CHAPTER - III
If Rama Sarma's personal life forms the bedrock for his novels *The Farewell Party* and *Height of Noon*, his novels *The Stream* and *Look Homeward* have different kind of protagonists and story development. Here we find the novelist to stand away from the characters. His focus is on transformation and realization of man.

*The Stream* has a grand start with Gopalam, the hero of this novel, requesting his wife, Suguna, to enjoy the moonlit night, with all earnestness. Gopalam is married to Suguna, a very simple, but pretty woman in whose beauty Gopalam is totally satisfied. His only wish at that stage of life is to have a wife who has a good complexion and who fits his status as an intellectual. He is disappointed with Suguna's indifference towards nature's beauty. The idealized life he dreams of, is shattered off by Suguna's unpoetic thinking. He has the "soul of a poet". In his youthful days love is a very absorbing passion to him. "Love of the purest type, that was his goal. Platonic love with the entire dream – like unreality appealed to him. He became an ardent advocate of it; little realizing whether it was practicable. In his utopian world anything was possible."1
Gopalan enters into a mood of retrospect, and thinks of his boyhood days, when his father considers him a dunce. But later he is transformed into a man with romantic views. Poets like Keats, Shelley and Wordsworth influenced him. He is a dreamer in his early days. His brilliance in education makes him more rationalistic towards religion. He believes in one supreme force that controls man and his deeds. "He thought he should, one day, evolve for himself a system of theology, based on his own individual belief."^2 Gopalam is too young to bother much about religion.

Gopalam is not entirely a dreamer, like poets, but wants to live a life that is idealistic and romantic. Even getting a dowry from the bride’s side is considered degrading. He is very independent in his thoughts and feels it necessary to bring out these thoughts without bothering about what others think about his deeds. Gopalam wants life to be beautiful and not ugly. Even blackness shocks him, and he hates ugliness in any form or matter. But he did not probe into the metaphysics of beauty.

While choosing his bride, he is very adamant in choosing Suguna, just because her beauty appeals to him. After their marriage, Gopalam is disappointed to know that Suguna can only be a wife, who is too submissive and unromantic in thought or feeling. This is not enough for Gopalam. He wants Suguna to admire him as
an intellect and genius. He cannot tolerate Suguna, showing concern towards her parents, for he is possessive and wanted her whole-hearted attention to be on him. He even goes to the extent of insulting her with abusive words and uncharitable remarks. He feels Suguna to be as cold as ice. The multi personality dimension of Gopalam expects more from his better half, Suguna. He, being an idealist, a poet and a champion of women’s cause, thirsts for more in his wife. “His conception of life as one of idyllic mirth was a little shaken. Here he was linked with a woman who had not many things in life common with him.” Gopalam’s view of life and his ideals about a woman, also transforms because of his disappointment with Suguna. He condemns outright saying,

“What was the use of being chaste, if one were to be as cold as ice? But he did not want all that godliness. He wanted a woman in earthly mode, not in ethereal robes. A woman who had more of the human element, that was what he wanted. --- Suguna was a dutiful wife but not a helpful friend.”

Suguna is not able to cope up with his romantic fervour and speed. She is too simple a wife. Gopalam wants his wife as his equal. His marriage becomes inconvenient and uncomfortable. His sense of freedom cannot tolerate the incompatibility of his marriage. His admiration and concept of beauty to give him a satisfied life, is now on the verge of breaking up Gopalam’s life. Man’s life stream has different stages in its course, and these stages transforms
man's thinking and perspective of his growth in his life. Gopalam is against Indian society and yearns for easy divorce as in countries like America, France and England. He even has an idea of abandoning Suguna, but "the humanist in him revolted against any such idea." There is an urge for escapism in Gopalam who feels that, "Men and women were trying to be decent all the time, though they might be fighting every moment of their lives."  

Gopalam reconciles himself in not depending on any woman in his life and starts to indulge in writing, where he can bring out women characters that can satisfy all his dreams. His dream heroines will listen to him and accept all his views and ideas. Here the character has a psychological depression due to his wife's behaviour. Suguna did not want to rise up to his expectation and this leads the two of them to a disharmony in their thinking and emotions.  

Gopalam is of the idea that he is a perfect man to have a perfect idea of life, which should be taken for granted by Suguna. He cannot tolerate a life that is domesticated and wants to have an exciting way of living, where the wife will pay compliments and worship his intellect. Gopalam is self-centered and he did not want to come down, to understand his wife as a simple Indian wife. He is misleading to think that beauty is the sole glory of a man's life style.
He is able to understand through his experience that beauty is short-lived and its form and image is not enough for life. Life means a deeper understanding through one's experiences and these experiences will transform a man from an immature person to a matured being.

After three months, Gopalam has a very beautiful experience. A student of his meets him and wants Gopalam to teach her. At first he refuses, because he is very reserved with women. Even though he gives a negative answer, he cannot bear to see her face that reflects disappointment.

When Swarna, the student, comes over to his flat, her beauty and radiant looks enhance Gopalam's mind to the brim. He starts classes for her and every time he looks at her, his heart slips into her beauty. Her visits become frequent and Gopalam wants to know of her affection towards him, before he can propose to her. Her endearing looks make Gopalam feel that she is 'leading him in the art of love-making.' After meeting Swarna, he feels life to have a real meaning and slowly he comes out of his shell, which is created after marrying Suguna. Gopalam's life is undergoing another phase, where the silent homely beauty of Suguna is diminished and the glittering beauty of Swarna is appealing to Gopalam. Man's life has its eternal beauty and a temporary transient beauty will fade and
wash away. Youth has a beauty of its own that will lose its suppleness and freshness as time eats up every hour of a man's life. This concept of man's life is yet to be known by Gopalam, who is being drawn to the beauty that glares and blinds his senses.

Gopalam's ambition to go abroad is revived again and he has a zest for life again. He regains his former self, ambitious and enterprising. Starting his life as a young intellectual he stumbles into beauty, that is Suguna and finds that sheer beauty of the flesh alone cannot bring a romantic feel in his life. He gets transformed from the stage of beauty being the sublime and crosses over to love, love that brings him back as a man. The love of Swarna makes him to be his real self that is crushed by an insensitive woman like Suguna.

Swarna loves Gopalam for his learning and sympathizes him for his domestic failure. Feminist movements influence her and she did not care for blind beliefs and conventions. Their love is justified by their craze for unconventionality. Suguna takes Swarna as a good friend and did not feel jealous of her. Gopalam, Suguna and Swarna go to Gopalam's village to attend the marriage of Gopalam's sister and there, Suguna is asked to stay for a few more days. While returning back, the closeness that Gopalam and Swarna enjoy, give them immense pleasure and happiness. The trip from the village changes their lives and makes them come closer.
Gopalam writes a letter of love, expressing his love in full form and wants to know how Swarna feels about it. After reading the letter she too reciprocates his love and allows him to kiss her. Swarna also wants to love him back but is uncertain about their future relationship. When Gopalam assures that he will marry her, she totally surrenders herself to him. He says that he, “found completion, perfection and marital peace. It was no longer necessary for him to create fictitious women for mental satisfaction.”

Gopalam comes to know that Swarna is dependent on a rich family for her education and that they are her well-wishers. But Swarna assures him that they had no influence on her private or personal life, which is her own mental make-up. Gopalam admires her for her strong mental views, like the “emancipated modern woman trying to be rid of the shackles of society. That was the type of woman he wanted and there she was.” As a young woman with freshness of thought and action, Swarna becomes his dream girl of his writings.

Swarna, with all the instinct of a woman, feels sorry for spoiling the life and happiness of Suguna. Gopalam promises to tell her the truth and marry Swarna. After Suguna’s arrival from his hometown, Gopalam puts down his feelings for Swarna. Suguna is
expected to make a row, but as a woman who understands the changes of life, accepts this transformation of her husband and also her transformation of position. She possesses a supreme strength to tell her husband that she wishes to go back to her parents, and also wait patiently for his call. This strength of Suguna shows the strength of Indian women who wait patiently for their men to come back after experiencing enough of their life. Indian culture and its tradition, still show Indian women having their belief strengthened and stabilized in the convention of Hindu marriages.

Gopalam and Swarna enjoy all the ecstasy of life with real poetic enjoyment. Vacation comes and Swarna visits her rich friends, where she meets Murthy who is also a dependent on the rich family. He has an urge to marry Swarna but she refuses to marry him. But Swarna respects him as a brother and well - wisher. Murthy comes to know about Swarna’s infatuation towards Gopalam and wants to crush it off. He talks about Gopalam belonging to another caste and how her infatuation will not gain recognition in society. The awakening about society and caste makes Swarna upset, and makes her think about her deed and its value among her people. Change of place gives Swarna a transformation in thoughts and ideals. Her emancipated mood in Gopalam’s company gets a jolt while in the company of Murthy. This is where we get a view of Swarna’s changing moods, which changes according to her then
present state. She even ignores writing to Gopalam and he is perturbed by her indifference of attitude.

Life is affirmed to man when he gets born into this world, but he is not a free man of thought and deed. He is suppressed and influenced by the society in which he is a part. This society has its hold on man's upliftment and depression. An Indian Society and culture places more value on man and woman relationship that has to be according to laws of morality. Gopalam's attitudinal transformation is seen when he finds his wife showing absolute serenity and acceptance of his deeds. This attitude, he did not expect from a wife, whom he thinks to be too ordinary. "But this silent acquiescence on her part was too much for him. She showed absolute serenity and even nobility. Coming as it did from the woman whom he considered to be not up to his expectations he was baffled and amazed."

Suguna attains a sacred place in his heart as a noble woman who waits for time to transform her husband. Swarna at last arrives and the two of them showered love and promises on each other. Swarna slips a ring on Gopalam's finger and takes that as a promise of their marriage. The moon is their witness. Both of them feel their souls to be related to each other from their previous life. The Hindu belief of rebirth is seen to apply in this place where they think of
themselves as reincarnated lovers from a previous life. Swarna's admiration of Gopalam is seen in these lines, "She admired him with a single devotion and in her he found beauty, love and divinity mingled together."

Gopalam's ambition to pursue his studies abroad urges him more and more. He cannot sustain it and feels that two years will give time for Swarna to finish her course and also by that time he can finish his course. In a way Gopalam feels that true love should be tested by separation. Swarna is against this suggestion thinking that a foreign land might change Gopalam and his love. She is afraid that he might fall in love with beautiful girls in England. After promising Swarna of his true love, she yields and lets him proceed. For both of them separation is like death.

Gopalam wants to uplift his status in society, so as to get a better opportunity in future. This may allow them to live in a place where none bothers them. So Swarna accepts his logic and starts to understand his views better. When man has achieved all the best around him, he starts to look for further attainment, something more beyond. That is what Gopalam is trying then. He is happy to go abroad, with Swarna willing to allow him to go. Swarna has her own womanly fears and moralizes him saying:
never you are tempted. during your stay abroad, you think of me. if you do anything bad, then you consider your Swarna also to be doing bad things here in this country. Your good is her good, your bad is hers. You will be guiding my life and me. You are the source of my moral strength and if you yourself go wrong, then your Swarna is bound to go wrong.

Swarna, puts together both their morality as a unified force, where one's transformation will transform the other also. She puts more weight on Gopalam's morality than on hers and thinks that it is Gopalam who will err not herself. The way she presents her speech, made like a mystic, amazes Gopalam. He feels purified by her talk and her words are imprinted in his heart. It almost resembled like words from a holy book. He even goes to the extent of feeling Swarna as a guiding star in his life.

Gopalam also requests Swarna not to marry anyone else in his absence. She gives all the promises of true love that shall withstand any tempest and promises Gopalam that her future is only with him. She accepts the separation to be the ways of God, the Supreme Being and wants to help Gopalam achieve his aim in life. She is now resolved in fate. She accepts the transformation of man and women relationship, and takes their separation, as a transformation of man from one plane of growth to another plane of growth.
Gopalam goes to say goodbye to his wife and is received with a dignified aloofness. His admiration for his wife increases but he is in no way ready to retrace his steps. He is moving along the force of the stream of his life. He cannot wait to understand the transformation in his wife's inner feelings, which is seen in a different angle, as a noble creature. Gopalam has a very tough time, parting with Swarna. They move together till the day of his departure. Though his heart is torn asunder his ambition is stronger and makes him leave Swarna with all the promises of true love and its validity.

The third phase in Gopalam's life starts and he is in a boat going towards London. He keeps himself away from the company of others for he is quite reserved and is feeling out of place as regarding the civilities of the ultra modern days. Reaching Southampton, he feels the extreme cold of that year. He is wonder-struck by the barrenness of nature and London looks very bleak and dull. He lives in the suburban part of London. His separation makes him feel sick at heart and he cannot bear the thought of Swarna's indifference in communication. He feels that he will go mad if he did not receive any letters from her. He is getting nervous of Swarna's delayed and irregular correspondence. He registers in the London University and is going to classes. But Swarna's advice restrains him from acquainting himself with any of his classmates.
Nature expresses her seasonal transformation, which Gopalam cannot enjoy. It is seen in the following lines:

Gopalam had the opportunity to see the transformation of nature on the onset of spring, where everything that looked barren sprung with a force to beautify nature and this transformation was too vivid and admirable. This sort of a transformation was not seen in India and the beauty that intoxicated his sense had to come to a standstill because his feeling of separation from Swarna made him sad. His romantic passion made him live for her and for none else in the world.

Spring transforms into summer and people are gay and joyful. Everything that is gay and joyful sickens him. His enjoyment of life, nature, friendship and learning are all stagnated by his promises to Swarna, which he takes to his heart. He is literally making a fool of his life. Swarna on the other hand is influenced by Murthy and his moralizing, hinders her from writing to Gopalam.

Gopalam now moves to another part of London, where he finds very sweet and kind landlady. One day as he enters the library he sees a girl looking at him and smiling. He sees a book on Theosophy lying in front of her. She understands that he wants the book and so she is ready to lend him the book. Gopalam feels that she is the prettiest girl he has ever seem in London. She has more of the oriental touch in her pleasing beauty that makes Gopalam feel free towards her.
He connects the Theosophy book with her good looks and thinks that she has some spiritual force in her. He feels the spiritual force within her to link his life that has its source from India, very far away. This life stream that links the girl and Gopalam in their life span is a wonder to Gopalam and the girl. He feels the spiritual force to come as a solace to save him from being collapsed. Their friendship seems as a life giving rope for him to come to the shore of rescue. There is more of affirmation, in ones life either to drown or to surface from problems in life. This affirmation of life is seen to surface from Gopalams transformation of his character, from every little experience he gains from his life.

Joan, his friend is a very pleasing girl and she likes Goapalam in a friendly way. They go out regularly for lunch and he even learnt French from her. Gopalam's land – lady is also very understanding and helpful. Joan liked to ask a lot of questions and she gets an immense pleasure talking to Gopalam about many aspects of life. Her questions about religion give her a new light from Gopalam's ideas about the Supreme force. Gopalam did not think in terms of a personal God. Some unforeseen force controlling the universe is quite satisfactory for him. His conversations with Joan transform his emotional, passionate thoughts to spiritual thoughts and belief. He gets mental relief from Joan's association.
Regular visits of Joan make them come closer in friendship and one day Joan questions about him and his life. She wants to ascertain if platonic love is possible, as he has written about it in his plays. To this Gopalam says that platonic love is possible, with friendship based on mutual admiration. Joan argues that in the prime of youth, such friendship cannot exist. Basic instincts of human beings cannot withstand its test with social relationships like friendship. This doubt of Joan is answered by Gopalam emphasizing that "Physical attraction is not the only link between men and women. There can be good companionship or sometimes the friendship may be based on mutual admiration."  

Joan tries to bring out Gopalam's mental agony but he is afraid to pour out everything about Swarna. She tries to explain to him that life's unpleasant experiences should be taken as part of life's force and to keep going without any stagnation. She explains about her love failure, that in no way has made her stop her mission of pursuing her studies. She has full faith in the controlling force of God, who knows, when to bring oneself into contact with a true partner in life. Joan goes on to say:

Moreover the person, whom we consider to be our proper partner may not be the one chosen by God. We are after all controlled and looked after by that benevolent Lord. For instance our friendship, we come from two different countries and it is only by accident that we have become friendly. But surely we ought to have been related to each
other in our past lives. Perhaps I was an Indian or you were a Britisher. 13

This passage is an insight into one's life, as a consequence of previous life as believed by Hindus. Gopalam is amazed by the way Joan is able to talk about reincarnation. This belief is an Indian belief and to this Gopalam says that he is not bothered about his after death mysteries but more concerned about life at present. "The past is a myth, the future and illusion. As for the present, I know I am lucky in getting you as my friend"14

Joan also feels that their friendship is brought together by some link from their past life which is governed by the Supreme force - God. Gopalam gets the same feeling of force, which governs a man's life in three stages, past, future and the present. The present is more alive and can be understood in terms of feeling emotionally the good and bad that came as waves in one's life.

Joan did not want Gopalam to become a cynic so early in his life. She wants him to reveal all about his love towards Swarna. She feels sympathetic towards Gopalam, like a mother caring for her child. She puts some sense into him by showing how he is ruining his precious life by being too sentimental in his love for Swarna. His fidelity should not bring him harm, and for that he has to bring back his original self, to face the world and the wealth of life. She is trying
very effectively to pull him from drifting away into nothingness. Only with his original self can he become creative. Gopalam feels the influence of Joan rich and intoxicating.

Though his feelings toward Joan as a friend in-need, finds new dimensions, he is always aware that he should not forsake his love for Swarna. He has a doubt about his friendship passing into a new phase called love. That possibility is awaited, even though he does not take any step towards enriching it. "He knew there would come a time when all that innocent friendship between him and Joan might develop into a stronger force like love. He was aware of such a possibility, but he did not want to forsake Swarna." 15

At the other end Swarna is undergoing torture from Murthy, who suspects about her love for Gopalam. He is trying in all untoward ways to separate both of them. His talk hypnotizes Swarna and she gets rattled about her reputation getting marred by society and her friends. Swarna's love is unshaken, but her faith in herself is completely shaken. The presence of Gopalam gives her an immense strength to defy society and the conventionalities governing it. But away from Gopalam she loses all her hopes and the strength to fight back with intensity. Another aspect that shakes her strength is the thought of Suguna's suffering caused by her. The ruined happiness is felt by Swarna to be her doing. Her conscience
pricked her unshaken stability that pushed her like a modern, idealistic woman all those days with Gopalam.

Swarna, in a fit of madness writes to Gopalam telling him that their relationship is over. That letter would have broken him to pieces if it had come some time before, but now with the strength of Joan's friendship and her philosophy of love, love that has no end in itself, makes Gopalam take in Swarna's letter, unshaken and in a philosophic attitude. He pities Swarna for her fickleness of mind.

Gopalam starts to experiment his thoughts of spirituality. Right from the beginning he is in the belief of some supreme spirit. He comes to a conclusion that the universe is being controlled and motivated by the Triple force. He explains his experience of the Triple force and he believes that only this force governs man in his life. Gopalam explains:

"This consists of Beauty, Love and Justice. This is the noble heritage of man. He comes into this world with all these three latent attributes in him. You may call them divine, if you want. Man is first moved by Beauty, things that are beautiful attract him. He, quite arbitrarily, but according to his tastes, calls certain objects beautiful and others ugly."

Man develops a strong liking for certain objects. In this life he is governed by love. Finally he has to surrender himself to justice. Man passes all these stages and attains divinity. Passing through
these stages will make man a perfect one. When Joan asks why this perfection is not seen in criminals, Gopalam answers her that, man may escape the law of justice but he cannot escape the justice in him. The Triple force within a man interacts with one and the other and brings about a reaction that forms the good, bad and the indifferent. Man has an originality that cannot be extinguished but can be clouded. Gopalam’s belief of the Force is based on reason, while Joan’s belief of God is based on belief. “The path from Beauty to Justice with the intervening dynamic force of Love, is the path from sensuousness to spiritual enlightenment.”

Man’s transformation from his belief in this glorious heritage of his, is bound to go up from a state of passionate longing to the annihilation of animal instincts. This belief of reason can be explained even to atheists and skeptics. Joan is feeling real happiness in making Gopalam realize his originality again. He has regained his former spirit. Joan wants to seduce Gopalam in loving her, not the physical aspect but she wants to be loved by an intellectual like Gopalam. One day Gopalam, enticed by her beauty, kisses her. She is elated and feels the kiss to be a passionate kind and not a friendly one. Both of them can stand just at that stage and proceed as friends. Gopalam did not want to become her lover.
There is another night when both Joan and Gopalam meet each other before a party starts. Both of them find each other pleasing but did not intend in any physical love but just a kind of understanding of each other. It is a night of intoxication and Gopalam understands that he is tossed on the stormy waves of life. He was disturbed about that night, but he was feeling as if he is on the "Olympian heights tasting the elixir of life". They both know that physically there is an attraction but they only want companionship and intellectual communion. Gopalam again receives letters from Suguna his wife, but he is struggling with his ego.

Swarna also writes to Gopalam again and this time has asked him to meet her at Madras, where she is having some freedom. When Gopalam arrives he is displeased because Swarna did not receive him at the station and she is not alone, as she had formerly informed. He is yearning to meet her alone and have all the ecstasy of the good old days. But due to his disappointment he immediately leaves to find a better job.

Swarna pleads with him through her letters asking him to forgive her, and he forgives her and is ready to take her back. Swarna is ready to leave her friends but again Murthy, senses her mood, and stops her and makes her accept another man as her
husband. She is pressed into accepting the bridegroom Rao, whom Murthy has thought fit for Swarna. The marriage is fixed.

Swarna asks permission from Murthy and others, to go to Delhi and get all her letters back from Gopalam. Again Gopalam and Swarna meet each other, but it is quite different in the beginning, because she has lost her old fervour of an emancipated woman. As years have passed, Swarna's feelings towards society have changed. She is pulled by the strings of Murthy, who thinks himself as her god-father. She also submissively accepts his views in guiding her life.

When Swarna is with Gopalam she feels the old urge of fighting anything and everything that bothers her. They spend their stay at Delhi with all enjoyment and fun, but Swarna has changed mentally. She has transformed her mental make-up and is scared of the abuses of society. She has lost her sense of freedom and thought, just because she cannot offend others or hurt their feelings. She has forgotten, that in life, she cannot please everyone. She has to choose her life, if she wants to be happy.

Gopalam gives her solace and even tells her that she will be taken as his wife and he is generous enough to forgive her tantrums of emotions that has hurt his feelings and even has tried to kill him.
Swarna promises to come back to him and takes leave of him. Again after separation and by the influence of Murthy, Swarna submits herself to his wishes. She gets married to Rao and promises never to think of Gopalam, but is found by her husband, to have thoughts of Gopalam. He never suspects a pre-marital relationship between them and accepts her for the sake of a heavy dowry. She undergoes immense suffering thinking that God has wished her to suffer for her previous deeds. Her ultimate submission is due to the value she places on her friends and society.

After Swarna's marriage, Gopalam asks Suguna, his wife to join him, and he has no more regrets about Swarna. He knows that justice is at last given to his life by Suguna's arrival. Suguna is more understanding than before and she can tolerate or has the eagerness of understanding her husband's intellect. She can even talk about Swarna and Murthy and this they can do like two spectators witnessing a play and they have crossed the whirlwinds of life and the stream of life flows with a smoothness and the path of the stream is now known to the stream itself.

The Stream is an ever changing and ever continuing flow that gets associated with many currents and cross-currents, that stand for the varied types of associations and relationship of men and women during their short mundane existence. This varied changes
of one's life gets transformed at various stages. Gopalam in the end understands and distinguishes his acquired personality from his own inherited personality. This is seen in Gopalam's thinking of his life as: "The nobler element in me moves me to the more balanced and intellectual understanding of life. I have come out of the storm and stress of the stream, -- for they have chastened and sublimated me. The stream of life now goes on calmly towards the annihilation of animal instincts." 16 The triple force strengthens his belief in the goodness and justness of life. His experiment of this force in his life is truthfully enforced without stagnation and runs along like a stream. There is the same goodness of character transformation forcing Rama Sarma's characters in Look Homeward.

The next novel Look Homeward of Rama Sarma deals with the vital issues of life and society. This novel has a fictional semi-auto biographical mode of narration that has been used in his first novel The Stream. The novel starts with a direct encounter of the protagonist Ravi, meeting Prem, a beautiful student of Denver. Both of them happen to be at Estes Park for a holiday and by chance - meeting they get acquainted with each other. Both of them, being Indian students in a foreign environment, feel happy to share the beauty of the place.
Prem is an arts student specializing in the field of drama and Ravinder (called Ravi) is doing his Ph.D. in Engineering. Both of them are from Andra Pradesh and know Telugu. This unexpected meeting with Prem jolts Ravi into believing about destiny. "He was not a great believer in destiny. He believed in his will power and he thought that he was the master of his own life." 19

Ravi is a man who believes in his will power and thinks of himself as the master of his life. He does not argue about their meeting, and so accepts it on its own flow. Ravi and Prem like each other and respect each other as being refined. They have lunch and are enjoying their talks about normal things in life. They discipline their talks to ordinary matters and hide their inner feelings about their meeting each other, which might seem destiny. While shopping at a curio shop, they understood that American civilization finds its roots from the 'Red Indians' antiquity and historicity. It is "a harmonious blending of the old and the new cultures." 20 Prem and Ravi understand that the Americans are ready to accept newness from all cultures around this world. That is why Americans can speed up faster to reach their goal. Prem feels that Americans are eager to know and acquire. The spirit of the Americans is shown as:

"The Americans would like to try everything. They were great adventurers. They still retain their spirit of curiosity and adventure. So they give a fair deal to everyone. If may be a theosophist from India or a religious preacher from some
other country. They wish to know what exactly is the newness in these concepts. They are not rigid. 21

Ravi and Prem are ready to appreciate the development of the Americans, though young in establishment, can reach a higher status with the organized, broad outlook they have. They enter into personal talks and it highlights their affection towards their parents. Prem loves her father and wants to go back to India after her studies. Her father is a government servant in the ministry of New Delhi. Ravi talks about his village on the bank of River Krishna, and his love for his father is above his love of God. He worships his father, who is a Gandhian in thought and ideals.

Talking about marriages, Prem is ready to leave it to fate and predestination. Ravi is more matter of fact in his choice of his partner saying that marriage can be heaven, if they get the right partner. He goes on to say that his first ambition is in research and after finishing his work, will he like to go into the blessed sphere of marriage. He echoes his sentiments by comparing his partner in life to be a good steersman or he may be tossed in the whirlwind of the stream of life. He is ready to take life as it comes to him, with all its success and failure. The trials and tribulations in life can be faced with faith in oneself and faith in God. Though he believes in God he has more faith in his rationalistic thinking. Like Gopalam in The Stream, Ravi in Look Homeward is against a personal God and is more for their
rationalistic outlook. This is quite an example for *Look Homeward* and *The Stream* to be echoing the author’s outlook of God. The sentiments in these two novels reflect the semi-auto biographical conscience, of the author itself. When Prem asks Ravi to surrender himself to God Almighty she echoes his thoughts by saying that:

> Always the ego in you tells you that you are doing everything and that you are achieving everything through your individual effort. It will be difficult for you to overcome this pride and to accept God’s will in its totality. If you can do it, you are ascending the scale and becoming one with God.  

Ravi goes into retrospection about his father who is a staunch follower of Gandhi. He is Ramesam, who gives up everything in life for the welfare of the people around him. He goes to the extent of selling his ancestral properties for others debts and he is in great debts. His father is everything for Ravi, and he considers his father as his greatest Guru in his life. He believes that the goodness of his father will reward them in future. His Fulbright fellowship for studies is a reward that shows that whatever good done in this world, will have its suitable reward. Ravi’s mother is much more sophisticated in outlook but is a very understanding woman as the wife of Ramesam. The only obstacle for Ravi is that he belongs to a different caste, and that might bring in problems for marrying Prem.

In *The Stream* and *Look Homeward*, we find the author dwelling in thoughts about his father and his Gandhian ideals. He
refers to his father as a freedom fighter and a person with generosity, even to the extent of giving away his wealth to the needy. Even in Height of Noon the same thoughts of his father come in, to remind about the author’s love towards his father and his sacrifices. The inner feelings of the author, about his father and his childhood is evidence enough about Rama Sarma’s autobiography within his novels. His theme is only from his life, that provides him with various themes, feelings and emotions.

While at Denver, Ravi meets Lal a student of India, who is a friend of Prem, but quite an unserious man, who talks in a very unpleasant way to women. His manner of talk quite irritates Ravi and he wants to know where Lal’s friendship stands for Prem. Prem makes it clear to Ravi that Lal is just a co-student of the university, who is doing his management course, and that he is not considered serious by any of the girl students there.

When Ravi had to go away to Manhattan, he expresses his inner most feelings of love and the ecstasy he feels in the presence of Prem. They depart with promises of communicating through letters. Prem starts to keep distance with Lal and Lal understand why Prem has suddenly changed. He understands that her influence is due to Ravi. Ravi goes back to his friends one being Gupta, who is a medical man, having full admiration for American
life. There is Ham, who shortens his name to American style. Sundaram is working as a Research Scholar and there is Ramesh Babu who is doing his Ph.D in Food Technology.

Except Ravi, all his friends are of the view that India means, poverty and squalor. They feel that India is a rich country but is fully corrupted with a political network that needs change and advancement in all the fields. The advancement in America is lacking in India and employment facilities are minimum. Gupta is more concerned in material comforts whereas others feel that research motivation is denied in India. Ham, brings out this view as:

In India very often there is no right place or opening for the type of research work we wish to do. For instance the training we receive here in Food Technology, Aeronautical Engineering or other branches of advanced knowledge has no relevance to the employment opportunities in India. We have to depend mostly on the government. We are kept as pool officers or pensioners or sometimes if we have a good pull we become administrators and all this research work will be a waste, a colossal waste. So we mean staying here even though we too love to be in our country.  

Ravi confides in Gupta about his love towards Prem. Ravi writes to his father asking his consent for the marriage. Ramesam is undergoing financial crisis and in that position he depends on his son to uplift his family. Ravi is wondering why his father, a man of ideals, did not accept a girl from another caste. Ravi can transform his love to a girl who is to be equal to his emotional feelings and
tastes, but his transformation from a man of rustic ideals cannot defy the love and respect he has on his father. He cannot transform himself like his friends who are ready to cut off their roots from India. His Indianness makes him, more of an ideal son to an ideal father. The poverty and ill health of Ramesam transforms his ideals and makes him a man too tame and submissive. He is not able to be as fiery as he was during the freedom struggle. Ravi is in a conflict of rural simplicity, inbred by his father and the love that has entangled him in the ties of love towards Prem. Though rustic in feeling he is transformed into a rationalistic thinker by his education and exposure. Due to this rationalistic thinking he is ready to accept the marriage into a different caste, understanding that every caste has its own genuine belief and heritage. Though his transformation is evident, his love for his father is much too greater and it is this link that depicts him as a man with an Indian heritage.

Before leaving to India, Ravi and Prem meet at San Francisco. They have a very exciting stay for two days visiting old friends and going round places and getting immersed in the beauty of the place. Ravi wants India to become as rich a country as America, one day. Ravi is happy for Prem’s sake, for she is able to return to India, and he decides to return back after finishing his thesis in six months time. He wants to serve his country after finishing his studies in America. He has great faith in his father, and
wonders how a woman in a man's life can make or mar a person. A man's life gets changed after he surrenders himself to a woman of his choice. "It is the woman's creative urge that draws man to her. He may be selfish, yet he surrenders himself to the woman through love and marriage." Though an engineer, Ravi understands what life is, and how to attain the enlightenment of life as he says "On the other hand I believe that unless you go through the mill of physical life, you cannot attain the blissful end." 

By blissful end he means by spiritual enlightenment and for this enlightenment one has to undergo non-involvement in worldly entanglements. "Non-involvement is a gradational process that is attained through involvement." Ravi means that an involvement in worldly matters will give man, the full understanding of life, and only such a person can become enlightened in his life for spiritual purposes. Ravi is happy about Prem, not getting spoilt in an urban background and he himself not being a barbarian in his rustic background. They understand that their traditional values of a cultural family background will make their living a pleasurable one. Prem gives the hope of a happy relationship by ones own mental capacity to make a hell or a heaven out of ones life. When the time comes for Prem's departure, Ravi becomes quite sentimental and uncertain of their future. He gets Prem's promise for waiting till his arrival at India within six months.
Prem left for India and Ravi feels distressed of being away from Prem. But Prem is happy to go back to her father, a lonely man, who has showered all his love for his only daughter. He even has a new outlook towards his daughter after her arrival, and is willing to discuss his views openly to her. Prem is a bit indifferent towards Lal who in her absence, has kept himself in the good books of Prem’s father, Murthy.

Prem did not like Lal’s intrusion in the family, but Murthy has a sort of liking on him. Murthy is given a picture about Ravi, being a reserved person and also a very self-centered person, by Lal. Prem wants to be alone with her father, and Murthy leaves the discretion of selection of her life partner, to his daughter’s wish. He hears a different version of Ravi from Prem. Murthy understands that Prem did not encourage Lal’s visits to their home.

Prem and Ravi have letter correspondence frequently but every time his letters lost the fervent glow of a lover. He is much worried about his father’s reply, which makes him sad to think that his love will not come to fruition. It is a wonder for Prem that her father puts forth, his inner most feelings of life and his treatment of her as his intellectual equal. He always concludes his talks like that of an oracle. His talks are based on his experience with men and matters of life in totality.
Like Rama Sarma's first novel The Stream, here too, there is love that has to undergo the test of time. Since their love is love at first sight, they need their separation to uphold their true feelings for each other. Ravi's indifference in communication gives Lal more promise of moving closer with Murthy's family. Murthy is worried about his daughter getting into a family, where financially they face problems and that she might lose the sophistication of a wealthy background. The intensity of Ravi's love towards his father and the love towards Prem are the two directions in which Ravi is torn apart, but his friend Gupta asks him to feel free and to take a bold step in his marriage proposal.

Gupta, Ravi's friend marries an American girl and he has a bitter experience with the girl. Gupta thinks Rosie as no different from any Indian girl. He has true love on her and his marriage is a beautiful occasion where all the friends have a good time. Gupta feels that love transcended the limitations of colour and creed. Gupta comments as: "Love transcended the limitations of colour. Human nature was the same, the elemental passions of humanity the passionate languages, all were the same, no matter whether one belonged to the white race, brown race or dark race." Gupta goes to the extent of advising his friends to marry foreign girls in order to establish, "--- international relationships and world citizenship."
Ravi has finished his research and is ready to go back to India. He is with Sundaram, the previous day of his departure and talks about the beauty of Indian moon-lit nights, warm climate and sunshine. The transformation of their minds in enjoying the beauty of India, in a foreign land like America shows how nostalgic, Indians felt, though they had bounteous natural beauty in a foreign land. A student like Sundaram has the vigour to transform his humane desires for achieving fame and name in his research. He is willing to give up all his ordinary likes and dislikes in life, for research. Though he loves his country his objective has a stronger hold on him. Ravi talks to Sundaram about this objective being placed in a country like India, where they needed young scientist and intellectuals to uplift and develop its research and industrial centers. Here, there is a cry for the survival of others, living in their homeland. Rama Sarma does not think of a single man’s growth but has given a wider thinking of the life of a country as a whole. Each intellectual has to devote himself only for the good of his country and out for the betterment of a neighbouring country. This outlook of Rama Sarma shows him as a man with a futuristic vision of thinking about his country.

Ravi arrives in a very good mood and seeing Prem and her father, gives him the happiness he thought was lost for sometime. Lal is at the airport with Prem and her father. This disturbs Ravi. But
he stays at Prem’s place and seeing Lal staying till lunch irritates him and he decides to leave for his home town. This upsets Prem, but she wants Ravi to talk to his father about their marriage.

Ravi goes back to his village and enjoys all that he had enjoyed in his early childhood days. He forgets himself amidst the rustic beauty of his village and is also disturbed about his father looking for a suitable bride who will bring in prosperity as well. Ravi tries to put down all the proposals by giving some negative point about each one of them. Ravi did not immediately reply to Prem and wants to give time to his thoughts about accepting his love for her that was under going a test. He is quite jealous of Lal and his influence with Murthy. Ravi writes to Prem, asking her about Lal’s position in the family. That letter of Ravi upset both Prem and her father and they take enough steps to avoid Lal totally.

Ravi goes to Delhi with Ramesh Babu for an interview and Ravi did not want to go to Prem’s house, feeling uneasy about his letter. But it is certain that he cannot live without Prem. By accident, he meets Gupta on the streets of Delhi, and this is a most surprising thing for Ravi. Gupta is the last person, he expects at India. He is stunned to see Gupta’s transformation of ideals and his concept of marriage. He has been jolted by Rosie, his wife and by then he is literally a pauper. He comes back to India and understands that the
two cultures are entirely different and he understands the importance of learned people's involvement in a country like India. This transformation of a man like Gupta is a welcome to India as well as Ravi, who is glad that, it needs a woman like Rosie to transform a westernized person like Gupta to come to his senses. He has witnessed the ugly side of life to understand the most beautiful side of his life at India. Man's temptation leads him to devastation and experience of the bad will make him a man of understanding. Through one's mistakes he realizes his right path. "Life has surprises for us".

Gupta, while talking to Ravi, understands how he is wavering in his mind about his future life with Prem. He takes it as an initiative step to meet Murthy and Prem, the next day itself and make the two souls come together. Gupta succeeds in his mission and the next day, all the three friends meet at Prem's house and have a very cheerful day. Ravi also has the opportunity to disclose about his father's willingness in accepting Prem as his daughter-in-law. This gives Murthy and Prem immense happiness and understanding of Ravi. Prem has immense faith in God and in his ultimate end in bringing together two souls that have true faith in each other. Their faith is like the faith of a husband on his wife and a wife on her husband. While speaking about life it is like, "Man should live in hope, or else he cannot survive. We have to fight the battle of life
boldly. We cannot run away from reality." This boldness has made Ravi and his friends face their life and come to terms with it. Prem has immense faith in Ravi as she waits for him to come back again. "She was prepared to wait for him patiently. That was her faith in him." Gupta has understood every bit of life and he says to Ravi:

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Ravi, life has much to teach us. More than what universities and teachers can tell us. Life can give us precious knowledge. - - - Nothing like life, we come into contact with different people. Our associations are sometimes pleasant and on other occasions unpleasant. The Stream of life can never be smooth with anyone. Life takes us up. We feel we are the monarchs but very soon the scene changes. We lose everything we have gained. - - - We cannot shun the tide. We are on it or we are drowned. It does not matter whether we go up or come down. But we have to get experiences in life.
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This novel explores the complex and vexing problems of India that is to say, the brain - drain sapping the life - blood of a developing country that is struggling to recover from centuries of foreign exploitation. There is a kind of dramatic skill through which intellectual arguments are transformed into a living issue. There is a fusion of the quest and varied elements of the post independent generation. Gupta's emphatic pleading is:

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We now understand that there is nothing so wonderful as the service to our country. Even though we have been politically independent we have not yet developed love for the country, the national spirit. The day we all feel that in our own humble manner we serve the country to the best of our abilities we march towards prosperity. We are not yet free from the shackles of self - interest. We have neither the
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The title *Look Homeward* is a Miltonic expression from *Lycidas*. "Look Homeward, Angel, now and melt with ruth" suggest the acceptance of the reality of the situation. It suggests through the novel that after acquiring knowledge and experience, one has to think of his home country, for development and fulfillment. The three friends who meet at Delhi after their studies at America is suggestive of many Indians who have come back to serve a noble cause, and it shows that their talks are not for them alone, but for the millions of all the Indians who lack the innate urge to sacrifice themselves for the betterment of their country.

Man is considered to be aware of his identity, on which any new experience has its own workings that may lead him into a new awareness of himself. The eternal search of one's identity may be on a personal, national, international and cosmic levels. This may be said to be the transformation from one identity to another and the ultimate realization of oneself with the grace of the Supreme Force - God. "There is a divine dispensation over which we have no control. So we are all the three recapturing the good old days." say Gupta. Ravi philosophizes as, "God's ways are mysterious."
There is another transformation, which personifies every character into another universal being. Ravi and Prem personify themselves as man and woman of the world. Their parents Ramesam and Murthy stand for God, the creator. Man keeps moving along the stream of his life and is pushed from one identity into another, aware that his creator may not know his changing identity. But the creator sees only one identity working within his creation, though many identities are flashed within the creation. They undergo a search for their true identity. Life affirms to man that, the changes in oneself is the true path to identify oneself with the world around them and the Supreme God head who is the master for all the happenings in this world.

Indians going into another country enter as an Indian identity, but the encounter on the other end may polish the person with new identities. The ultimatum of the self will remain in the root without much change, and realization comes as they pass on from their identities to realize their inner identity, that is the self.

Another episode in between the story is that of Gupta and his marriage to an American girl. There seems to be a shift from national identity to identity of civilizations. Coming into this identity may bring about a change into one big community. There is no possible concrete answer to this question of a unified civilization, but
the happy ending of the personal story of Ravi and Prem gives us the implication of Man is Man, whether he is from the West or the East.

Another transformation of identity is of Sundaram, who identifies himself into Space Technology, where his identity cannot be claimed by one country or even mother earth can claim him as her son. He can even attain inter-planetary civilization, where his identity of a home in particular is lost. He is lost into space and eternity. Talking about Sundaram, Ravi says that, "to great thinkers and researchers ordinary pleasures have no meaning." After talking to the youngsters, Murthi realizes that:

- - - - -They were a set of dreamers, utopians. They had to go a long way before they could understand the mysteries of life - - - But then he also realized that if young men and women took it on themselves they could metamorphose the sick social order into something dynamic. They had the energy and the will power.36

The 'Home' signifies Man's own self - all the experiences he feels and the causes of these experiences are due to his de-centering of himself. Finally his de-centered self will identify himself in due course, to attain the spiritual enlightened self. Life is given to every man to nourish his thoughts, feelings and emotions, leading them to a higher state of recognition. Life is not given just for living an unknown life. Each individual should understand the
purpose of living. Providence has its say in a man's growth and development, his rise and fall, his realization that happens in due course of his experiences. The characters in Look Homeward and in The Stream are seen to have different thoughts at different stages in their life. These thoughts attain maturity as the years of experience; teach them to understand life in a much better perspective. In The Twentieth Century Novel, life is formulated as:

Life is not formulated until we apply reason to it, the faculty that has been cultivated for the abstract purposes of thought and the practical aims of conduct. But reason is the last faculty to be developed and applied by ordinary mortals. And it has a way of dissecting the life out of experience.57

Nature, and the beauty of a woman's physical and mental beauty enhance life's beauty. This beauty is found in the lines given by Ravi:

The music we hear, the painting we see, the beautiful scenes of nature, the tall rocks and the streams that flow on them, all these lend charm to life. And woman's love perfects this idyllic vision. The softening touch of a woman, the feminine graces, the soft endearments, make man's life pleasant.58

In The Stream and Look Homeward, women are the force in a man's life for attaining the grace and the disgrace of life. Man is led to his height of manhood by the graceful touch of a woman. She serves as an agent for his spiritual enlightenment, by drinking in the elixir of life.

2. Ibid, P.3

3. Ibid, P.15

4. Ibid, P.15

5. Ibid, P.16

6. Ibid, P.29

7. Ibid, P.32

8. Ibid, P.38

9. Ibid, P.42

10. Ibid, P.47

11. Ibid, P.55

12. Ibid, P.67

13. Ibid, P.70

14. Ibid, P.70

15. Ibid, P.74

16. Ibid, P.81

17. Ibid, P.83

18. Ibid, P.173


20. Ibid, P.6

21. Ibid, P.7

22. Ibid, P.10
23. Ibid, P.23
24. Ibid, P.35
25. Ibid, P.35
26. Ibid, P.35
27. Ibid, P.57
28. Ibid, P.57
29. Ibid, P.76
30. Ibid, P.79
31. Ibid, P.80
32. Ibid, P.92 – 93
33. Ibid, P.92
34. Ibid, P.92
35. Ibid, P.99
36. Ibid, P.99