man, thank God that he has
created a good person. When you see someone wicked, feel sorry
for him for after all he is also a part of God's creation." 19

Singh praises him to be Upanishadic but Anand refutes
saying it is only his common sense that makes him say such things
since he has not read Upanishads. A Vice-Chancellor from a South Indian University comes to visit Delhi and gets a chance to meet Dr. Anand. He invites Anand to head the department of the new university where the Vice-Chancellor is working. But unfortunately the opportunity of getting the post is delayed by some politics in the university. Anand has a nostalgic feeling of going back to his village and he wants to settle down in his own state. For the same purpose, after five years he takes his family back to his village for the summer. To his surprise, the university advertises for a Reader post, and Anand applies for it. He attends the interview and did not shrink in front of the interviewers as others did. He has his scholarship and service at Delhi, to uphold his dignity.

Anand gets his appointment order but the terms of pay is much lesser than what he actually gets at Delhi. Anyway he goes back to Delhi to appraise the Principal about his new appointment. The Principal is unwilling to lose Anand, because he has attained a place of a good teacher among students and colleagues. He is considered as a good man. When Anand insists in going, the Principal has no other choice but to allow Anand, with the promise of waiting for his change of mind within a year. Anand wants to find his roots, away from Delhi. After reaching his town, and joining duty, Anand makes a trip to the hills for a darshan of Lord Venkateswara. Anand and his family feel out of place in the small town and quite
frequently he is mistaken to be a foreigner or a person from another state.

After a week's stay, Anand receives a cable from Principal Gupta – stating that they have got a revision of pay. For a reply Anand tells him that he will wait for a year to see how things take shape in the university. It is taxing for Anand to be teaching only the under graduates. He takes the matter to the Vice - Chancellor and asks to relieve him or to do something to upgrade his position for research work. After a few weeks, Anand receives a message stating that his name is included in the University Grants Commission for an assignment to go to the United States of America. His name is sent at the last moment, when the University Grants Commission asks for a fourth name in the previous list of names. He is selected to go to America for a hundred days stay for studying the General Education Programme, Anand is one among the ten selected to go, Anand did not, even for courtesy thank the Vice Chancellor for this chance, but only thanks God Almighty for his trip to America.

Anand changes his views about life, which has its hold with God Almighty. Every step to reach a higher plane in life seems to Anand, to be the doing of providence. Anand has a strong belief that God's shaping of his life is for betterment and God Almighty also
understands his willingness. This affirmed belief of God’s shaping of man’s life is seen to bring Anand happiness and goodness of life.

Anand attends some classes to see the difference of British education system and American system of teaching. Lecturing, in America is informal but in England it is quite formal. Lecturing is a serious exposition of scholarship for one hour. But in America a lecture can turn into a discussion if the students have any doubts. This type of discussion and lecturing method cannot be practiced in the Indian universities. He shares his views with the America scholars and this gives a wider range of understanding from his narrowed specialization. His intellectual horizons are broadened. The American’s informality pleases him. Anand’s view about the Indian system of lecturing and the American system of lecturing, presents to the reader of this novel, the difference in the aptitude in learning and teaching. Students, who can discuss their doubts, will have a wider prospect of thinking and learning. It is understood that the Eastern side of the globe can encounter the Western side, for a vast and wider understanding of the western system of education and learning. Life is the same everywhere and feelings are the same. The Western technology grows faster than the Eastern globe and apart from this angle, life of an Indian has the same joys and sorrow as in the west. An Indian going to the Western globe, will feel strange that even though the Western man has freedom of
thought, he suffers the same, as the man of the East, who has less freedom in his social laws.

The only embarrassing thing for Anand is, the way Indian students avoid coming back to India. The students of India are full of admiration for their American teachers, for their friendly and sociable approach. Anand is of the view that, Indian teachers are also affectionate enough for their way of showering affection is traditional. Anand thinks that a friendly teacher will be taken for granted, to extend favours on a student. So he is of the opinion that Indian students cannot be treated like the students of America. His thoughts are tradition bound and it has a new approach, which yet had to shape itself in Indian scenario. Indian system like the British system is secular and therefore he cannot sympathize with the American based Indian students.

At the end of his stay he is invited along with the other educators to visit Britain again. He feels very happy to visit England again. He wants to meet Mary and some of his friends again. Anand visits Paris and Geneva on his way back to India. On his return he is made a Reader. He becomes busy with the new programs, to be conducted in the university.
The Principal grows jealous of Anand's academic growth and the Vice Chancellor's admiration of Anand. Though Anand is asked to admit students for post-graduation studies, the Principal gives a lot of trouble in course of his work. Anand totally ignores the Principal and the hypocritic way in which he conducts his administration. When the post for Professor is advertised, the Principal starts to support another person who is not qualified for the post.

It is heard that the Vice - Chancellor took more trouble to confirm Dr. Anand in that post. The department and the Principal make it a procedure to give him all the trouble possible. They try to put him off from the post of Professor. An anonymous letter is dropped against him and the Vice - Chancellor put it into the bin to show others that any letter against Anand cannot shake his views about Anand.

When the interview is conducted groups of members are seated for conducting the interview. He is selected as the Professor of the department and this makes many in the department feel ashamed of their behaviour. They have a belief that Anand might start taking revenge on them. But Anand calls all his colleagues and gives them his view of how to accommodate themselves to the new environment in the department.
This part of Anand’s behaviour shows the dignity of a learned man who is magnanimous in his views and thoughts. He has more faith in the goodness of man’s life than the seasonal changes in one’s behaviour. People around Anand have not understood him and have had bad influences around them to spoil one’s growth. Being, magnanimous Anand achieves to change the jealous minded persons turn towards him for friendship and understanding. Jealousy, hatred, biased outlook are all part of man’s growth in his life span. This basic feelings and emotions are brought out to understand life in a better perspective and outlook.

Anand strongly thinks that his growth in life is due to the birth of his second daughter who brought him luck and good will. He compares his daughter to Perdita of Shakespear’s, The Writer’s Tale. "Perdita brought prosperity to a barren land, and his own daughter Padma, he felt, had given peace and prosperity to the family. Anand’s great dream of becoming a Professor was fulfilled." 20

His wife Lakshmi takes the initiative of building a house for the family though Anand is against that thought. He did not wish to settle down in one place. His wife is a lady full of affection and homeliness, where Anand can get solace and peacefulness. She stands beside him in all his problems and happiness and the peace
and harmony inside the family is the main reason for Anand to get through life without any hindrance. She takes the burden off his shoulders and this good woman is the sole being for Anand’s greatness as an individual. Lakshmi takes great pride in explaining to her grand children about their grandfather’s childhood.

Anand as a boy is never interested in studies or in going to school. His father is well respected by the villagers because he is a staunch Gandhian man with a freedom struggle backing him. He is put in prison and this makes the family suffer a lot. But the villagers have great respect for the family and they take it to themselves to help the family during the absence of their leader. Lakshmi narrates about her father – in – law as:

He was generous, and as a Gandhian the spirit of service to the country was upper most in his mind. He was a great influence on the villagers and once or twice a week he used to address them on the Gandhian ideals. Those were days of sacrifice and heroic martyrdom. Men and women, educated as well as uneducated, came under the spell of Gandhi. His simplicity won the hearts of the village folk and they were ready to sacrifice everything for the cause of the country. 21

There is the autobiographical over powering of events through Lakshmi, who brings in the flash back method of narration for her grand children to understand about their grandfather. Dr. Anand’s childhood memories are exactly what Rama Sarma had undergone when he was a child. He feels happy about his father
who sacrificed for the cause of his country. Life for men and women
during freedom struggle was not peaceful or self-centered. Indians
as a whole were involved, heart and soul in getting freedom from an
alien group of people. Their earnest fight, forgetting their happiness
and peacefulness is a wonder till this day for any foreigner who
reads the history of the village folk who fought for a common cause.
There is the flow of the better qualities in men and women during the
freedom struggle period. Their thoughts are heavenly. Life means
sacrifices and living for others.

Anand gets his inspiration for studies, from a friend of his
father who is reading a book on Vivekananda. Gandhi blesses
Anand, when the leader comes to their village. This makes the grand
children of Anand, feel elated about their grandfather's childhood
experiences.

Anand's marriage with Lakshmi is providential. He is sent to
see the bride and immediately he accepts to marry Lakshmi without
getting a dowry. After marriage Anand's egoism takes to lash
Lakshmi, by saying that he has done her a favour by marrying her
without a dowry. He teases her and she bears with him until, when
he takes to speak harsh and ill of her parents. He thinks of himself
to be a great person with higher qualification, who need not bother to
marry a woman with lesser education. Anand in younger days is
very ego centered. "He was very young, imaginative and very intelligent. He was an intellectual not to be classified with the generality of mankind he thought. One might call it intellectual snobbery." 

This is true of the young Anand in this novel. It is the years of experience and life's lessons taught at every stage of his life that mellows down his "intellectual snobbery" Anand wants to do his Ph.D at England. It is Lakshmi who makes him venture into his unknown future and this makes him feel the simplicity and her loyalty towards him. It is at this juncture that Anand comes down from his ethereal plane. She has a steady and pragmatic approach to life.

Lakshmi symbolizes the womanhood of India, always patient and bearing the good and evils of life with unfailing dignity. Even Anand, who has had a better education, seems to have a different outlook of life at every stage. The womanhood of the East (India) is obviously the best when compared to the ever - wavering mind of the western civilization. It is through such loyal love towards the husband, that creates a better man from a snobbish personality.

When Anand is offered the post of Principal of the university he accepts it, even though he has a liking in teaching and research. He has a greater obligation to work for the well being of his country
and men. He offers to take classes in the morning and looks after the administration in the afternoon. Even though he is there only in the afternoon, there is no slackness in his work as an administrator. This Vice-Chancellor has great faith in Anand and this makes Anand act freely with independent thoughts in his office and department. All the students and staff in the office work with him to achieve harmony in his work. He had the tact of bringing any untoward situation to a control. He never makes his students feel enmity towards him. After his term as a Principal he goes back to his department work. This gives him enough time to go away with his family to visit temples in the South.

As his retiring term is approaching Anand plans to go abroad as a visiting Professor. But it is five days before his retirement that he is appointed as Vice-Chancellor of the university. After twenty five years of teaching Anand is seen by the natives as an alien who should not get the opportunity of a Vice-Chancellor. There is a lot of trouble, even to the extent of students going to the governor to explain that he did not belong to the soil. Anand and Lakshmi firmly believe that God will shower His grace, and it is God's wish that he should attain the post of Vice-Chancellor. He takes himself to be an agent of God to do justice to all the needy.
After he becomes the Vice-Chancellor, he is selected for the Meritorious Teacher's Award of that year. This is the second award he receives for good teaching. He is honoured D.Litt (honoris causa) from a neighbouring university. These events bring happiness to its height.

When Anand’s term as the Vice Chancellor is coming to a close his wife Lakshmi falls ill. His wife has cancer in her liver and she is taken to Vellore for treatment and Anand stands by her and takes pleasure in reassuring her. When he comes back to the university on some urgent work, he gets a call from his daughter stating that his wife is no more. Anand is shattered and his belief in God is also shattered. He takes his lose as a providential happening. He hopes that his wife will be with him when he retires from service. Anand is totally crushed by his wife’s death. He thinks that:

*His citadels of hope and his implicit faith in God all crumbled in one moment. So far life had been peaceful, pleasant and satisfying for him, but now he had to face the tragic fate. He could not understand why God should give to man heights of glory and abruptly drop him down unceremoniously. - - - - - - - He was angry with God for he never thought that He would give him such a raw deal and make him miserable for the rest of his life. Like Adam he questioned why God had given him all those good things of life almost unasked for, and then had abandoned him to a life of suffering.*

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Anand is feeling as if he has to drag on the job, for his mind becomes blank and he wants to get away from service. He cannot work because of the hollowness of feeling he feels within himself. Even scholarship in isolation has no appeal in him. He feels empty and after an active episode of administration and scholarships writing criticism and scribbling something gives no meaning in life. His life has reached the height of noon when suddenly his whole edifice crumbles with the death of Lakshmi. He wants to be of use to Mankind but he did not know how he could achieve that. He waits for that moment, with patience and humbleness.

As a whole, this novel depicts the academic life of universities today. It is also an assimilation of the East and the West. It is also a reflection of the author's academic life that is more of an autobiography and it also brings out the analysis of husband and wife relationship. We find in the novel a main thread, which is the devotion to work. Dr. Anand is a 'Karma Yogi' in the truest sense of the term. He does everything with detachment and this detachment in his work is what a Karma Yogi does. Justification of the ways of God to man is one of the striking aspects of this novel. Life is in the hands of God. This novel is a highly realistic novel, which graphically sketches the academic scene in independent India. The aspirations of the professional, jealousies among the teachers, favouritism and nepotism in the appointment of teacher in the universities, the fall of
standards in research in India, all these are discussed at length in this novel.

While discussing about Art, Tolstoy says that, "feelings are the subject matter of Art, --- and they influence our life, it is all important to decide which feelings are beneficial and which are detrimental to mankind." He goes on to express:

The feelings expressed in Art influences our life profoundly. There is therefore an intimate connection between Art and the rest of life. Art is socially, important because it wields this power of propagating feeling. Tolstoy emerges as the champion of humanistic values - - - - a universal work is characterized by brevity, simplicity and sincerity - - - - It rather connotes economy in the use of words and techniques - just what the theme demands and no more. Simplicity rules out cleverness or manipulation for its own sake. It implies a severe concentration on major issues, on the essential implications of a theme, without wandering into blind alleys. Sincerity is the artists spontaneous and undivided loyalty to the conscience of humanity that speaks through him."

The Farewell Party and Height of Noon are based on the author's autobiography and these two novels deal on issues, which are quite same and even may seem repetitive. But Rama Sarma is influenced by life to the very extent of happiness and fulfillment that he takes more interest in discussing his experiences of a lifetime. For him, one novel is not sufficient enough to angle out his views. He needs two protagonists to express his inner musings to the readers of these novels. The simplicity may seem as a shallow
rendering of thoughts, but in fact this simplicity enhances the realistic touch. Though life is complex, man’s utterance of life need not be complex. Rama Sarma is sincere to the core and his understanding of life is a gradual process through which his life can be taken as an example of God’s justification in leading the life of a man.
2. Ibid, P.3
3. Ibid, P.5
4. Ibid, P.9
5. Ibid, P.23
6. Ibid, P.20
7. Ibid, P.31
8. Ibid, P.50
9. Ibid, P.51
10. Ibid, P.65
11. Ibid, P.67
12. Ibid, P.85
16. Ibid, P.18
17. Ibid, P.18
18. Ibid, P.25
19. Ibid, P.39
20. Ibid, P.71
21. Ibid, P.75
22. Ibid, P.87

23. Ibid, P.128


25. Ibid, P.169