CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST-PERSON SINGULAR IN ANAND'S NOVELS

Private Life of an Indian Prince (1953)

Of Anand's first-person narratives, only Private Life of an Indian Prince is written from the witness-narrator's point of view, the others are autobiographical novels. Like Marlow, the Conradian narrator, here Dr. Hari Shankar, the personal physician and companion to Maharaja Ashok Kumar of Sham Pur, relates the story of the protagonist in the context of the merger of his state into the Indian Union. On the theme of accession of the princely states to India after her independence in 1947, there have appeared many other novels, viz. Philip Woodruff's The Island of Chamba (1950), Santha Rama Rau's Remember the House (1956), Manohar Malgonkar's The Princes (1963) etc. Of these, The Princes deserves comparison with Private Life of an Indian Prince, both the novels draw on a similar historical material and both employ the same method of narration; the story of The Princes is also told by an 'insider', Abhayraj, the heir-apparent to Hiroji, the Maharajah of Begwad state. Keeping in view the similarities between the two works, Professor Saros Cowasjee observes, "Malgonkar's The Princes has much in common with Anand's Private Life of an Indian Prince, and in the handling of several incidents Malgonkar gives evidence of
having been influenced by Anand."¹

In the "Author's Note" prefixed to Private Life of an Indian Prince, the novelist explains the technical advantages of choosing Dr. Hari Shankar's point of view. The novelist could not have hit upon a more effective point of view than that of Dr. Shankar's. The Maharaja Ashok Kumar alias Victor or Vicky is a neurotic and decadent libertine, so he cannot be entrusted with the task of telling his own tale coherently. In Dr. Shankar's words, he is "a bundle of ill-assorted fantasies and facts whose incongruous collection into one personality made him a strange wild creature."² The novel opens with his escapade with Miss Bunti Russell and closes with his being admitted to an asylum in Poona. He drifts from eccentricity into absurdity and thence to lunacy. To illustrate, in Part I he takes Bunti down the 'Khuds' to the waterfalls for the obvious purpose. After the incident, he refuses to see Colonel Jevons of the Civil Hospital, saying:

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¹ Saros Cowasjee, So Many Freedoms, p. 139.
² Reacting to Saros Cowasjee's statement which had appeared in an article entitled "Anand's Princes and Proletarians" in The Literary Half-Yearly, Vol. 9, No. 2, 1968, G. S. Amur writes: Professor Saros Cowasjee rather overstates his case when he argues that Malgonkar's novel gives the evidence of being influenced by Mulk Raj Anand's Private Life of an Indian Prince. There is, of course, an inevitable similarity in the historical material used by the two novelists but their attitudes to it are totally different from each other. Anand's novel is more of a study in decadence than in disintegration.... Anand's sense of history is as impeccable as Malgonkar's but the novel's obsession with the neurotic fixation of Vicky, an autobiographical spill over as Professor Cowasjee tells us, makes it unbearably repetitive and uninteresting. Unlike Abhay's point of view, with its rich ambivalence, Hari's is singularly unrewarding....

³ Mulk Raj Anand, Private Life of an Indian Prince (Delhi: Hind Pocket Books (P) Ltd., 1972), p. 42.
'Tell him to go to his mother's!' ... 'Who does he think he is? Sala! Monkey-face! Doesn't he realize who I am? Ask him to get out of my house....' 3

Again, in Part II while in conversation with Dr. Hari Shankar, he brags of his own capabilities:

'The trouble is that I am a genius whom nobody understands. But I shall make you understand. I shall make everyone understand! I shall show you the stuff I am made of! I...I...I...!' 4

Finally, after getting his mistress Ganga's paramour, Bool Chand, murdered through his agents in India (while Vicky is in London), he goes mad:

...I feel naked, naked, naked like a murderer!
But I did not murder Bool Chand. I did not do so with my own hands. My hands are clean! I tell you, Hari, they are clean...!' 5

There is no dearth of his hysterical and histrionic outbursts in the book. Obviously, such a hopelessly ill-adjusted personality is unfit to be the narrator of his own tale.

There is still another reason for the author's not using the autobiographical mode of narration in the novel. In that case, he would have been identified with the protagonist and there would have been an overt and blatant accusation that he had transfused his own story into the narrative. Even now, Saros Cowasjee argues in the introduction to this novel that "Vicky might have a slight resemblance to a prince Anand had known, but in him Anand has caricatured some aspects of his own emotional life; one must not

3 Ibid., p.33.
4 Ibid., pp.113-14.
5 Ibid., p.326.
forget the circumstances which induced Anand to write this novel.⁶

An analysis of the genesis of the novel clearly bears out Prof.
Cowasjee’s contention. Anand’s intention to achieve a personal

catharsis through the creation of a hero broken by the destructive
forces of love is disclosed by himself:

I had a six months’ nervous breakdown and recovered
my equi-poise only when the novel rushed out of me in
one month.⁷

Likewise, the external point of view of editorial omniscience has
been rightly avoided because any sympathy shown inadvertently by
the omniscient narrator for the protagonist would have been mis-
interpreted as the author’s sympathy for the lecherous and eccen-
tric prince. Anand’s views expressed in a letter to Saros Cowasjee
also seem to strengthen this doubt:

Actually my knowledge of Indian life at various levels
had always convinced me that I should try to do a
‘comédie humaine’. In this the poor, the lowly and
the untouchables were only one kind of outcasts. The
middle sections and the nabobs and rajahs were also to
be included as a species of untouchables. Unfortu-
ately, there has not been time to show the poor-rich
of our country, who deserve pity more than contempt....

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⁶ "Introduction" to Private Life of an Indian Prince, p.15.

⁷ Author to Critic, p.12.

In 1946, Anand met in Bombay a clever and talented woman, Anil
de Silva, and fell passionately in love with her. It was on
her advice that he started the art magazine Maru. In 1948,
he sought divorce from Kathleen so that he could marry Anil.
But he was shocked to learn from Anil’s letter that she had
decided to marry a Frenchman and was leaving for Paris for
that purpose. Anand rushed to Paris, but failed to dissuade
her. On his return to Bombay, he suffered a nervous breakdown
and was nursed by a Greek dancer called Melpo, who advised him
to write the anguish out of his system. The result was Private
Life of an Indian Prince. Geeta Dasi in the novel has her
origin in Anil and Maharani Indira bears some resemblance to
Kathleen.
As usual, all the characters are taken from real
life and transformed creatively from within an
almost Dostoevskian mood of pity, absolute pity,
for those who love absolutely -- in this case the
prince....8

It is for this reason that M.K. Naik thinks that the novel has
tarnished Anand's image as a champion of the poor:

...the irony in the fact that the champion of the
untouchables, coolies, peasants and the under-
privileged is now preparing to shed tears over an
abnormal Maharaja is rather uncomfortably sharp.9

It may be pointed out that Mr. Naik misses the point that the
narrator in the novel is not the omniscient author, but Dr. Hari
Shankar.

Again, the novel does not project multiple points of view
at length, although through dialogues the reader does get a glimpse
of different viewpoints in so far as these look natural and desir-
able. If multiple points of view had been employed exclusively,
the result would have been a muddle for want of a single focus.
Moreover, it is doubtful whether all the leading characters would
have been able to put forward their viewpoints convincingly and
lucidly.

The novelist was thus left with the alternative of choosing
a narrator from among the characters of the novel, other than the
hero, of course. The prospective witness-narrators could be:

8 Ibid.
(i) Ganga Dasi, His Highness's mistress,

(ii) Indira Devi, the Maharaja's Tikyali Rani (i.e. the third queen), and

(iii) Dr. Hari Shankar, the Maharaja's personal physician and companion.

Other characters like Munshi Mithan Lal -- ex-tutor but now Private Secretary to His Highness, Captain Pratap Singh -- the Prince's A.D.C., Bool Chand -- the Political Secretary to His Highness, Chaudhri Raghbir Singh -- the Commander-in-Chief, Srijut Popatlal J. Shah -- the new Prime Minister of Shampur appointed by the Government of India, June Withers -- the pretty shop-assistant in London department store, are too minor to claim an intimate knowledge of the Prince's private life.

Ganga Dasi, affectionately called Gangi by Vicky, is a nymphomanic harlot: she behaves coquettishly and exploits her physical charms unabashedly. She is even more ill-assorted than Vicky, because "he was comparatively constant while she was absolute promiscuity."\textsuperscript{10} She is both illiterate and unscrupulous, as such, she cannot prove a reliable narrator. Similarly, the Tikyali Rani, Indira, though an educated and well-cultured woman, cannot tell the story of her husband's life authentically, because she is too estranged from him to understand him fully. Temperamentally, both are so unsuited to each other that they can never live under the same roof. Her version, therefore, cannot but be

\textsuperscript{10} Private Life of an Indian Prince, p.42.
biased against the Maharaja who had completely neglected her.

The novelist's choice of Dr. Hari Shankar as a narrator is judicious; he is the only character who is competent enough to give an objective, authentic and interesting account of the Maharaja's private life, because he is not only the latter's personal physician but also his close associate, confidant and counsellor. He is so well acquainted with Vicky's psyche and milieu that he understands him more than any other character does. Above all, he enjoys the confidence of the Maharaja and is apprised of all his affairs, including those concerning his relations with Gungi. As a doctor, Hari Shankar understands and describes authentically his master's neurosis. Addressing Ganga Dasi in Part II, Dr. Shankar asserts: "As His Highness's doctor, I know what he really feels." Like a psychiatrist, he considers his patient's case "an important case history for my files." When he pushes the thermometer into his mouth, he knows that the real malady of his patient is psychological, not physical. He analyses the latter's eccentric behaviour and traces its origin to his faulty upbringing:

...the shameless schooling through which his childhood in his father's zenana, and his boyhood and youth in the hands of the Angrezi Sarkar, had put him. For he had learnt all the filth that his retinue of servants in the palace could teach him, and been spoiled by his doting mother, always anxious to save his life against the homicidal fury of his father's concubines... All his scandalous

11 Ibid., p.103.
12 Ibid., p.118.
behaviour, therefore, was due to the incongruity of the various strains in him that were trying to unite and become one person, but only made him a kind of montage man, a pathetic creature, a spoilt child. 13

Dr. Hari Shankar occupies an ideal position from which he can assess all other characters objectively. He knows that Ganga Dasi is a harlot and Victor a libidinous hound and that he (Victor) would have her with him at any price. Dr. Shankar thoroughly understands the relations between them:

Inspite of the fact that he felt no security in Gangi, he found in her general amiability and charm, consolations such as he could not get from the company of his chaste, rather too proper wife.... In the aura of the atmosphere that prevailed between them through the long-drawn miseries of days, the nights were relieved by the high-powered love-making...having touched the ultimate limits of sex which held them both prisoners of each other.... 14

Dr. Shankar describes Ganga Dasi as a nymphomaniac, schizoid or split personality. He tells the reader that she was at once a sadist who wanted to torment Vicky and be tormented by him. She had an insatiable urge for sex, that was why she changed her lovers one after another. The cause of her abnormality is traced to the discord between her parents; her cruel father suspected his wife of infidelity and used to beat her often:

Perhaps there lay the trouble. Since every man had been a kind of cruel father to her, she loved and hated men in an ambivalence which resulted in the woman's amazonian revenge against men.15

13 Ibid., pp. 42-3.
14 Ibid., pp. 82-3.
15 Ibid., p. 139.
He assumes the role of an impartial observer to view the triangle involving Vicky, Indira and Gangi. Having understood each of the three characters individually, he pronounces his verdict before Vicky:

"...your desires, which are the root of your troubles, are elemental. And Indira, too, is strong, because she has faced up to her own loneliness and conquered her fears enough to defy you. The only misfit is the Queen Bee. She is not only helpless, but powerful and destructive. And there is no limit to her desires, even as there is no limit to her ignorance."\(^16\)

He thus stands for reason and sanity. He is said to be "the rational side of the author analysing the irrational side as seen in Vicky."\(^17\)

Again, he is in touch with all the developments that take place in Vicky's life — right from his attempt to rape Bunti till his admittance to an asylum in Poona. He describes every episode dramatically like a Poe narrator. For instance, when he informs Vicky that Gangi is carrying on with Popatlal J. Shah, Vicky is shocked and begins to shriek. Dr. Shankar reports the scene verbatim:

'Ooh, what are you saying?' shrieked Victor
'Do you mean...?'

'Yes, I think she is having an affair with Popatlal J. Shah,' I said.

'God!' Victor said, beating the temples of his head with his palms, 'Oo, my God...!' And he began to weep like a child, his cries flying past any words I could speak to soothe him, till I had to close the doors to prevent the reverberations of his shrieks from penetrating into the thick night.\(^18\)

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16 Ibid., pp.136–37.
17 "Introduction", Private Life of an Indian Prince, p.15.
18 Ibid., p.140.
Likewise, he is an eye-witness to Victor's humiliation at
Sardar Patel's hands when the Sardar summons the Prince to sign
the Instrument of Accession. There is a first-hand account of
the scene:

'Deewan Popatlal Shah did bring your message,
Sardar Patel,' Victor ventured.

'And you ignored it!' the Sardar snapped. And
he looked at Victor hard, and turning round,
swept us all with a glance that seemed to say:
'Fools, anti-social knaves, how dared you help
this princeling to defy my orders!'

'Sir, I want to...say...that...' Victor began,
but could not go on.19

Similarly, the Vicky-June affair is narrated by him dramatically.
While in London, Vicky plans the seduction of an attractive shop-
assistant, Miss June Withers, and carries out his designs skilful-
ly. He woos her by telling her his tale of woe. He appeals to her
sense of pity in order to beguile her into his trap. Dr. Shankar's
viewpoint is effective in presenting the scene without any
distortion:

'I have lost my throne,' he said. 'But that
wouldn't have mattered. Only, only the woman whom
I loved also left me.'

June's compassion hovered in the air before her
in this critical moment. From the blossoming of
her face she seemed to be drawn to him. His
sorrow had apparently revealed that he could
also love and was not merely a seducer....20

Victor thus provides the drama and Shankar presents it analyti-
cally, objectively and authentically.

19 Ibid., p. 237.
20 Ibid., p. 308.
Despite the author's claim that the narrator is not to be mistaken for him, many critics like Saros Cowasjee, H.M. Williams and S.C. Harrex believe that Dr. Shankar is his spokesman in the novel. It is noteworthy that many of Dr. Shankar's opinions in the novel can be easily attributed to the author. For instance, the downfall of the Maharaja is viewed by Dr. Shankar as if it were described by the author himself:

It was not extraordinary that his personal debacle with Ganga Devi had coincided with his dethronement from the Sham Pur gaddi, and his virtual extermination from the state. So that what had happened was not a calamity overtaking an unfortunate individual, but the concentration of all the social 'fates' in a Greek tragedy, which were bearing down on him relentlessly and might crush him, but which, given an enlightened will, he could have fought or could even now fight.

At times, Dr. Shankar echoes Anand's views as expressed by the latter in *Apology for Heroism* which is subtitled: A Brief Autobiography of Ideas. To illustrate, the universe is defined by Dr. Shankar in the same way as by Dr. Anand, as a kind of 'Lila' or sport, with manifold manifestations of the One Absolute, all

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21 (a) "...there is as much of Anand in Dr. Shankar as in the Prince for Dr. Shankar is the rational side of the author analysing the irrational side as seen in Vicky."
--- Saros Cowasjee, "Introduction", *Private Life of an Indian Prince*, p.15.

(b) "In spite of the author's assertion of an objective outlook in his Note, we suspect that Dr. Shankar's views are at least partially Anand's own."

(c) "...Anand is not entirely justified in claiming in the 'Author's Note' that he has 'reverted to the Indian tradition of anonymity' in his use of the narrator."

22 *Private Life of an Indian Prince*, pp.286-87.
striving to attain absorption in the Absolute. Again, like the author, Dr. Shankar also has a comprehensive outlook on life:

'...the whole man cannot admit of the stupid dualism between "spirit" and "matter".' 23

In Apology for Heroism also, Anand dismisses a crude distinction between a materialistic West and a spiritual East and pleads for "a new synthesis of values." 24 Anand, nevertheless, admits in a letter to Saroj Cowasjee: "If there is any alliance between myself and a character, it is with the narrator." 25

On the whole, Dr. Shankar's point of view in Private Life of an Indian Prince succeeds in focussing the reader's attention on all the salient features of the Maharaja's 'inside story'. In the introduction to the novel, Saroj Cowasjee praises it highly:

Private Life of an Indian Prince has something to offer to every kind of reader. The historian will be fascinated by the intriguing relationship between the Prince and his subjects and the new Government of India; the moralist will find confirmation of his faith in Vicky's destruction; the romanticist will find consolation in the Prince's ultimate love for Gange and his sacrifice; the realist will point at the futility of knowledge which is not backed by a will to act; the psychologist will either agree with Dr. Shankar's analysis or take up issue with him. But it will most please the committed reader who is also an artist.... 26

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOVELS

Out of the proposed seven volumes of Anand's confessional novel Seven Ages of Man, the first three that have appeared so far are: Seven Summers (1951), Morning Face (1968) and Confession of

23 Ibid., p.344.
26 "Introduction", Private Life of an Indian Prince, p.17.
a Lover (1976): the fourth in the series, Bubble, is under publication. Here, the "I" of the narrator stands for the fictional hero, Krishan Chander, who looks back upon his bygone days in a retrospective mood. A discerning reader can find out many similarities between the protagonist and the author. It is because the source of these, as well as of many other novels and short stories of Anand's, is a one-thousand-page confession written by him at the instance of Irene. who had given him a copy of Rousseau's Confessions to read in 1925. An extract from his diary of those days enables the reader to understand his autobiographical novels in the right perspective:

In the confessional novel I am writing, I may go via memory lanes, through the everchanging selves, towards myself and transform myself into a self.

Anand, however, resents the labelling of these novels as autobiographies:

They are not autobiographies. They are autobiographical novels. I protest, as did Tolstoy, about Childhood, Boyhood and Youth, when the reviewers called the book autobiography; the distinction is really important.

Krishan Chander is, indeed, the fictionalised version of Anand, and the narrator is the mature protagonist who recreates his past through successive stages—childhood, boyhood, youth etc. This view is endorsed by the novelist himself:

27 Mulk Raj Anand, Conversations in Bloomsbury, p. 60.
28 Author to Critic, p. 101.
I adopted Krishan Chander as the name of the fictional hero of my autobiographical novel, because a new Krishna seemed to be called for. And the "I" of the narrator had to be distinguished from the character Krishan Chander, who is also me, to a large extent.29

_Seven Summers_ (1951)

Anand's first autobiographical novel, _Seven Summers_, subtitled: The Story of an Indian Childhood, is modelled after Tolstoy's _Childhood_ (1852); both the novels describe the life of a child from within -- from the child's point of view. _Seven Summers_ deals with the first seven years of the hero-narrator's "half unconscious and half conscious childhood"30 and not the first seven years since his birth. It covers the period 1908-1914, i.e. from the time when Krishan is about three -- standing with thumb in his mouth and wondering where the road comes from and where it goes — till the outbreak of the First World War. The book is made up of two parts: 'The Road' and 'The River'; the first symbolizes the journey of life and describes the protagonist's experiences in the cantonment of Mian Mir, while the second suggests the flow of life and recounts the child's adventures and misadventures in the cantonment of Nowshera. Concomitantly, the novel also hints at the social, cultural and political conditions of the country through his consciousness.

As in _The Big Heart_, the opening chapter of _Seven Summers_ is also written in the present tense while the remaining chapters

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are rendered in the past tense. The reasons for using present tense in the first chapter are:

(i) the child's curiosity and playfulness is universal,
(ii) the road, like Tennyson's "The Brook": 'For men may come and men may go,/ But I go on for ever', is a symbol of eternity, and
(iii) the road divides the sepoys' barracks and the sahibs' bungalows, implying that there is a difference between the ways of life led by the soldiers and the officers.

In the remaining chapters, however, the narrator dwells on his past experiences.

Krishan Chander traces his growth into a sensitive child through a gradual development of his senses of perception -- touch, taste, smell, sight and hearing. To illustrate, in the beginning, his father's moustache is to him the whole of his father; he is more fascinated by the bushy growth of hair on his mouth than by anything else about him. Then he describes him as "slightly less than middle-aged about this time, also of middle height, and dressed in wide baggy cotton pyjama trousers, a white cotton shirt...". 31 Next, when he is beaten by his father for stealing a mango from the basket which had arrived as a gift from some sepoy and later, for daring to defy his order to call the barber before his (Krishan's) going to school, he resents his father's authoritarian attitude:

31 Ibid., p. 66.
...the violent thrashing which I received then made me hate him for ever on one side of my nature and largely transformed me into the uncompromising rebel that I became...there sprang perhaps from this ridiculous incident the lava of violence in me which sizzled like an active volcano during my boyhood, till my whole life became a series of constant eruptions. 32

Here, the use of first-person singular is effective in analysing the cause of his smouldering rage.

Likewise, he describes his own growing consciousness authentically. For instance, he has the knack of comparing women with one another on the basis of different smells supposed to be emanating from them:

...And I felt that neither the milk and sugar of my mother, nor the curds of aunt Aqdi, nor even the sweet burnt grass of "little mother" Gurdevi, could surpass the mixed smell of Motia and Molsari flowers which was my aunt Devaki. 33

Again, the autobiographical mode of narration is appropriate for effectively depicting Krishan as a Freudian child. Like Lord Krishna, the legendary hero who liked playing with the 'gopis' and after whom the child Krishan is named, he is fond of the company of females, usually older than himself. He relates at length the sensual thrills he derives from them: he enjoys being picked by his aunt Aqdi; he is comforted by the feel of his 'little mother' Gurdevi's haunches; he goes into raptures over being pressed by his favourite aunt, Devaki, to her bosom — "hard as two mangoes were her breasts" 34 —; and he speaks of his physical desire arou...
when he is picked up in Rukmani's arms or when he sits in Durgi's lap. Referring to his sensuality awakened by Rukmani, the twelve-year-old daughter of Dr. Balmukand, he remarks:

'It was curious that I should have become conscious of physical desire so early, but, as I clung to her neck and felt the pressure of her budding breasts, as I rested my cheek against her cheek and felt the touch of her long hands, I became suddenly aware of a strange and wild rapture such as I had faintly felt in being fondled by my aunt Aqqi and Devaki.'

The first-person singular is suitable for delineating the child's felt-experiences, for it successfully portrays him as a keen observer. This is evident from many episodes in the novel, viz. the death of his younger brother, Prithvi; the juggler's show he witnesses; his visits to an exhibition and a zoo; his first day at school; his attending the Delhi Durbar of 1911; his being assaulted by the deaf Captain Cunningham for following him, rather doggedly; his sustaining a head injury during a melee following a Kabadi match he was watching, and consequently, his five months' serious illness; his visit to his maternal grandparents' village, Deska, to attend his eldest uncle's forthcoming marriage; and his impressions of the stir caused by the outbreak of the World War.

The narration of each episode is vivid and impressive because the first-hand account is invariably accompanied by his own reflections. For example, during his visit to the zoo, he is fascinated by the spectacle of monkeys' delousing each other and, seeing them, he is

35 Ibid., pp.183-84.
reminded of the sweeper women sitting in the same stance and delousing each other in the followers' lines. Again, of his visit to the Delhi Durbar of 1911, held to mark the occasion of the Coronation of King George V and his consort, Queen Mary, as the Emperor and Empress of Hindustan, he remembers terrors of one kind or another. His father, Babu Ram Chand — a head clerk of the rank of Havildar in the 38th Dogras of the Indian army — takes him to Delhi by putting him in charge of an orderly in the servants' carriage "for fear so flagrant a breach of army discipline as an Indian child travelling in the same train as a 'Jarnel' might be discovered." ^36 On reaching Delhi, he is left to the care of Babu Haveli Ram, because "my father thought that I might become conspicuous and the Sahibs might tell him off for bringing so discordant an element into so gorgeous a ceremony." ^37 Here, he casts aspersions upon his father's servility.

Again, as regards Anand's attack against untouchability, Krishan's own experiences highlight the evil authentically. To illustrate, in Part I (Chapter X), he howls on swallowing the small thorns of the cactus fruit given to him by Ali. Bakha, the sweeper boy — and probably the replica of the hero of Untouchable —, comes to the child's rescue but has his scruples about picking him up because he, being a sweeper, is conscious of his 'low' position and knows that he will get into trouble if he handles the child and 'pollutes' him. Later, however, in Part II (Chapter V), Krishan

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36 Ibid., p.111.
37 Ibid., p.112.
is wounded in the head with a stone that accidentally hits him while he is witnessing a Kabadi match, and Bakha carries him home in his arms. Krshan's mother, notwithstanding her son's serious condition, curses the sweeper boy for having polluted her son. In this very chapter, the narrator pays a rich compliment to the poor and acknowledges the debt of gratitude he owes them:

How much kinder and more prodigal in their generosity were these humble, poor sepoys, workmen and untouchables than my own parents, who regarded themselves as their superiors and always forbade me to touch anything belonging to them! Certainly I learnt a great deal of what I know from these people, the gift for making things, of telling a tale as well as making tea, and all my manhood was built up on the experiences of these irrelevant moments spent in truancy. 38

Likewise, the narrator is critical of the education imparted in Indian schools where teachers follow the maxim: 'Spare the rod and spoil the child'. Describing his first visit to the primary school at Nowshera, Krshan contemplates the other boys' suffering at the hands of the cruel master, Din Gul, in its possible relation to himself:

38 Ibid., pp.169-70. 
Anand himself expresses similar sentiments in the "Preface" to the 1951 Indian edition of Two Leaves and a Bud:

All these heroes, as the other men and women who had emerged in my novels and short stories, were dear to me, because they were the reflections of the real people I had known during my childhood and youth. And I was only repaying the debt of gratitude I owed them for much of the inspiration they had given me to mature into manhood, when I began to interpret their lives in my writing. They were not mere phantoms.... They were flesh of my flesh and blood of my blood, and obsessed me in the way in which certain human beings obsess an artist's soul. And I was doing no more than what a writer does when he seeks to interpret the truth from the realities of his life.
A sudden terror gripped me as I stood in the tense silence of the room watching the boys, being beaten. It was Ali's turn to be flogged next...39

The orthodox religion, as practised by his mother, also comes under sharp criticism by the narrator. He observes that during his serious illness in the wake of the head injury he had received, his mother prayed to the gods of each religion for his recovery and yielded to all kinds of superstitious beliefs in charms, tricks and magical potions which are encouraged by the priestcraft in India:

With the implicit credulity of a woman who was half demented by her anxiety, my mother not only threw mutton to the eagles, but gave oil touched by my hand to the mendicants, food to the beggars and charities to the temples, and vowed a pilgrimage to Haridwar on the Ganges. No miracle seems to have healed me but surgery. My wound mended in the course of five months...40

It is the magic of internal point of view that lends interest, authenticity and verisimilitude to the whole account and enables the novelist to communicate his themes artistically to the reader.

It is noteworthy that questions play an important role in the child Krishan's mental development. No doubt, every child is inquisitive by nature, yet Krishan's curiosity seems exceptional. He asks his parents all sorts of questions, some of which defy logical answers, while others are even embarrassing to them. For instance, when he asks his mother where she found him, she answers

39 Ibid., pp.97-8.
40 Ibid., p.181.
"You were in my soul, my darling, hidden like a secret. You were in my body like a pearl in a mother of pearl. You were my inmost desire... So I prayed to God to give you to me. And God being a very kind person made you for me and put you in a little alcove in our house at Peshawar..." "Who made God, mother?" I asked. "I don't know, child, but your nurse knows," mother said casually, smiling but rather impatient now. 41

Similarly, in his eagerness to know everything, he asks his father:

"Father, why are there so many things in the world? Who made the world? And why is it not possible to know everything?" 42

On the whole, Anand follows in this novel the Wordsworthian technique of recollection and psychological appraisal to convey the child's romantic wonder at the world around him. The use of first-person singular makes the narrative lively. The naturalness and intensity of Krishan's feelings expressed alongside various episodes, enables the reader to understand the narrator's upbringing in right perspective. The first volume of Seven Ages of Man thus paves the way for the subsequent ones. Except for a few direct commentaries on childhood made at a few places in this volume, it is written from the child's point of view. Such comments as "Childhood, oh childhood! How easy it is for one to yield to the slightest happiness and the merest breath of sorrow in one's childhood!" 43 or "...childhood is not altogether the

41 Ibid., p. 58.
42 Ibid., p. 164.
43 Ibid., p. 34.
happy, golden time sentimentalists make it out to be as a compensa-
tion for the rigours of the grown-up world... but break the illusion
that the viewpoint is that of a child's and, therefore, make the
novel read at times like a book on Child Psychology.

Morning Face (1968)

Anand's second autobiographical novel, Morning Face, describes the hero-narrator's experiences as a boy against the
background of India's freedom struggle during the crucial years
1914-1919, i.e. from the beginning of the First World War to the
Jallianwala Bagh massacre and its aftermath. It does not,
however, imply that "the value of the book is to be sought not
much in its imaginative intensity as in its accuracy as a docu-
mentary novel", as misconstrued by C.Paul Verghese in his review
of the novel. The author was constrained to complain to the
editor of the Quest in which the review had appeared:

... There would be no need to write such a long
novel merely to retell the history of the Indian
national struggles, because it has been told quite
well by Jawaharlal Nehru in his Autobiography.

The aim of my novel was quite different. It was to
try and show the somewhat jerky, fantastic and irre-
regular growth of a young boy from innocence to expe-
rience, and, within the experience, to illuminations,
which may symbolically indicate the growth of a tree
from the roots of the famine-stricken cracked Indian
earth. The development of Being to possible Becoming
does involve a journey through historical time. Morning
Face is one stage of the pilgrim's progress of an
individual....

44 Ibid., p. 29.
C.Paul Verghese, Essays on Indian Writing in English (New
46 Anand's letter to the Editor of the Quest, dated Feb. 12, 1970,
Ibid., p. 39.
Morning Face is, indeed, a visionary novel in which Krishan Chander traces his growth — physical as well as mental — by relating episodes of pleasure-pain belonging to the difficult period of boyhood.

The book is divided into three parts: 'City of Dreadful Nights', 'The Prison' and 'The Regiment'; each part deals with the boy Krishan’s experiences in Amritsar, Ludhiana and Jhelum respectively. His home town of Amritsar, the 'Ocean of Nectar', turns out to be the 'City of Dreadful Dreams', because here Krishan witnesses family quarrels over property, the commotion among the elders of his coppersmith brotherhood about the question of leaving the Aga Khani sect, the death of his nine-year-old-cousin, Kaushalya, and ignorant and orthodox women’s belief in superstitions, charms and ghosts. In Part II, he describes his harrowing experiences in Ludhiana where his eldest brother, Harish, is an Assistant Jailor. At home, he is tormented by his nagging, illiterate and childless sister-in-law, Draupadi, and, at school, he is harassed by his sadistic teacher, Master Buds Singh. So, his stay in his brother’s house on the premises of Ludhiana District Jail is no less than the term in a prison. In Part III, he recounts his days after leaving Ludhiana to live with his parents in Jhelum cantonment. The war is over but the national scene is charged with tension; the Jallianwallah Bagh tragedy adds fuel to the fire. At Amritsar, where Krishan’s family has moved to for a few days to celebrate Ganesh’s marriage, the boy Krishan inadvertently breaks
the curfew and is detained in the lock-up for a night. He is given seven stripes of cane as punishment before his panicky mother secures his release. Again, at Jhelum, he comes under the influence of Dr. Chuni Lal and Kedar Nath who instil patriotic fervour into his mind. He takes part in a procession arranged in honour of Lalla Lajpat Rai, the great freedom-fighter, and is consequently expelled from school. Through his father's efforts and through the good offices of Captain O'Sullivan, an Irish officer of his father's regiment, he, along with the other expelled students, is reinstated.

The novelist follows "the introvert-extrovert method", as practised by Tagore and Tolstoy, to allow "rhythmic patterns to emerge from the inner consciousness of the unheroic hero"; the narrator turns inwards to reveal his inmost thoughts and feelings, and he turns outwards to describe what goes on around him. The use of first-person singular lends intensity, authenticity and verisimilitude to the narrative. Krishan, though small-sized and nicknamed 'Choohia' at school, gives a detailed account of his physical growth. He describes his growing sensuality and onset of puberty convincingly. As before, he is drawn to females, because "I was to find solace for the isolation, forced on me among the boys of my age by my inflated ego, in the warm glow of women, wherever I could seek out one to be my beloved." He feels more

47 Ibid.
48 Morning Face, p. 37.
comfortable in their company; he has in him the yearning to sit with them, talk to them and be fondled by them. For instance, he is enamoured of his beautiful aunt, Devaki, notwithstanding the slanders about her loose morals. On the arrival of the family in Amritsar (in the very opening chapter of the novel), he is received affectionately by her; he is drugged with the happiness of her embrace and clings to her, not even allowing her to put him down and pick up Shiv. Again, his love for Mumtaz, his eldest brother's mistress at Ludhiana, is intense and genuine. One night, he follows his brother stealthily to her place. She is all affection for Krishan; she lulls him to sleep next to her and he clings to her all night, bathed in the otto of roses:

That night I registered the half-conscious desire, that, when I got bigger, since Harish could not marry her, I would forget all the prohibitions against her status as a prostitute and surrender myself heart and soul to the gaiety of her spirit and wed her....

Similarly, he passionately describes his calf-love for Helen, the dark but comely daughter of the bandsman Jimmy. The narrative, being a first-hand account, impresses the reader:

... I was almost blind with my urges. I wanted to hold her, just to cling to her....

From the suppressed amorousness inside me, I dared to whisper hoarsely:

'Be my marigold flower, Helen?'

'If you be my God, Krishan!' She said, playing on my name.

All my impulses seem to fly to the skies with the happiness of her acceptance, like birds scurrying out of joy....

49 Ibid., p.288.
50 Ibid., pp.554-55.
It is Krishan's point of view that makes the description vivid and thus highlights his ever-growing sensuality. Likewise, he faithfully records his thoughts when he finds his 'pyjamas' soaked for the first time. He fails to understand the cause of the happening and thinks that he is stricken with a sudden illness. When he takes his aunt Devaki into his confidence, she laughs away his fears and consoles him, saying that there is nothing to worry about and that it is simply a sign of his becoming an adult.

The method of recreating the past is equally effective in depicting his mental development. First, he protests to his mother against her calling him 'Bully', because he is no longer a child. Then, he fancies that he has grown up, because he has begun to speculate on all kinds of things, to compare one thought with another, and hence to criticize. He starts pondering over varied subjects like death, God, religion, education, untouchability, love, marriage, poetry and freedom. To illustrate, his cousin Kaushalya's untimely death moves him deeply. Earlier, in Seven Summers, he had witnessed his little brother Prithvi's death and had simply compared death to sleep but, in Morning Face, his reflections on Kaushalya's passing away go deeper:

Only, I wondered why my beautiful world of happiness had been so suddenly destroyed. What was this death which had changed everything? What was this creeping, uncanny, frightening spirit which stole up and took my Kaushalya away? What was death? And what was the meaning of life?51

51 Ibid., p.89.
The tragedy proves a turning point in Krishan's life. Again, on hearing the sad news of his uncle Partap's death, he meditates upon the enigmatic nature of death:

And I was overcome by the uncertainty of life again, as after Kaushalya's death, of how a man could be breathing this moment, and then be dead the next moment. And yet death had not come to me when I wanted it. Death was a strange thing. Inexplicable. Sudden. And terrible,...”

The above statement, though a platitude, sounds impressive, because it is based on his personal experience.

Further, the autobiographical mode of narration enables Krishan to portray himself as a sensitive and rebellious lad. For instance, his unkind feelings towards his father, sown in his heart at a fairly young age, now take deeper roots. He dislikes his father for the latter's servility to the white sharks and for his guile in exploiting Devaki's widowhood by compelling her to adopt Ganesh (Krishan's elder brother) as her son. Krishan's father is always afraid of losing his job and 'izzat' because of his son's alleged anti-government activities. He takes him to task for mixing with the so-called seditionists and ruining his school career. The boy harbours hatred for the callous British rulers as well as for his indifferent father:

...I began to have the apprehension of General Dyer as the demon-king Ravana, only red-faced, with a donkey's head on top ordering soldiers to shoot. And I wondered why father could not even hear that sound if he could not quite imagine the sudden sound of bullets hitting human bodies."
He wishes that the Court Martial inquiry into the Garwali-Revolt episode had resulted in his father's dismissal so that he (Krishan) might be free to think, say and do what he liked. He is deeply influenced by the patriotism of his political mentors — the Dutt Brothers at Amritsar, Dr. Chuni Lal and Kedar Nath at Jhelum, Master Hari Har in Kangra and, above all, his own mother at home. As the freedom movement gathers momentum after the Jallianwallah Bagh tragedy, Krishan's urge for participation in the struggle also increases. He, with the help of his companions, scales the compound wall of the school to join the procession taken out in Jhelum to accord a hearty welcome to Lalla Lajpat Rai. Consequently, he and his companions are rusticated from school (they are, however, taken back after a few days). His cowardly father beats him for bringing him a bad name; nevertheless, his brave mother consoles him:

'Your impulse of defiance comes from the good in you, son', mother consoled me. 'That I know —.'
'Then who is right?' I asked, 'Father or me?' 54

He thus portrays himself as a rebel, determined to become "a supreme rebel, voice of suppressed men's smouldering fires, walker of rough paths, harbinger of strange visions, of unseen freedoms, not a mere babbler, but bursting into a million actions so that words become deeds..." 55

In this volume, the narrator also traces his initial attempt at creative writing. Inspired by the life-story of his beloved

54 Ibid., p.542.
55 Ibid., p.571.
aunt, Devaki, he contemplates writing a novel "like one of the volumes of George W.M. Reynold's "Mysteries of the Court of London" around the figure of Devaki, to make the object of my love shine through my book, create an imaginary character of her, as also of Mahant Nandgir, the evil man and rival of Ananta, into whose lover's heart I would put feelings like my own."56 Likewise, he composes poems to give vent to his pent-up feelings. Captain Terence O'Sullivan, who gets him and other expelled students reinstated, admires his poems. Himself a lover of freedom and poetry, the Captain exhorts Krishan to pursue his interests and he lends him books to promote his reading habit. The following two verse lines inspired by the boy's infatuation for Helen, are a case in point:

'O Helen, will you be my marigold flower?
If you will be Krishan, my God...'57

There are many similarities between the protagonist and the author. For example, like Krishan, the author writes about his own cousin Kaushalya's death in an article, entitled: "Why I write?"

My first real essay was a letter to God Almighty, asking Him why He had caused the death of my little cousin Kaushalya, at the age of nine, by inflicting on her the dread disease of lungs, when she had not done anything bad. I put the letter in the hands of the priest of the temple. But God did not answer my protest. So I have tended to regard Him, since then, as the enemy of mankind.58

Similarly, in his book "Apology for Heroism", Anand refers to "the eleven stripes on my back at Amritsar,"59 for accidentally breaking

57 Ibid., p. 570.
the curfew. Though the number of stripes given to Krishan in the novel is seven, and not eleven, the close resemblance between the real and fictitious incidents cannot be ruled out.

The book, nevertheless, is not an autobiography; it is an autobiographical novel, as Anand protested to C. Paul Verghese against the latter's review which had appeared under the caption 'Self-Portrait'. 60 Morning Face, like any other autobiographical novel, is a combination of fact and fantasy. It is episodic in structure and the use of the narrator's "I" lends unity to the different strands of the narrative. The significance of the first person singular point of view in this novel is evident from Krishan Chander's following remark made with reference to his ambition of writing a novel on Devaki:

If I could persist with this plan, the "I" which so much troubled me, would turn into something else, another personality who would understand others and thus become superior like God who created people. 61

Confession of a Lover (1976)

Anand's third autobiographical novel, Confession of a Lover deals, among other things, with the hero's sexual urges and exploration as a young man. The narrator, Krishan Chander, having recounted his childhood and boyhood experiences in Seven Summers and Morning Face respectively, now proceeds to recreate his college days in order to trace his growth from adolescence to youth. All his

C. Paul Verghese, Essays on Indian Writing in English, p. 36.
61 Morning Face, p. 401.
previous inchoate characteristics — his inordinate inquisitiveness, his insatiable quest for knowledge, his precocious sensuality, his rebellious temperament and his poetic talent — blossom out in this work. Krishan Chander now assumes the pseudonym 'Azad' (meaning: free). The novel begins with his cycling towards Khalsa College, Amritsar to seek admission to the first year class, and closes with his taking a train to Bombay — en route to England for higher studies — after getting a first class Bachelor of Arts degree with Honours in Philosophy. In between, he recounts his experiences in education, love, poetry, journalism, and freedom struggle etc.

The narration of various episodes is interspersed with the protagonist’s self-observations which enable the reader to identify himself with the hero and follow his career enthusiastically. For instance, Krishan Chander Azad ruminates over the happenings of his first day at college and analyses his feelings in relation to his beloved aunt, Devaki, with whom he is staying at Amritsar to pursue his college studies:

Once I was alone, I was the neutral witness of the I, who had been made a first year fool this morning, of the I, who had acquired a new friend in Noor, of the I, who had demolished the bullies on the way back home, of the I, who was apprehensive about the future of his love for this lovely woman who had been the main pull for my coming to Khalsa College, Amritsar...

Krishan’s introspection into his different selves is reminiscent of Sergius’s self-examination in Bernard Shaw’s well-known play.

Arms and the Man. The interior-monologue, though suitable for the revelation of deep recesses of mind, is fraught with the disadvantage of the speaker's self-glorification. Krishan's indulgence in self-praise is evident from his thoughts which flash across his mind while he is lying in bed in Dr. Bhatia's nursing home:

As I peeled the onion of myself, I tried to bolster up my vanity... '... Who could be less proud than me, inspite of Professor Henry's praise of my intellect? And who, inspite of all his weaknesses, could beon the courage to act when others remained indecisive? After all, I have dared to do things...'

And, this adulation of 'I' by 'Me' preserved my false pride.63

Krishan tries to portray his character objectively by supplementing his introspections with others' opinions about him. For example, at college he is nicknamed 'Tadpole' or 'Teddy' because of his small size, just as he was called 'Chuchia' at school for the same reason. At the time of admission, even the college Principal addresses him as 'little boy' and asks him jokingly whether he has come to join school. His best friend, Noor, however, pays him a rich compliment by calling him 'freedom incarnate'. Prof. Henry praises his forwardness but points out that he is 'a little cocky'. Prof. Sodhi remarks that the young man is either a God or a fool because he craves for recognition. Prof. Bhatia observes that he has the natural extremism of adolescence. Mr. Horniman is impressed by his intelligence and is confident that he will fight evil, regardless of consequences. The eminent Urdu poet, Iqbal, commends

63 Ibid., p. 293.
Krishan for the latter's poetic talent. On the other hand, his father is critical of his academic achievements and opines that he has become arrogant with the knowledge he has acquired at college, and that the study of philosophy has turned his head. He is thus the focus of everybody's attention, and a mixture of praise and censure depicts him in his true colours.

Characterization in the novel is generally rendered from Krishan's viewpoint; as regards portrayal of other characters, Krishan acts as the centre of consciousness. Just as others judge him, so also does he form his opinion about them. For instance, soon after his admission, he discusses with his friends his impressions about the members of the Selection Board. According to him, Principal Walters is a shrewd and kindly man, with a sense of humour, Professor Strong should have been an Inspector of Police, and not a teacher, and so on and so forth. Likewise, he assesses the members of his family: he despises them for their hypocrisy, especially with regard to their attitude towards Devaki:

Oh, my family!... My father is greedy! ...My mother is stubborn and ignorant and worships her gods all day! My eldest brother Harish takes bribes and goes to bazaar women! My elder brother Ganesh is insidious and scheming.... And they have all made my aunt Devaki whom I love, spend her money on Ganesh's marriage — and now want more.... I am fed up with their hypocrisy. I am full of hatred and bitterness and anger — when I want to love everyone and learn everything and grow to master my Kismet!  

In the above passage, the protagonist, while telling his friend, Noor, about the members of his family, drifts to speaking about

64 Ibid., p.26.
himself. He feels dissatisfied with his world; his 'ghaon-maooon' (confusion), however, finds an outlet in poetry which proves both an escape and a consolation. His love for his sweetheart, Yasmin, Noor's sister-in-law, motivates him to express his passion for her in verse. She, too, is a fine poetess and responds to his love in the same form. Love and poetry are inter-related; love gives rise to poetry and poetry, in turn, proves a vehicle for the expression of love. To illustrate, Yasmin confesses her love for Krishan in an Urdu poem, beginning:

What shall I say to you? how shall I say it?
You came and possessed my soul.65

The lover reciprocates her sentiments in the white heat of passion:

Yasmin, in your everyday life you may belong to others.
In the secret of my heart, you belong to me,
You will return, adorabla one,
You who once visited my heart,
You will return
So I shall not weep. 66

Unfortunately, she is married to another person; nevertheless, their romance outlasts her marriage, nay even after her becoming the mother of a daughter, as she exclaims:

I hear the cry of pain from your heart,
As though it is the shriek of my first child.67

The Krishan-Yasmin episode is narrated so passionately by Krishan himself that the reader is spell-bound. Pornographic considerations apart, the growth of their love is traced vividly from the

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65 Ibid., p.128.
66 Ibid., p.154.
67 Ibid., p.279.
internal viewpoint. Their love is likened to many a proverbial romance by the narrator:

Perhaps, we were incarnations of Leila and Majnun, Shirin and Farhad, Heer and Ranjah. Our love was only the confirmation of other loves. 68

It is the autobiographical mode of narration that makes the incidental comment authentic; here, an external viewpoint would have rendered the remark look like an authorial intrusion.

Different stages of the Krishan-Yasmin romance are dealt with effectively and passionately from Krishan's point of view. For instance, he feels irresistibly drawn towards Yasmin when, sitting next to him in a cinema hall, she puts her left hand in his right. He describes his own excitement at the moment in an impassioned manner:

My heart was thumping behind my chest.... The blood rushed in my body. I felt I was sweating. But I grasped the dainty hand and pressed it.... I was dreaming of the time when I could be alone with her, when I would hug her and kiss her and tease her and fight her and perhaps, awful, beautiful thought, go into her. 69

Likewise, his romantic union with Yasmin on the bank of the Beas is described by him in a titillating manner:

I tore the buttons off her tunic near the bosom and slobbered my way from the left nipple to the right, caressing the lovely, warm, sweet-covered protuberances. 70

He recalls how he had to be kept off his mother's breasts as he wanted, even in mature childhood, to suck her for milk. Only now,
after all these years, had he the chance to fulfil that old urge again. When Yasmin is motivated beyond control, she initiates Krishan to take her. In the narrator's words: "I was gauche and fell on her, like an eagle swooping down on a dove."71 He, being naive, soon disengages himself from her. He feels ashamed and apologizes to her. She, however, encourages him, saying that he will be able to improve upon his performance next time. In fact, she tempts him to seduce her once again the same day by asking him to give her his baby.

Such erotic scenes captivate the reader, especially when these are rendered subjectively. The use of "he" instead of "I" would have seemed remote for want of Krishan's personal involvement. To hear a love story from 'the horse's mouth' has a special charm about it. Krishan's broodings over the consequences of his affair with Yasmin are so faithfully recorded by him that there can hardly be any doubt about the truth of these. A few months after the incident of their indulgence, he is congratulated by Naseem — Noor's wife and Yasmin's elder sister — on becoming a potential father. He is also given Yasmin's message that she will join him whenever he likes. The stark reality that he will have to accept his beloved along with her one-year-old baby by her husband and his own off-spring that she is carrying in her womb, soon dawns upon him:

71 Ibid., p. 305.
I knew that, inside me, my courage had failed me, I tried quickly to reconcile myself to the thought that my poetry had not only been an escape from my miseries, but an act of rebellion as well, the poetry of one who did not conform. Could I not be honest in bridging the gulf between my emotions for Yasmin and my vague thoughts about living bravely in the future? Why hadn't I thought of this before making love to her on the bank of Beas?... 72

Obviously, omniscient narration cannot communicate his feelings so well as the first person singular point of view does. Again, as he is awaiting the arrival of Yasmin in Srinagar to be finally united to her, he introspects himself and realizes that he desires physical union with her more than soul union. He also considers himself intellectually superior to her. The news of her death, however, upsets him. She is probably murdered by her suspicious husband who gets wind of her plan to elope. And he (Krishan) delves deep into the mystery of death in the context of the passing away of Kaushalya, Devaki and Yasmin one after another:

I had a hunch that the shock of death, of the passing away of my cousin Kaushalya when she was nine years old, of the suicide of my aunt Devaki, and now, the murder of Yasmin, were compelling me to probe into the mystery of life itself -- of what man was, what he was here for, what he could do or think, and where he was going.... 73

Thus, different themes of the novel, viz. love, poetry, death, philosophy etc., are closely knit together through Krishan's heart-felt experiences. The intensity of his feelings is effectively communicated by means of the autobiographical mode of narration. The reader is impressed by his sincerity which is

72 Ibid., p.341.
73 Ibid., p.386.
The hero-narrator's "I" lends greater unity to the various episodes in this volume than in the preceding ones. Confession of a Lover comprises twelve parts, dealing with Krishan's first day at college, Devaki's death by suicide, his romance with Yasmin, his meetings with eminent poets, Dr. Iqbal and Bhai Vir Singh, Mrs. Annie Besant's lecture at Khalsa College, Amritsar, Krishan's imprisonment because of his alleged involvement in the sedition against the government, his flight to Bombay, his initial, successful attempts at journalism, his physical

74 Ibid., p. 45.
fulfilment, his frustration resulting from Yasmin's murder at the
eleventh hour, i.e. before her departure from Lahore for Srinagar
to join him, his brilliant success in the B.A. examination, and
finally, his leaving Amritsar for higher studies abroad. These
are not just scattered or isolated incidents, but are closely
interwoven into the structure of the novel. Discourses on poetry,
death, philosophy etc. are also well-assimilated into the narrative.
Krishan Chander emerges as a memorable character in this volume,
as Alastair Niven rightly observes:

In the third novel of the sequence we are shown
Krishan at his most vulnerable. He has lost the
safety of his earliest environment and found as yet
no compensating certainties. If the epic scheme
involves the hero's quest for truth, self-knowledge
or fulfilment then Confession of a Lover marks the
point at which Anand-Krishan makes the preliminary
search to find out what will be the object of his
whole life's journey.75

75 Alastair Niven, The Yoke of Pity (New Delhi: Arnold-